



west lothian
college

Career Long Professional Learning and Development Policy

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Introduction

The college is committed to equipping its people with the necessary skills to deliver the college vision of developing a highly skilled, enterprising and resilient workforce.

The college's Career Long Professional Learning and Development Policy supports the realisation of the strategic learning and development aim, outlined in the college's People Strategy, of *'creating capability by motivating and engaging our people with their learning and development for all required skills and the adaptability and agility for change'*.

The Career Long Professional Learning and Development Policy has been informed by the college's People Strategy.

The policy sets out how the college will support and advance staff development.

Aims

The aims of the Career Long Professional Learning and Development Policy are to:

- Embed workforce skills development and planning.
- Develop a proactive approach to staff development at both a team and individual level.
- Develop effectiveness and efficiency at team and individual levels.
- Ensure that the college realises excellence across service delivery.
- Ensure professional standards are embedded in learning and teaching and service delivery.

Development Themes

The following themes will be developed:

- Learner retention and attainment.
- Learner involvement, engagement and partnership.
- Supporting and enhancing digital skills particularly for digital learning delivery.
- Promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly for trauma responsive practice.
- Effectiveness, efficiency and professionalism in all services.
- Highest possible customer service.
- Risk assessment and health and safety.
- Continuous quality improvement and enhancement.
- Societal, organisational and environmental sustainability.

Staff Development Expenditure

Staff development expenditure and budget control will be held by the Head of HR and People Development. Decisions of expenditure and priorities will be informed by:

- Requirements to realise the college vision and strategic goals and embed college values and behaviours.
- Annual priorities agreed with the Executive Leadership Team.
- External drivers and legislative requirements.
- An ethos of measurable continuous quality improvement and enhancement.

The following factors are considered for expenditure (monetary and time) decisions:

- To what extent the learning and development activity is essential or desirable to the staff member's current role or whether the activity will provide opportunities for future progression and is of benefit for the college for succession/workforce planning reasons.
- Whether the activity request has been discussed at a formal development meeting with the line manager.
- The extent to which the activity has demonstrable links to college values and strategic goals.
- The cost of the activity (funding is normally limited to a maximum of £1,000 per annum per staff member).
- The current level (together with factoring in any future commitments) of the overall learning and development budget at the time the request is made.
- Whether the expenditure will meet all requirements of college financial regulations and procurement policy.
- Whether the time commitment of the activity can be met whilst ensuring ongoing service delivery. The staff member's line manager is responsible for this decision and also whether the activity can be undertaken within working time.
- Opportunities arising for skills and knowledge development through GTCS Professional Update.

Development activities should be requested via the college's personal development application process (PDApp).

Approaches to Development

Individual Development

New staff (except Invigilator and Life Model post holders) must complete mandatory induction training. Existing staff (except Invigilator and Life Model post holders) must complete refresher mandatory training as directed by the college. All staff (except Invigilator and Life Model post holders) must undertake a development review with their line manager to discuss their learning and development activity during each

academic year. Guidance notes for development reviews are available for all staff and managers. During this meeting the reviewer and reviewee will agree development activity targets for the upcoming academic year.

Individual development learning can be accessed via the college's online Staff Learning Academy site which provides a range of learning materials. Other development activities can be identified by the staff member, line manager and/or Learning and Development Officer.

Funding and time commitment

Staff having an approved learning activity are expected to undertake and complete this within an agreed timeframe. Any difficulties to achieving this should be raised by the staff member with the line manager.

For costs, staff undertaking an activity which **costs more than £500**, are required to sign an agreement with the college detailing the conditions of the support provided. In particular, any staff member voluntarily leaving West Lothian College employment whilst undertaking the activity or within 1 year of its completion will be required to repay the full college funding expenditure for the activity.

Professional Memberships

The college will not financially support any professional membership costs.

Team Development

Teams and managers will identify development and quality enhancement needs through self-evaluation. Managers will have responsibility for and oversight of this work.

Team development needs may be addressed through team development days/events or other activities. Such activities must also demonstrably link to the achievement of the college vision and strategic goals and support the embedding of college values and behaviours.

Managers will coordinate and facilitate team development activities in conjunction with the Head of HR and People Development and the Learning and Development Officer to ensure that teams realise targets from self-evaluation. Team development events are approved through an applications process and submission of Professional Development Application (PDApp) forms.

The Learning and Development Officer will book external trainers/facilitators and will support managers in the coordination, delivery and evaluation of team development activities.

Reporting on development activity is undertaken on a quarterly basis to the Executive Leadership Team and the college Board of Governors via the HR and People Development Team.

Whole college Development Days

The college schedules whole college staff development days at intervals throughout the year. The content of these days will be informed by a strategic overview of development needs held by the Head of HR and People Development who will consult on content with the Executive Leadership Team and College Leadership Team.

Online Staff Development

Some aspects of staff development are most effectively addressed through e-learning. This method of development will be offered where it represents value for money and learning outcomes can be achieved.

Other Staff Development

The college recognises that informal development is valuable and can only be undertaken with a commitment of time and other agreed expenses, which will be provided where possible. The following list provides examples of informal professional development:

- Representing the college on an external group.
- Visiting colleagues in another college to share best practice.
- Shadowing colleagues internally or externally.
- Attending network meetings.
- Leading and contributing to professional dialogue events.
- Team teaching.
- Discussion with internal colleagues.

Leadership and Management Development

In particular a focus for learning and development activities is to equip college managers and leaders with the required skills and confidence to successfully respond to, adapt to, enact and manage change as well as the capabilities to engage, develop, support and challenge their staff and promote excellent performance.

The college will also support staff who have the potential and aspiration for career development, particularly in terms of management and supervisory skills where this strengthens succession and workforce planning.

Workforce Planning

The college will, through effective workforce planning, ensure that it has a sufficient level of staffing which is appropriately skilled and deployed and will provide staff, where possible, with the opportunity to progress.

The college has three values which are:

- Welcoming to All
- Students at the centre of everything we do
- Always striving for better

Underpinning these values are college behaviours:

- We are respectful and inclusive, and treat everyone as an individual
- We listen actively, and communicate in an open and supportive way
- We are positive role models, engaging with purpose and enthusiasm

- We work together and support each other as part of a team
- We are flexible and accommodating, acting on feedback to make changes
- We are understanding and responsive, focusing on individual needs

- We evaluate and reflect on our practice to improve and succeed
- We are open to new ways of working, looking outwards and learning from others
- We are proactive and forward thinking, preparing for what may be coming next

To ensure the realisation of these values and embedding of behaviours a number of tools will be employed:

- Succession planning – an annual activity undertaken by management, supported by HR and People Development.
- Risk management – risk of leaving assessed annually in the annual workforce planning exercise undertaken by management, supported by HR and People Development.
- Recruitment and retention planning – with processes in place for vacancy control and recruitment planning.
- Staff induction and lecturers' induction – all new starters undertaking an induction with all staff regularly undertaking mandatory training.
- Flexible working – a supportive approach to flexible working for time and location of delivery.
- Forecasting of demand for, and supply of, skills required in specific areas – assessed via the annual workforce planning activity undertaken by management, supported by HR and People Development.

Teaching Qualifications and Professional Development Awards

The college will support staff undertaking teaching qualification as outlined in Appendix B.

All lecturing staff are ultimately required to undertake the TQFE, unless they already hold an equivalent teaching qualification. This is a contractual requirement agreed via national bargaining.

General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS)

All GTCS registrants must use the myPL tool of the myGTCS system for logging personal development and completing GTCS Professional Update. It is the registrant's responsibility to ensure that they meet all ongoing requirements of GTCS registration, including Professional Update. Guidance on the expectations of GTCS registrants and their line managers is included as Appendix A.

Assessor and Verifier Units

The college will support staff undertaking Assessor and Verifier units where these are an essential requirement of their post.

Support Services

The college actively encourages support areas to engage in development activities including team and personal development. The college will support professional qualifications where appropriate and relevant to the post holder's job role or to provide development opportunities.

Recording

A central record is kept of PDApps – both individual and team, however, members of staff are responsible for keeping their individual continuous professional development records. Lecturers must use the myPL tool of the myGTCS portal provided by GTCS for this purpose.

Staff should notify the HR and People Development Team of completed qualifications, in particular TQFE completion.

Evaluation and knowledge transfer

Staff undertaking learning activities will be encouraged to participate in their evaluation process. In addition, where appropriate, staff are encouraged to share their learning with relevant colleagues and teams to embed their learning and disseminate knowledge and skills more widely.

Reporting

The Head of HR and People Development will produce an annual Staff Development Plan for Executive Leadership Team approval and report against realisation of this quarterly to this Team and to the Board of Governors.

Appeals

In the case of disagreement regarding the application of this policy between a member of staff and their line manager, the matter will be referred to a more senior manager who will be advised by the Head of HR and People Development. The decision taken by the senior manager and the Head of HR and People Development is final. At meetings involving the staff member they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague or be represented by a trade union representative.

Review

This policy is reviewed on a three-yearly basis or as required.

Appendix A – GTCS Guidance

The following provides specific advice on Professional Update for the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered staff and their line managers.

This guidance relates to all lecturers and/or GTCS registrants whether joining West Lothian College as GTCS registered staff and maintaining this status, or becoming registered with GTCS during the period of employment.

The college will notify GTCS of registrants leaving and joining West Lothian College or becoming registered in the course of their employment.

Introduction

This appendix provides information and guidance for GTCS registered staff of West Lothian College and their line managers to meet the requirements of Professional Update.

West Lothian College have had the college's approach to lecturers' professional development validated by GTCS.

Key Purposes of Professional Update

Professional Update focuses on continuous improvement rather than performance management.

The key purposes of Professional Update are:

- to maintain and improve the quality of our lecturers as outlined in the appropriate professional standards and to enhance the impact that they have on learners' learning
- to support, maintain and enhance lecturers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland

1. Professional Update Requirements

GTCS registered staff at West Lothian College are required to:

- a) Record professional learning using the MyPL online tool provided by GTCS - you should check your contact details are up to date annually.**
Each GTCS registrant should have a MyGTCS account through which contact details can be checked and amended. If you do not have an account set up, this can be created at www.gtcs.org.uk using your GTCS number, date of birth and by creating your own password.
- b) Engage in ongoing career-long, high-quality, professional learning**

Ongoing engagement with high quality learning and development opportunities in turn provides high quality learning experiences for the college's learners. Professional learning is what lecturers engage in to stimulate thinking and professional knowledge and to ensure that their practice is critically informed and up to date.

A range of learning and development activities are available through a variety of sources including College Development Network, SQA and other external organisations. Opportunities will be circulated by the HR and People Development team as and when appropriate.

Examples of professional learning are outlined by GTCS as follows:

[Professional Update for College Lecturers - The General Teaching Council for Scotland \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards-for-lecturers-in-scotlands-colleges)

- Work shadowing
- Co-operative or team teaching
- Digital learning to enhance blended/remote learning and teaching
- Planning learning which is inter-disciplinary
- Employer/industry engagement
- Participation in activities relating to assessment and moderation
- Secondments, acting posts and placements
- Masters level study
- Accredited courses or activity related to achieving national professional standards for lecturers
- Industry/academic conferences
- Self-evaluation and critical reflection processes
- Action learning
- Enquiry-based learning
- Professional dialogue with colleagues, other professionals, employers and learners
- Critical analysis of focused professional reading and research
- Engaging in practitioner enquiry/action research
- Learning about aspects of curriculum or pedagogical practice
- Peer support e.g. coaching or mentoring
- Observation of learning
- Online learning/blogs

c) Self-evaluate using professional standards

The Professional Standard for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges is defined by GTCS and can be accessed here:

<https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards-for-lecturers-in-scotlands-colleges>

The standards offer constructive support for registrants as they consider how to continue to develop professional knowledge and skills through ongoing self-evaluation and professional learning. Registrants can self-evaluate and plan professional learning using an aspect of any of the professional standards appropriate to their area of focus.

d) Discuss the impact of professional learning through professional dialogue

A wide variety of learning and development is available through organised events both internally and externally. West Lothian College recognises that participating in college, local and national working groups, being observed in the classroom and professional dialogue with colleagues is valid and beneficial to personal and professional development. All employees are encouraged to engage in professional dialogue as it is a key component of review and development meetings and supports professional learning.

e) Maintain a record of professional learning / associated evidence

The HR and People Development team will record all events and activities booked through the PD Application process. In addition, it is important that individuals also keep a record of any additional learning and development including reading of literature, professional dialogue etc. Lecturers must ensure that they update this into the MyPL GTCS system, which **must** be used for recording activity relating to Professional Update. The MyPL record should record professional learning activities reflecting on the professional standards and the impact of your professional learning.

GTCS Guidance on Evidence of Impact can be accessed here:

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-learning-journey-usingevidence-of-impact.aspx>

f) Confirm engagement in the Professional Update process every five years for sign off

GTCS registrants are required to complete the 'sign-off' process every five years through the MyPL GTCS system.

GTCS Professional Update makes reference to an employer's Professional Review and Development process (PDR). At West Lothian College, the PRD process is the college's development review.

The line manager will then confirm this engagement via the GTCS system by confirming the lecturer's 'sign off'. Line managers are not required to be GTCS registered to participate in this process and a non-registered manager can have a GTCS account set up by emailing professional.update@gtcs.org.uk.

Registrants will be notified directly by GTCS at the beginning of the year that their Professional Update sign off is required. Registrants can also see on the homepage within in their MyGTCS account when their Professional Update year is.

Information about the deferral process can be found in Section 3 (Deferral Process).

2. The Role of Line Managers

Line managers should be familiar with the requirements of registered lecturers, as set out in Section 1 (Professional Update Requirements).

It is the responsibility of every individual GTCS registered lecturer to engage in reflective professional learning to meet the requirements of Professional Update. Professional learning is what lecturers engage in to stimulate their thinking and professional knowledge and to ensure that their practice is critically informed and up-to-date.

Line managers play a supportive as well as a challenging role, encouraging their individual staff and teams to reflect on practice with a focus on continuous improvement and assisting in the identification of professional learning activities and opportunities which will contribute to this.

GTCS registered lecturers must engage in Professional Update and maintain registration with GTCS. Lecturers should also notify their line manager when it is their sign off year.

GTCS require line managers to confirm the ongoing engagement in professional learning on an annual basis through the College development review process and every 5 years by 'signing off' Professional Update with GTCS at the lecturer's identified sign-off year. Completing the sign off process enables the lecturer to have their GTCS registration confirmed for a further five years.

The line manager signing off professional learning through the Professional Update process is referred to as the Reviewer. A Reviewer must set up a MyGTCS account, so they can link their account to their GTCS registered staff. This is required to allow the lecturer to share their record on an ongoing basis with the Reviewer and also to enable the 5 year sign-off process. Reviewers are not required to be GTCS registered to participate in this process and a non-registered Reviewer can have a MyGTCS account set up by emailing professional.update@gtcs.org.uk requesting this. If a Reviewer is already a GTCS member then they should email professional.update@gtcs.org.uk requesting Reviewer status.

When a GTCS registered lecturer has completed Professional Update, they must submit their Reflective Professional Learning Record to their Reviewer. This is done via linked MyGTCS accounts.

The GTCS registered lecturer requests a Reviewer by clicking “request association” and entering the reviewer’s email address in their MyGTCS account. This only has to be set up once and would require change only if the Reviewer changed. The Reflective Professional Learning Record should then be discussed as part of the process and should take into account evidence of impact.

The Reviewer (line manager) is required to confirm the lecturer’s engagement with the requirements of Professional Update and Professional Standards.

3. Deferral Process

It is recognised that there are a number of exceptional circumstances which may make completion of the Professional Update process within the designated timescale difficult. These include, but may not be limited to, career breaks, extended illness and maternity/ paternity/adoption leave. In such circumstances, an extension to the 5 yearly sign off period may be requested.

Deferral would be subject to approval by the registrant’s immediate line manager, or the Vice Principal. A request for deferral can be made at any point in the year but should be made as far in advance as possible. Deferrals would normally be granted for a period of one year with the expectation that Professional Update sign off would be completed the following academic session. Where a registrant knows in advance that the deferral period is likely to be greater than one year, this should be discussed with their line manager.

Where there is disagreement in relation to a decision regarding a deferral which cannot be resolved between the lecturer and their immediate line manager, the matter should be referred to the Head of HR and People Development.

The decision to grant a deferral sits with the employer, in this case West Lothian College. Where a deferral has been approved by a line manager, GTCS should be informed by way of the MyGTCS account. The GTCS Professional Update guidelines at <http://gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-update-what-do-i-need-to-know-do.aspx> give information about deferrals.

4. Bringing forward Professional Update

GTCS also permits a registrant to bring forward their Professional Update and complete this prior to the scheduled deadline. Guidelines to do so are available on the GTCS website: <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/college/professional-update-for-college-lecturers>

5. Appeals Process

Professional Update focuses on the registrant’s commitment to career long professional learning and the impact of this rather than determining whether or not a registrant is, or has remained, competent in relation to the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland’s Colleges.

Where there are competency issues in relation to a lecturer's performance, this is a separate matter and would be addressed through College policy, advice on which can be sought through Human Resources.

Where there is dispute or disagreement about any aspect of the Professional Update process which cannot be resolved between the registrant and their immediate line manager, the matter should be referred to the Vice Principal.

6. Action by West Lothian College

West Lothian College expects that GTC registered staff will engage fully in professional review and development and Professional Update, making use of the support and tools available via GTCS.

- West Lothian College will provide support and guidance where appropriate to support meeting these Professional Standards
- West Lothian College will encourage and support registrants to attend and engage in learning and development activities as and when appropriate.
- GTCS registered staff will be reminded annually to check that their contact details with GTCS are up to date and to amend these as appropriate.

Appendix B – Teaching Qualification Routes

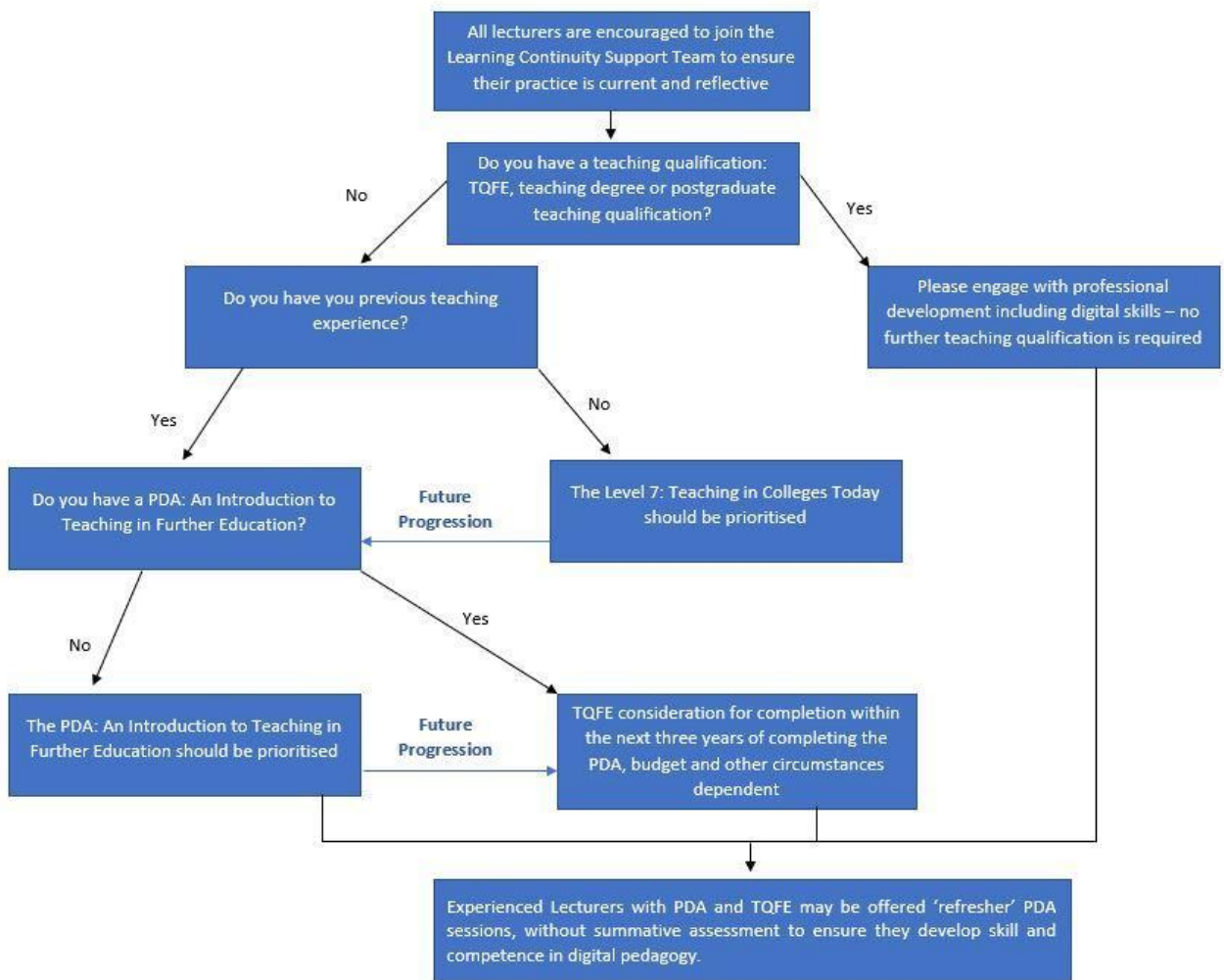
Teaching Qualification Routes

The following process outlines the teaching qualification routes and the decision-making process for new and existing lecturing staff.

When referring to PDA this qualification is entitled 'Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges'.

Process for Existing or New Lecturing Staff

1. New Lecturers, with no teaching experience or teaching qualification, will be required to undertake the Teaching in Scotland's Colleges Award as soon as possible after their start date. This will be supported within the Faculty and supervised by the appropriate Learning and Skills Manager.
2. New Lecturers, with teaching experience, but without either the PDA or TQFE will be offered the PDA in the first instance, at the earliest possible opportunity, to ensure digital pedagogical skill development is the highest priority.
3. Where a lecturer already has a teaching degree or postgraduate teaching qualification, they wouldn't necessarily be a priority for TQFE. However, they may be presented for TQFE due to other considerations, or if finances allow.
4. Lecturers will discuss their career long professional learning needs with their line manager and use the annual personal learning plan process to document their planned and agreed journey towards GTCS registration.
5. Those without PDA are prioritised for PDA first. The PDA has been adapted to include digital pedagogy and this is the college's core priority in the 'emergency years'. This is especially important for lecturers early in their teaching career.
6. For TQFE decision making, Faculty Directors will collectively establish priority need and agree this over a three year plan to ensure lecturers who are not a current priority are clear that they will undertake this in future years - budget permitting. This will ensure a balance across all Faculties and will be reviewed annually.
7. Experienced Lecturers with (or without) PDA and TQFE may be offered 'refresher' PDA sessions, without summative assessment to ensure they develop skill and competence in digital pedagogy. This will be identified as part of ongoing personal development conversations and through the Personal Learning Plan annual reviews.
8. All lecturers will join the Learning Continuity Support Team to ensure their practice is current and reflective.



Equality Impact Assessment

EIA covers **strategies, policies, procedures, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services**, but will be referred to hereinafter as 'policy/practice'.

Policy/Practice (name or brief description):	Career Long Professional Learning and Development Policy
Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (choose from the following options):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed new Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice • Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice • Other (please give detail): 	
Person responsible for the policy area or practice:	
Name: Job title:	Derek O'Sullivan Head of HR and People Development
An Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if the policy/practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affects operational or strategic functions of the College • is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance) 	

Why the EIA is being carried out	Affects operational functions of the College.
Equality Groups Relevant to the Policy/Practice, identify which of the undernoted equality groups are impacted upon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> race (including ethnicity and nationality) <input type="checkbox"/> religion or belief <input type="checkbox"/> sex <input type="checkbox"/> sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> pregnancy and maternity marriage <input type="checkbox"/> or civil partnership	No impact

Record your assessment against the following statements:

Statement	Equality assessment
Detail the evidence of the needs of the identified equality groups and any gaps in information	For staff with disabilities, PDApp identifies individual needs from the point of view of supporting that individual to attend/participate in the development activity.
Will application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups?	Not applicable
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	Not applicable

State how this policy/practice will foster good relations:	The policy promotes opportunities to all staff regardless of any circumstances.
Will the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?	None – the PD application identifies individual needs from the point of supporting that individual to attend/participate in the development activity.
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	N/A
Which equality groups or communities have been consulted in the development and review of this policy/practice?	N/A

<p>Equality Impact Assessment Outcome</p> <p>Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision. (Delete the options that do not apply):</p>	
<p>Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.</p> <p>Option 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.</p> <p>Option 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated</p> <p>Option 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated against.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>Monitoring</p>	
<p>When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
<p>Publication of EIA</p>	
<p>Can this EIA be published in full, now? Please state Yes or No</p> <p>If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:</p>	<p>Yes</p>