



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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Company Profile

Introduction

Public Affairs Ireland (PAI) was established in October 2002. Since then, PAI has excelled in the provision of information services to the public sector including a monthly journal, a weekly e-zine providing updates on Oireachtas and government department business, a State directory and periodically other specialised publications. In the light of perceived demands, the company began providing training and conferences specifically dedicated to the needs of the public service in Ireland. It began providing training seminars of short duration and in time began to provide longer certificate level courses designed to address some of the perceived training needs of the Irish public service.

PAI's education and training service arm, PAI Professional Development, is innovative in its approach to training and education. PAI's strength lies in the experience and knowledge base of its core team of directors, some of whom are former public servants with considerable public administration experience. It can also call on a range of experienced current and former public servants for particular expertise and experiences as necessary and it employs appropriate legal experts, economists, HR specialists, top accountancy and legal firms, project managers and procurement experts, as required for the provision of state-of-the-art training with a practical focus. This enables PAI provide the perspective of leading professionals and experts from a range of different disciplines in both the public and private sectors in a number of training programmes specially developed for the public service. While the team might change depending on the course requirements, PAI always seeks to utilise the most appropriate personnel for particular learning. This flexible but highly effective approach is aimed at ensuring participants receive high quality training with a public sector ethos and orientation. This formula is

particularly effective for participants who are in public sector employment and are mostly already third level graduates.

Learners on these training courses tend to be middle ranking public servants many of whom would be third level graduates. PAI is a vocational education and training body which organises courses for mature employees of the public sector in association with other professional organisations such as legal, management and accounting firms.

Many PAI training seminars are short half-day events. However, there is an increasing demand from participants and their employers, for nationally accredited integrated programmes under the National Framework of Qualifications.

Public Affairs Ireland's Mission

Public Affairs Ireland's mission in its Professional Development role is to provide quality Training and Education Courses, which will meet or exceed the expectations of our clients.

Public Affairs Ireland's Vision

PAI will become more widely recognised as a provider of high quality courses and seminars.

PAI will become a recognised alternative to existing course providers.

In order to achieve these goals:

1. In August 2008 Public Affairs Ireland moved to a dedicated state of the art Training Centre which ensures control over all aspects of Training / Learning facilities. This new facility contains: 6 fully equipped lecture /training rooms, each with a capacity of up to 25 students; breakout rooms; staff room; a library; offices; cafeteria and common rooms. In time, it is hoped that provision can be made for disabled access
2. As of September 2008 we developed an online learning resource and information repository, the PAI Moodle, where students can access course materials and talk to each other and instructors.

3. PAI will maintain or increase the quality and customer satisfaction levels of existing courses/seminars.
4. As of September 2008 PAI increased the number of its certificate courses. These courses, though stand alone, are capable of combining to form a comprehensive portfolio of training and education for public sector workers.
5. PAI gained accreditation for one of these courses by HETAC in mid-2009.
6. New certificate courses are to be introduced each year thereafter.
7. A development agenda which will see continued growth in student numbers, an enhanced portfolio of seminars and increased centre capacity is being pursued.

Public Affairs Ireland's Values

Quality is an essential part of PAI's positioning in a competitive education and training market. PAI Professional Development believes that the quality and relevance of its courses are their unique selling points. Through its emphasis on excellence, PAI ensures that the company will provide education and training standards which consistently meet the needs and expectations of its student customers.

Public Affairs Ireland aims to provide a working environment which encourages review, questioning, excellence and creativity.

Public Affairs Ireland commitment to its clients/students

For our clients/students Public Affairs Ireland guarantees:

- excellent teaching/training
- professional conduct and integrity from all PAI staff
- regular course observation, evaluation and review to ensure standards are maintained and improved
- efficient administration and auxiliary services
- excellent premises and facilities for training/learning and study.
- a clearly structured course that is appropriate to students' needs
- appropriate and effective teaching/training methods

- regular assessments, reports and end-of-course assessment procedures leading to a certificate of attainment (where appropriate)
- experienced and competent trainers working under the supervision of an appropriately qualified training manager/course leader
- to maintain and develop a learner-centred ethos through working in conjunction with learners
- to consult and co-operate with stakeholders to tailor services to meet their needs
- to say clearly what it is going to do and to do what it says it will.

Public Affairs Ireland commitment on information

Public Affairs Ireland undertakes that its advertising, promotional materials and course information follow national advertising standards, are factual and give a clear and truthful account of their courses and other activities.

Before enrolment, Public Affairs Ireland provides students or their representatives with clear information on the nature of and rationale behind the course. In addition, clear information is provided on:

- course length and dates;
- number of hours taught, and number of hours for self study
- assessment procedures, reporting, and certification.

Before enrolment, Public Affairs Ireland undertakes to provide students or their representatives with full and clear details concerning the contract between the PAI and the student, including exact course fees, and the rights of each party, according to the contract, in the event of withdrawal or exclusion. (In the event of a course withdrawal PAI will either reschedule the course if agreeable with instructors and students or immediately return students' fees) Where necessary, PAI will take out a performance assurance bond to guarantee refund of student fees.

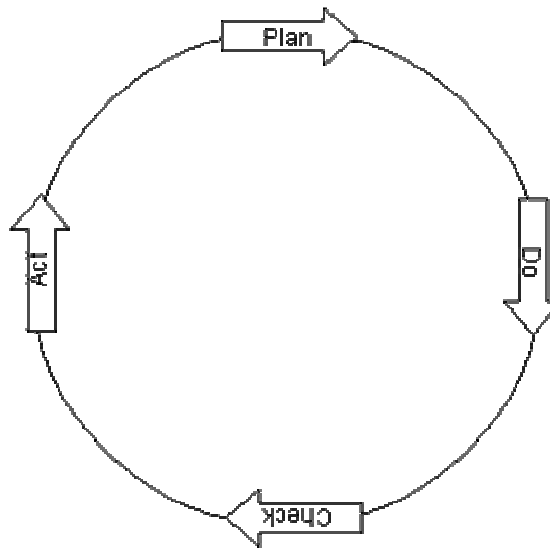
All prices mentioned in advertising and other information specify clearly which services and goods are included in the price and which are available at additional cost. Any additional taxes that may be payable are also specified.

Diplomas and certificates of any kind signed or issued for any purpose by Public Affairs Ireland contain accurate statements of fact. When such certification is based on

examinations or tests, Public Affairs Ireland undertakes to ensure that these are valid and soundly administered.

Public Affairs Ireland Quality Assurance Model

The quality model adopted by Public Affairs Ireland is based on the Deming/Shewart Cycle



This model has been chosen by Public Affairs Ireland because it is applicable to the processes and services of the PAI.

- 1. Plan** In all of its activities PAI endeavours to plan carefully, taking cognisance of the views opinions and requirements of its stakeholders.
- 2. Do** PAI aims to carry out its activities as planned.
- 3. Check** All actions are subject to some or all of evaluation, appraisal, inspection and observation.
- 4. Act** Action is taken to rectify shortcomings identified in stage 3

Public Affairs Ireland Management structure

PAI Management structure is as follows:

Contract staff are indicated by italic text

Information pertaining to the Quality Assurance responsibilities and roles within the management structure can be found on pages 12-14.

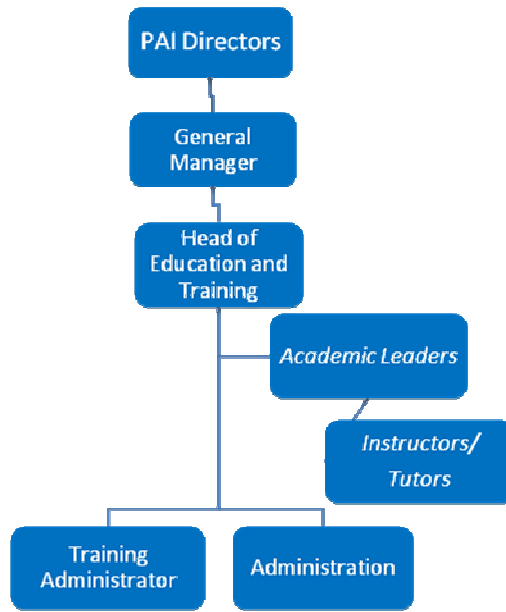


Fig. 1: PAI organisation structure

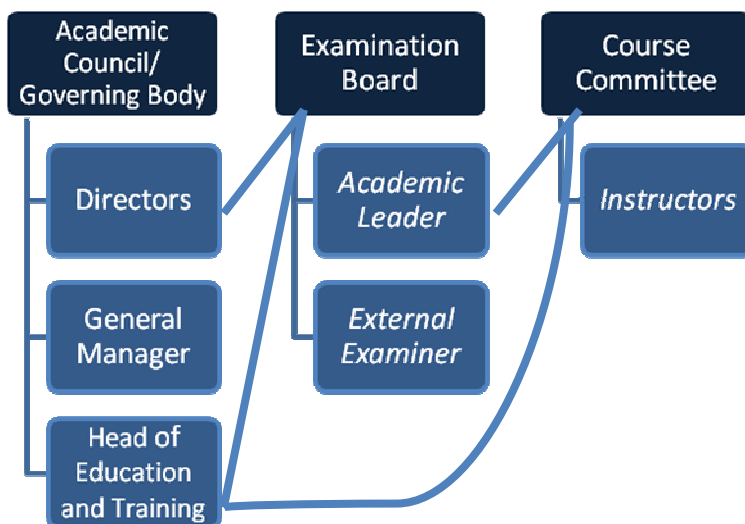


Fig. 2: PAI academic structure

The PAI Governing Body is made up of the PAI board of directors along with the General Manager and Registrar/Head of Education and Training. The PAI Governing Body effectively functions as an **Academic Council**. Meetings are minuted.

- This body oversees all standards and quality aspects of PAI courses.
- They have primary responsibility for the PAI QA Procedures.
- They review the QA Procedures in its entirety every three years.
- They have final acceptance of proposed new courses.
- They approve major modifications to courses which have been recommended by the Course Committees.
- They review course design and specifications prior to completion of tender documents and prior to viewing by Accreditation/Validation Bodies.
- They conduct an **Annual Review** of all programmes offered by PAI and may refer courses back to the Course Committees if the courses are considered to be underperforming

Course Committees are established for each new course as required and include an Academic Leader and persons with specific expertise related to the proposed course. The duties of the Course committee are:

- to develop and refine the Initial Course Proposal.
- to add the necessary specialist expertise.
- to set assessment requirements and to act on evaluations when major course modifications are required.
- to review the course content and support facilities when courses are scheduled to be re-run.
- to review the course in the light of possible changes in subject knowledge or changes in legislation.
- to review the course taking into consideration student feedback on the course content, support facilities and student exam and assessment results.
- to agree changes in the course, ensuring they do not affect the objectives and quality of the course.

- to recommend these changes to the Governing Body/Academic Council.

An Examination Board is established for Certificate courses to review all proposed grades and finalise the grades to be awarded to each participant on the course. The Examination Board will consist of the course Academic Leader, an External Examiner, the PAI Head of Education and Training and course instructors

An **Appeals Board** will be convened to deal with student appeals relating to a particular grade awarded. The Appeals Board will consist of the PAI Governing Body; the relevant Academic Leader and an Internal Examiner. They will hear submissions from students and may require submissions from tutors and examiners.

The Head of Education and Training has specific responsibilities, within the academic structure, in the recruitment, assessment and management of Training and Trainers. This includes the recruitment and management of Academic Leaders and (in conjunction with the PAI Governing Body), Course Specialists. S/he will agree session plans with presenters/trainers, assess training and provide feedback to trainers. The Head of Education and Training has responsibility for ensuring Education and Training comply with QA procedures.

The Academic Leader has responsibility for working with the instructors and subject specialists to set learning outcomes for the course and for individual modules. This group will also agree continuous assessment assignments and set exam questions. The Academic Leader will supervise correction of exams and will ensure collection from students, of both mid course and exit feedback. The Academic Leader will sit on the Exams board.

PAI instructors

PAI instructors are the main interface with PAI clients/students. Their understanding of the PAI quality ethos and willingness to accept and actively contribute to the QA Procedures is essential. When recruiting instructors to the PAI, the following are the criteria set forward:

1. Formal professional qualifications and a leader in expertise in the area of the course
2. Previous teaching /training experience
3. Previous experience of high level mature students in the state sector
4. First class presentation, speaking and instruction skills

5. Independent and unaffiliated to any vested interest that might cause bias
6. Verified references from reputable organisations
7. PAI has received positive evaluation of their performance through customer feedback from previous training seminars with PAI
8. Instructors will make a positive contribution to the development of the course if required.
9. Training partners are companies which join with PAI to carry out a course. The criteria applied to PAI Instructor recruitment are also used in the selection of their Instructors. For the duration of the course they are in effect PAI Instructors.

QA and Management Responsibilities of PAI Directors and staff

The following summarises the principal responsibilities, including those related to QA Procedures, and authority of each job role. All staff can and must identify quality failures or possible improvements, and record these instances so that corrective action can be taken, both to rectify the immediate situation and to prevent recurrence. The General Manager continually reviews the company's resources to ensure that adequate staff, equipment and materials are available to meet customer requirements.

| Job | Academic QA Responsibilities | Management Responsibilities |
|-----------------|---|--|
| PAI Directors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee and review QA Procedures as a whole through membership of the Governing Body • Sit on the Appeals Board as representatives of the Governing Body • New course identification • Initial contact with important training partners to secure partnership • Ensure training partners agree and adhere to QA procedures • Final approval of new courses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall strategy • Business goals and targets • Approve marketing and communications materials |
| General Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management, control and maintenance of the Quality Assurance Procedures and their review as a member of the Governing Body • Sit on the Appeals Board as representative of the Governing Body • New course identification • Facilities management including library functions • Action in cases of quality below required levels • Learner protection measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to directors • Financial control • Recruitment, management & co-ordination of PAI staff • Contract management & control (instructors, venues etc.) • Staff training • Supplier selection & purchasing |

| Job | Academic QA Responsibilities | Management Responsibilities |
|--|--|--|
| Registrar / Head of Education and training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for day to day Academic Quality • Sits on Course Committees, Exam and Appeals Boards • Resource allocation and management • Input to course design and quality control • Liaison with Academic Council, Exam Board and Course Committees • New course identification • Observe and give feedback to tutors/trainers on their teaching methodologies and performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan training calendar • Manage students and tutors on the day • Organise and manage logistics, staffing and timings for the events • Help draft course and conference brochures and calendars and online and print marketing campaigns (plan, write, design, create and distribute) • Communicate planned requirements for badges, packs, pens, brochures, and communicate to Admin Support in time to avoid shortages |
| Training Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for all aspects of student enrolment, records, etc. • Acknowledge registration by email to customer • Get presentations from speakers 2 days in advance and load them into memory sticks (x2) and laptop. If not received in time, escalate to Training Manager. • Get students to complete evaluations on the day and report customer evaluation to speakers and management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at venue in time to set up room including projector, screen, laptop, registration desk • Circulate speakers presentations to students after the event • Prepare and send attendance certificates to students who attended if they have requested them • Send details of students who appeared unannounced on the day to Admin • Provide student list to speakers on the day or before if requested • Take telephone and email enquiries and registrations, enter on event spreadsheet (student list) and pass registration to Admin Support for invoicing and collection |

| Job | Academic QA Responsibilities | Management Responsibilities |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Academic Leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upholds QA Procedures relating to course content and facilities through involvement in initial course design and sitting on Course Committee board. • Work with the instructors and subject specialists to set learning outcomes for the course and for individual modules. • Upholds QA Procedures relating to assessments through sitting on the Exam and Appeals Boards • Agree continuous assessment assignments and set exam questions. • Supervise correction of exams. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| Instructors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Academic Leader and Head of Education and Training to uphold QA Procedures relating to course content and delivery through: designing and developing learner supports for their courses such as slides, handouts and other documentation • Liaise with Head of Training to ensure their training matches Course Design /Specifications • Take note of and act on Student feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| Administrator / bookkeeper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive sales registrations from course organiser, send invoices and update event spreadsheet with invoice number/details • Filing all paper correspondence with students incl. registrations, invoices and payments • Deal with invoices from speakers • Find out planned requirements for course materials and source suppliers, get quotes and order appropriate stocks of folders, badges and pens so that we never run out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain stores of the above supplies • Book keeping and debt collection |

PAI Process for Course Design and Modification

Stage 1 *Origin*

A course may be proposed by PAI staff, PAI stakeholders or by External Experts linked to PAI. It may originate in feedback from participants on PAI seminars who are seeking a course to meet their specific needs. It can also come in the form of a request for tender where a public body has identified a training need and has requested tenders to meet that need.

Stage 2 *Initial assessment*

The proposed course is then made the focus of a meeting of the PAI Course Development Committee where it is either accepted or rejected. The criteria for acceptance are that:

- the course should fit with the range and type of courses PAI provides
- the course meets the needs of our client base
- the PAI must have available, or be able to source, the expertise required
- the PAI must be confident it can provide a quality course, surpassing existing competitor's courses
- the course needs to be potentially profitable.

Stage 3 *Initial Course Proposal (ICP)*

Following this meeting, staff are assigned to draw up an Initial Course Proposal. This ICP is drawn up using a standard PAI template (Appendix 4) which will contain the following details:

1. The rationale for the course.
2. The aims and objectives of the course
3. The draft course schedule.
4. The resources, human and material, which are available and the resources which will be required.
5. The budget; including all costs and possible return on investment.

Stage 4 *Course Committee with Content Experts*

The ICP is then sent to the PAI Course Committee which contains an Academic Leader and content experts from one of the major consulting firms who specialize in the relevant area. They will become the consulting partner for this course. The Initial Course Outline is reviewed and, in consultation with the course presenters and PAI, the Course Committee refine the ICP adding session plans with learning outcomes for each stage, setting running orders and indicating how best to deliver the training. They will also decide on continuous assessment for the course and on the end of course assessment.

Stage 5 *Final approval*

The ICP is then sent to the PAI management for final approval. Following approval the course is sent to relevant Validating Body.

Stage 6 *Resource Allocation*

The now detailed Course Proposal is sent to the Head of Education and Training to re-assess the resource implications of the proposal. Resources are allocated.

Stage 7 *Marketing*

The Course Proposal is passed to the Marketing Department and offered to the PAI client database.

Stage 8 *Presentation*

The course is presented.

Stage 9.1 *Observation*

Representative sections of the course are observed by the Head of Education and Training and/or Academic Leader (with the agreement of the presenters)

Stage 9.2 *Evaluation*

The students are asked to complete evaluations of the course content, course presentation, learning outcomes, training and library facilities and catering.

Stage 10 *Incorporation of Feedback*

Evaluation comments and suggestions are fed back to the presenters and in consultation with the PAI Head of Education and Training they will review the course in the light of these comments and make any necessary modifications.

Minor modifications, which do not change the overall character of the course, may be agreed by the presenters in conjunction with the PAI Head of Education and Training. Major changes will be required to be approved by PAI Course Committee and will re-enter the cycle at Stage 4.

The course is re-run and re-evaluated.

The course is subject to an annual review by the PAI Governing Body

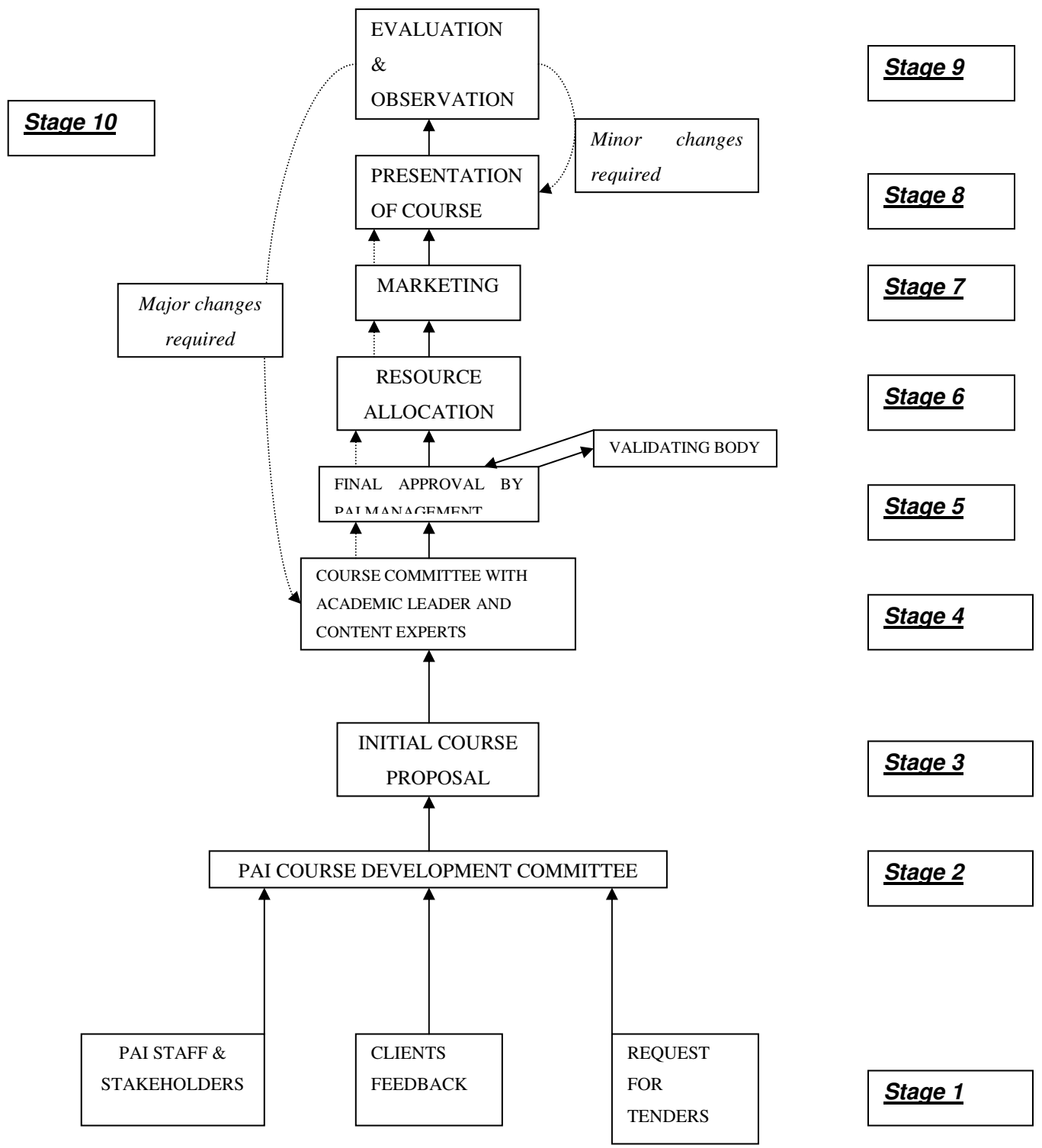


Fig. 3: Public Affairs Ireland Course Design and modification

PAI Examinations and Appeals Procedures

Examinations take place on the last day of each Certificate Course.

PAI student examination responsibilities

Students are required:

- to observe the examination regulations,
- to be in attendance before the examination start time,
- to comply promptly with instructions from the invigilators.

Students must not:

- engage in any behaviour which causes inconvenience or disruption to other examination candidates.
- engage in cheating i.e., any behaviour likely to gain them an unfair advantage.

Students must inform PAI of illness or other factors which may affect/may have affected examination performance, and to produce, where appropriate, verifiable evidence in support of this.

PAI students have the following rights re examinations:

- To be made aware of the regulations governing Examinations.
- To have any examination regulation clarified and explained to them.
- To be able to undertake their exams without interference from others
- To be given adequate notice of the date, time, location and duration of examinations and assessments.
- To be informed of programme syllabus and assessment techniques such as the format of papers, continuous assessment, practicals and presentations as used in the examination process.

To have a suitable environment for the conduct of the examination.

To have examinations and assessment papers properly prepared and presented.

To have the examination process conducted efficiently and to schedule.

To have answer books and other examinable material kept securely pending marking and stored thereafter for an appropriate period of time (no less than 12 months).

To have all examinable material marked fairly.

To be informed as soon as possible of the results of assessments and exams

To have the right to appeal examination results and to have suitable appeal procedures in place, including an Appeals Board.

To be made aware of the appeals procedures.

To have the examination appeal dealt with fairly and without undue delay.

To have an opportunity to resit the exam when prevented from doing so by illness.

Appeals Procedure

Where a student perceives grounds to exist, a student may query the result of an examination. The student may either request a recheck which is the administrative operation of checking the recording and the addition of marks, or, they may request a review of a result which means the reconsideration in detail of all or part of the existing examination material where feasible by the Internal Examiner and course Academic Leader.

The grounds for a review are as follows:

The examination regulations have not been properly implemented;

The regulations do not adequately cover the candidate's case;

The course's assessment practices are perceived by the student as unfair;

Insufficient consideration was given to compassionate circumstances related to the candidate's examination situation made known to the PAI by the candidate prior to or during the programme of the examination concerned.

Any request by the student for a review or a recheck must be made in writing to the PAI Head of Education and Training within seven working days of the student being notified of their examination results.

The PAI Head of Education and Training in cooperation with the relevant Academic Leader and Internal Examiner will arrange the assembly of all the relevant documentation, including, if appropriate, copies of marking sheets, examination scripts or other examination material, continuous assessment results, continuous assessment material, etc.

The PAI Appeals Board

The PAI Appeals Board will meet to consider the review. It will include the PAI Governing Body, the Academic Leader and an Internal Examiner. The Appeals Board will examine all relevant documentation; they may request submissions from Course Tutors or other appropriate persons. The decision of the Appeals Board will be sent to the relevant awarding body for formal processing. A summary report of the appeal and the Board's decision will be forwarded to the External Examiner. The Head of Education and Training will notify the student of the decision.

Monitoring of Courses

The purpose of monitoring courses in Public Affairs Ireland is to -

- ensure systematic processes exist for gathering and considering information that can be used to improve the delivery of Courses;
- ensure Courses remain current and continue to meet their stated aims;
- ensure the support facilities related to the Courses are adequate;
- monitor the degree to which learners meet the intended learning outcomes of the Courses and the extent to which the assessment mechanisms are appropriate;
- contribute to the development of a quality culture in which all participants are aware of their respective roles and that actions are taken to address observed weaknesses in the Courses.

Monitoring

Monitoring courses involves the ongoing examination of course delivery.

The experience gained from delivering the course should be evaluated in the context of the course's aims.

This examination of the courses should focus on the links between the modules, the demands on the learners, and the coherence of the course delivered.

The introduction of significant changes to a course must follow the PAI procedures for Course Design and Modification as described earlier (pp 15-18).

Course Committee role in monitoring

The main focus of course committees in this area is to monitor the ongoing delivery of courses and to introduce improvements consistent with PAI procedures.

On completion of a course Instructors will complete a monitoring report and may complete a Staff Questionnaire. These are distributed to the Course Committee

Attendance is recorded by lecturers and is submitted to the Head of Education and Training a copy is sent to the Course Committee. In cases of unexplained absences, students will be contacted by the PAI Training assistant and the reasons placed with the attendance records

Student feedback and will be sent to the Course Committee.

Exam results will be sent to the Course Committee

On completion of a course the Course Committee will complete a monitoring report

Survey of Students

Student appraisal of a course is achieved using a Student Feedback Questionnaire and Focus Groups

The questionnaire encompasses: student reaction to the course, organisation and content of subject, effectiveness of communication, evaluation of learning and support facilities to include library, and general evaluation of premises, content, and presentation. Suggestions for improvements may be made. .

The questionnaire may be completed anonymously

The PAI training Assistant will provide a summary of questionnaire responses. (An example is included in Appendix 2). These summaries are sent to the relevant Instructors, the PAI Governing Body/Academic Council and the Academic Leader. They will also be considered by the Course Committee as they review the Course.

A Focus Group will be held with each student cohort mid way through the Course. The results of this will be reported to the Course Committee and Governing Body

The Staff/Instructor Questionnaire is included in Appendix H4. The questionnaire facilitates suggestions for improvements in all aspects of the PAI. The results of the questionnaire will be instrumental in Course Committee reviews and in the Governing Body Reviews.

Internal Examiners

1. The Internal Examiner will report to the Academic Leader and the PAI Head of Education and Training.
2. All assessment and examinations must be consistent with the course syllabus and the stated learning outcomes.
3. The timing and weighting of assessments must be in accordance with the approved course schedule and the assessment schedule.
4. Mechanisms for providing feedback to learners on their assessment performance must also be designed into an assessment instrument.
5. Draft examination papers, model answers and a marking scheme must be submitted to the Academic Leader for forwarding to the relevant external examiner
6. Internal examiners must ensure that all examination papers, model answers, and marking schemes are securely retained.
7. Learners must be informed well in advance of an examination of the structure of the paper.
8. The Internal examiner must in the first instance confirm that the scripts correspond with the attendance sheet.
9. In marking an examination scripts the Internal examiner must follow a consistent approach in keeping with the model answers and the marking scheme.
10. The Internal examiner must make every effort to ensure that no errors have occurred from marking assessments, scripts etc. to recording a final mark on the marks sheet.
11. Internal examiners must make examination scripts and assessment material available, as required, to External examiners.
12. Internal examiners must be present for the pre-exam board meeting to ensure that the marks on the marks sheets are correctly recorded on the examination broadsheet.
13. Internal examiners must attend the Exams Board meeting.

14. Corrected assessment and exam material must be retained for one year following the meeting of the Exams Board.

External Examiners

1. The PAI Governing Body will ensure that persons appointed to act as External Examiners are competent to fulfil this role.
2. The PAI Head of Education and Training will ensure that the External Examiner receives all necessary documentation to enable them to understand the examination systems operated by the PAI.
3. Such documentation might include:
 - a. Quality assurance policies and procedures
 - b. Programme/subject/module documentation
 - c. Assessment and examination procedures and schedules
4. External Examiners will determine, in their expert judgement if the assessment procedures are fair and consistent and in accordance with the appropriate standards.
5. External examiners will ensure that, all significant elements of the course with which they are involved have been adequately assessed.
6. External Examiners will decide, in consultation with the PAI Academic Leader:
 - a. the particular draft examination papers, model answers and marking schemes they wish to review prior to the examination.
 - b. the particular marked examination scripts they wish to consider
 - c. the nature and content of other assessment material they wish to consider, including course work.
7. The Academic Leader will ensure that such material is provided to the External Examiner in good time.
8. External examiners should have the examination materials for both the first sitting and repeat papers, prior to the first sitting examination
9. It will be the duty of External Examiners to see the drafts of all examination question papers, marking schemes, worked solutions etc., before the question papers are sent for printing.
10. External Examiners will have the right to make such suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions and amendments as they deem appropriate.

Annual reviews

Management review – Governing Body

The PAI's Governing Body, along with the Registrar and a retired senior civil servant will thoroughly review the suitability and effectiveness of the Quality System every three years. During this review action points are allocated and minuted. (Appendix 5)

The objectives of the review are:

1. to establish that the Quality System is functioning correctly and continuous quality improvement is taking place following the Deming /Shewart Cycle. (This review will reinforce not replace, actions and recommendations for improvement made by stakeholders whenever necessary.)
2. to expose any irregularities or defects in the System and identify weaknesses. They will evaluate possible improvements and implement those necessary
3. to review the effectiveness of previous corrective actions, and to review the adequacy and suitability of the management system for current and future operations of the Company;
4. to review any complaints received, identify the cause and recommend corrective action if required;
5. to review the findings/results of the PAI Staff Questionnaire.(Appendix 4)
6. to review student feedback on PAI processes
7. to review the findings of internal/external audits and identify any areas of recurring problems or potential improvements;
8. review the findings of the PAI Governing Body and take action including changes to Quality policies and procedures.
9. to review PAI's business processes in light of results: venues; partner selection; course design; staffing etc.

Registration process

Effective administration controls are already in place for the organization, which has dealt with some 3,000 registered public service employee students who have attended PAI training seminars and conferences over the past three years.

Control of documentation

Record storage

Document storage facilities ensure that all electronic customer records, course evaluations, exam papers, presentations and other documents relating to PAI's training business are backed up to removable media off site weekly. All records are retained for a minimum of 2 years.

Access to Documents

Electronic files within PAI relating to training courses, seminars and conferences, including customers and the quality system itself, customer lists and student lists, are protected by password to ensure that they are available only to the appropriate personnel, with the correct level of authority. Access permissions are revised and reissued as necessary. Obsolete versions of files are removed.

Documentation with controlled access includes:

| Document | Where? | Accessible by | Changed by |
|---|-----------------|---|---|
| Course outlines and brochures | Shared drive | All PAI staff | Once turned into a pdf, cannot be changed |
| Presenter/trainer biographies and photographs | Shared drive | All PAI staff | Person drafting brochures and programmes |
| Customer Registrations / student lists | Shared drive | Course organiser, General Manager, Administrator/bookkeeper | Password protected |
| Quality Assurance Manual/ Operating Procedures, | Shared drive | All PAI staff | General Manager only |
| Speaker contracts | Shared drive | All PAI staff | |
| Venue contracts | Hard copy (fax) | All PAI staff | Under the control of Training Manager |
| Customer marketing database | Web based | Password access to selected PAI staff | User-based permissions vary access rights |

Customer complaints

1. All complaints are dealt with by General Manager in consultation with PAI Directors.
2. A separate file is opened for each complaint and immediately dealt with or at least acknowledged while being investigated.
3. Periodically (e.g. quarterly) Directors and General Manager will review any documented complaints at their weekly meeting in order to identify possible areas for improvement and corrective action required to prevent recurrence.
4. Complaints relating to course content or test/assessment will be dealt with by the Academic Leader and/or the Head of Education and Training

Staff Attitude to Errors

All employees are encouraged to spot and eliminate waste and error in the business processes of PAI.

PAI staff are encouraged to think of/be aware of whole processes in PAI and not just that immediately affecting themselves in order to avoid creating problems elsewhere

A learning, non-judgmental approach is encouraged to faults encountered. This helps encourage staff to immediately report deficiencies and to suggest improvements in methods, materials, suppliers, and sub-contractors.

Staff may, at any time, discuss and propose possible improvements in procedures with the Management or Directors. They may also do so during their annual assessment.

Data Protection

PAI states on its web site that it will not share any information about its customers with other parties. No personal information is collected as students normally register through their employer organisations. Any personal information is strictly confidential.

Measurement of Quality Goals

There is a systematic measurement of achievement to quality goals and targets. Directors, General Manager and Head of Training review these regularly.

| Quality metric | Goal | Responsible |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Overall evaluation of course by students during the course | Zero below expectations for 95% of courses. Or fewer than 10 in 100 students less than 100% happy | Head of Education and Training |
| Student evaluation of venue | 100% | Head of Education and Training |
| Student evaluation of speakers | 100% | Head of Education and Training |
| Student evaluation of learner supports/handouts, library etc. | 100% | Head of Education and Training |
| Students get acknowledgement of registration within same day | 100% get email or call if no email or it bounces back | Training administrator |
| Student evaluation of lecturers | 100% of students should provide evaluations | Head of Education and Training |
| Students get speakers' papers within 24 hours | 100% | Training administrator |
| Feedback analysis to PAI management and partners within 24 hours | 100% | Training administrator |
| Courses are marketed at least 4 weeks in advance | 90% | General Manager and Directors |
| Complaints are acknowledged immediately and dealt with within 48 hours | 100% | General Manager and Directors |
| Phone calls and messages are responded to within half day | 100% | All |
| Data entry | Fewer than 1 in 50 registrations are entered in error where the error is ours (name, email address etc) | Training administrator |
| Tutors presentations are clear and concise | 100% | Course Committee and Course leader |
| All tutors are present on time | 100% | Course Committee and Course leader |

Appendices

Appendix 1 PAI ICP template

| |
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Title of proposed course

| |
|-----------------|
| PROPOSER |
|-----------------|

| |
|-------------|
| DATE |
|-------------|

Course Title

COURSE Duration

..... Hours per week

..... Weeks per semester

..... Semesters per year

..... Number of years

E.G. 3 months part time, including 10 days in classroom and approx. 30 hours home study.

Proposed start date

.

Proposed enrolment numbers

Year 1 students (number of courses)

Year 2 students (number of courses)

Proposing group

Course Proposer(s).....

Course Development Team

.....

Rationale

A statement should be made as to why this course is being proposed. Reference should be made to how this course will contribute to the social or economic infrastructure of the country; the value it will bring to participants and to their employers

AIM

The aim of this course is.

1 TARGET AUDIENCE

The intended audience----anticipated levels of prior knowledge

2 MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Access requirements

.....

.....

.....

COURSE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this course graduates will:

MODULE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Fill in for each module/subject

3 ASSESSMENT

Assessment methods (including WBL, assignments, essays, projects, practical, formative testing, summative testing etc.)

Demand for the course

3.1 Demand from potential students

Quantitative data in relation to preliminary research on the demand for the course from students should be presented. This could include feedback from current students or surveys undertaken among current students. It might also include surveys or tele-polls of training managers. If there are other similar courses already being offered elsewhere then reference should be made these and reasons given why PAI course is superior.

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4 Demand from employers

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5 Secondary research in relation to demand

Reference should also be made to National and International reports quantifying the skills needs in the area. E.g. Report of the Expert Group on Skills Needs.

5.1 Similar courses elsewhere in Ireland

5.2 Similar courses abroad

A sample list of similar courses (particularly in the UK) should be provided if relevant

RESOURCES

5.3 Lecturing / academic personnel

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5.4 Physical Resources

5.5 IT/Other

5.6 Certification

Award Sought

Minor Special Purpose Supplemental

Justification for seeking an award

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Academic credits

ACCS?

Level and number of Credits sought (if any):

- Level of course
- Number of modules.....
- Credits per module
- Total number of credits.....

6 Progression or Transfer Opportunities

In This Institute:

.....
.....
.....

Elsewhere:

.....
.....
.....

COURSE SCHEDULE

For each year of the course an indicative course schedule should be provided in the following format. The sample values shown in the table can be edited.

| PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---|
| NAME OF INSTITUTION | | | | | |
| TITLE OF AWARD | | | | | |
| AREA OF SPECIALISATION | Procurement | | | | |
| LEARNING MODES OFFERED | Part time | | | | |
| STAGE | | | | | |
| DAY | TITLE OF EXAMINATION MODULE | MODULE STATUS | ACCS CREDITS | CONTACT HOURS | ALLOCATION OF MARKS |
| MODULE | | | LEVEL:NUMBER | (per week) | Cont. Ass. Proj. Pract. Final Max Marks |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | MANDATORY | | | | | | | |

SPECIAL REGULATIONS:

Appendix 2 Staff/Instructor questionnaire

| Public Affairs Ireland | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------|------|------|------|--------------|---------------|--|
| Staff Questionnaire | | | | | | | | |
| Please indicate your opinion by marking the appropriate box | | | | | | | | |
| PAI | Excel- lent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very Poor | Don't Know | |
| 1 PAI Course management is | | | | | | | | |
| 2 PAI Course planning is | | | | | | | | |
| 3 PAI Administrative support is | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Communication within the PAI is | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Encouragement and support for staff development is | | | | | | | | |
| 6 PAI Quality Assurance procedures are | | | | | | | | |
| 7 PAI website is | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Use of ICT (intranet, network folders, etc.) is | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Complement of courses is | | | | | | | | |
| 10 PAI academic structure | | | | | | | | |
| Improvements you would like to see: | | | | | | | | |

PAI Resources and Services

| | Excel- lent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very Poor | Don't Know |
|---|----------------|--------------|------|------|------|--------------|---------------|
| 11 The PAI Education and Training Centre is | | | | | | | |
| 12 My office accommodation is | | | | | | | |
| 13 Lecture / classroom accommodation is | | | | | | | |
| 14 Breakout room facilities are | | | | | | | |
| 15 Staffroom facilities are | | | | | | | |
| 16 PAI staff library is | | | | | | | |
| 17 Availability of books, journals, online resources etc. is | | | | | | | |
| 18 Staff computers are | | | | | | | |
| 19 Computer network and email facilities are | | | | | | | |
| 20 Audio-visual facilities are | | | | | | | |

Identify where improvements can be made in the physical facilities and provision of services:

Please indicate your opinion by marking the appropriate box

Course:

| - Programme | Excel- lent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very Poor | Not Relevant |
|---|----------------|--------------|------|------|------|--------------|-----------------|
| 21 Course as a whole is | | | | | | | |
| 22 Quality of student intake is | | | | | | | |
| 23 Relevance of the course content as a whole is | | | | | | | |
| 24 Relevance of each of the individual subjects is | | | | | | | |
| 25 Course organisation is | | | | | | | |
| 26 Course as a preparation for further study is | | | | | | | |
| 27 Course relevance to employment is | | | | | | | |
| 28 Operation of the Academic Leader is | | | | | | | |
| 29 Clarity of students responsibilities and requirements is | | | | | | | |
| 30 Organisation of the assessment schedule is | | | | | | | |
| 31 Appropriateness of the assessment workload is | | | | | | | |
| 32 Operation of Exam Boards is | | | | | | | |
| 33 Student attendance in my subject/module is | | | | | | | |
| 34 Student commitment in my subject/module is | | | | | | | |

Outline where improvements to the Programme can be introduced: (Continue overleaf)

Appendix 3 Management Review records

Documentation of actions taken on the periodic Management review of the QA Policy and procedures

| Date | Meeting | Subject | Attendees | Actions | Due date | Responsible |
|------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Documentation of actions taken on the periodic Internal Audits of the QA Policy and procedures

| Date | Observation | By whom | Communicated to | Actions |
|------|-------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| | | | | |
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