Quality Assurance Handbook PART A1

POLICY No.1: Policy and procedure development for Tech Apprenticeships

1. Purpose of policy

Policy No.1 aims to clearly outline and define the FIT approach to developing policies and procedures for dissemination to Apprentices and broader stakeholder groups. Policy and procedure development closely informed by regulatory guidelines encompasses the activities of development, approval, issuance, and revision of new and current policies across FIT, with a view to optimising a consistent, positive, and interactive learning experience for all Apprentices in traditional face-to-face delivery settings or where FIT leverages virtual classrooms for blended modes of delivery. Policy and aligned procedure development is a core activity of the FIT Registry team and TEL Unit and allows for codifying best practices detailing digital-first methodologies while demonstrating adherence to statutory and regulatory requirements/frameworks.

1.1 Policy scope

Apprentices should access this policy along with tutors, FIT staff, Approved Delivery Partners[1], and broader regulatory and accreditor stakeholders where appropriate. Before any sign-off for approval, individuals tasked with disseminating internal or external policy or procedure development must adhere to the structure and outline noted in this policy before

[1] Typically an Education and Training Board.

submission to the FIT Academic Council for adoption. New policies or procedures must drive and promote structure, consistency, and best practice in application.

1.2 Overarching considerations

All policies developed for use in the delivery of Tech Apprenticeships must reflect the mission, ethos, and expectations of FIT as the National Coordinating Provider of the programmes and contribute to a transparent apprentice experience that provides for stakeholder accountability.

It is vital for efficient and useful policy development activities that policy development leads to identifying relevant and competent personnel in given operational areas to generate policy and engage in timely updates of aligned procedures. In addition, all policy development activities should fully adhere to the given accreditor and quality requirements, and all must be cognisant of the overarching statutory process relating to apprenticeship provision in Ireland while also reflecting best sectoral practices.

1.3 Policy statement

FIT recognises the necessity to delineate policy items that form a specific element of a policy and the aligned procedure relating to a particular subject matter or governance item. All FIT quality assurance documents clearly detail this distinction, noting the pertinent QA policy and procedure topics separately. A series of logically ordered and expected headings define policy development in FIT. Strong policy development practices guide and inform decision-making and provide for consistent application, clarity, and fairness for Apprentices. All FIT policies will follow the template layout as displayed in Sections 1-1.3 of this document. Individuals who develop or revise policies or procedures in FIT must understand the context and background of materials in development. As noted, procedures are distinct from policy and form a separate and accessible series of steps that complement the implementation of

a particular policy. Insofar as practical, all procedures approved by the Academic Council will be drafted in a clear and comprehensible format.

1.4 Policy and procedure development - key features

- Identification of a policy or procedure;
- Ensure non-reproduction with existing documentation approved for use;
- Early stage consultation with Tech Apprenticeship Registrar;
- Development of draft policy or procedure as necessary;
- Consult relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- Furnish to the next available sitting of the Academic Council for approval; and
- Publish.

1.5 Accessing policies

All approved operational policies of FIT are publicly accessible and documented as part of the Quality Assurance Handbook PART A1. However, in some instances, policies aligned to staffing may not be publicly available. These policies will be available through appropriate HR DUO App staff login.

1.6 Policy and procedure layout

The procedure format may vary, but all policy outlines are purposefully rigid to promote FIT-wide consistency. All text should utilise Calibri (Body) font size 11 and use FIT-formatted main and subheadings with 1.5 line spacing. A template is available from the FIT Registrar. It should include a series of expected headings at a minimum: the document's title and purpose, the policy scope, overarching considerations, and a succinct policy statement. Additional headings may be added but should follow after the outline of the mandatory elements. Policy documents should not, in any instance, include exhaustive procedure

listings. In addition, a metadata box is included at the end of each policy that allows tracking of critical stakeholders, persons, as well as revision history. New and revised policies must be simple, straightforward, unambiguous, and free of grammatical, spelling, or factual errors. Cited publications or regulatory reference information must always be relevant and up to date.

1.7 Policy and procedure review

FIT will review and amend policies and procedures no later than five years after initial issuance. In practice, FIT anticipates minor changes being made to policies and procedures on an ongoing basis, reflecting the ongoing codification of best practices.

In consultation with wider FIT staff, policy development leads, and policy owners, the FIT Director of Academic Affairs and Programme Development will maintain a register of all active policies and procedures. Each policy owner must be responsible for keeping abreast of contemporary regulatory issues and changing current documents/policies concerning their institutional policy footprint. The Director of Academic Affairs and Programme Development will approve minor modifications to existing policies.

Document History		
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