



**Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Disability)  
Honours Degree**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR  
2007/2008**

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report documents the Quality Assurance (QA) Evaluation processes undertaken by the Open Training College for the BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies (Disability) during the academic period 2007-2008. Student retention figures and overall assessment results are provided for the year group.

Details of the QA Evaluation processes are presented alongside reports from the external examination procedure for the academic period. Both of which highlight the strengths of the programme as well as providing suggestions for improvements.

Outcomes of the evaluation procedures for each component module of the programme are presented, with the feedback for each relevant Skills Workshop presented first. Following the success of the first end of year student survey conducted online in 2007 this process was repeated in 2008. The results of this survey are presented in a separate report as they relate to aspects of the College as a whole and to all courses. Major findings of the survey relating to the BA (Hons) programme are summarised for the reader in this report.

The report concludes with a review of the recommendations from the 2006-07 report and a follow up on their implementation. Finally, recommendations from this evaluation period are then presented.

Though negative feedback was not prevalent, suggested areas for improvement are noted along with suggestions from the external examiners. These suggestions, with which the programme team are in concurrence, form the basis for the actions, which will be taken for the programme in the forthcoming 2008-09 academic period.

The procedures outlined and findings presented in this report illustrate the implementation of the holistic and participatory nature of the College's evidence-based Quality Assurance system while also highlighting the importance placed on Continuous Quality Improvement.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

The Open Training College's Quality Assurance (QA) Policies and Procedures were agreed with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in 2003. This report documents the findings arising from the evaluation procedures as agreed with HETAC and data gathered by the College during the academic year 2007-2008.

QA evaluation methodologies of the OTC place emphasis on participation of all stakeholders and seek feedback from both staff and students on all aspects of the programme and College services in this regard. A full explanation of the OTC Quality Assurance procedures is given in section four of this report.

This report begins with an overview of the BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies (Disability) programme (section three) and an explanation of the OTC Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures (section four). The findings from the External Examiners reports are then presented (section four). Assessment results are documented in a pie chart, in section five, which illustrates the number of students who attained first and second class honours and pass grades in their assignments/exams. Table one in section five illustrates the number of students who began and completed the programme, the numbers of those who deferred and also those who withdrew from the course.

Details of and evaluation procedure findings for each component module are then presented in section six. An overview is provided for each module and the QA findings are presented per individual module.

Section seven of the report provides a discussion of the evaluation procedure results for 2007-2008. Themes and key findings are identified and discussed. The key outcomes of the 2006-2007 QA report are revisited in section eight, with a detailed report of how these were implemented and the results of actions taken. Finally, section nine outlines the key findings from this report and recommendations for the BDD (Hons) programme for the academic year 2008-2009.

### **3. OVERVIEW OF THE BA (HONS) IN APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES (DISABILITY)**

The Open training College's Honours Bachelor of Arts Programme is a one-year HETAC-accredited course at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It is a five-module add-on programme for eligible applicants with appropriate level 7 qualifications. This course has been designed and developed to encourage learners to become leaders and visionaries in providing services for people with disabilities. Graduates will have the knowledge, skills and competencies to shape the future development of high quality, rights-driven services for people with disabilities.

#### **COURSE DESIGN**

The course has a number of key features in its design:

##### **1. Open learning**

This degree is an open-learning programme. This ensures the course is more accessible than traditional college-based courses by:

- Being available to staff geographically distant from the college;
- Causing minimal disruption to the service through limited out-of-agency time;
- Allowing some flexibility regarding the time, place and pace of learning;
- Facilitating interruptions to the programme (due to personal/professional life circumstances) through the modular structure of the course.

##### **2. Modular structure**

The programme consists of a series of 5 interrelated but separate modules, each module being assessed independently. This modular structure allows for the disruptions that may arise due to changes in personal circumstances. The credits for the completed elements of the course are retained and may be built on at a later stage. In developing the modules for the course programme, the College employed a wide variety of unit and/or module authors each with extensive knowledge and expertise in their respective areas. Details of each module are given in the relevant parts of section six. Figure 1, below, outlines the modular structure of the BDD (Hons) programme.

**Figure 1: BA (Hons) Modules**

#### **BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies (Disability)**

1. Introduction to Qualitative Research
2. Essential Social care Management Skills
3. Disability and Social Policy in Ireland
4. Disability in the context of social Equality and Inclusion
5. Essential Social Care Leadership Skills

### **3. Support systems**

Many of the course participants may be returning to study and formal learning after a significant time lapse. To assist their successful participation on the course, the College facilitates a range of supports. These include:

- A named tutor who provides individual telephone tutorials on a fortnightly basis, and gives written feedback on assignments. A tutor may also lead group tutorials when participants gather to attend workshops. Students can email their tutors at any time and are guaranteed a response within 48 hours.
- A work-based supervisor who should have a good understanding of relevant organisational policies and procedures and will offer practical support, especially in relation to work-based assignments and the practicalities of implementing aspects of the course into daily work.
- Regional study groups who will meet regularly at a time and place that suits the group.
- An e-learning Moodle support framework is also in place via the College website. Each student is given a password and username so as to be able to access:
  - Additional learning resources via Internet links to relevant websites.
  - Learning materials relating to study skills.
  - The Open Training College Student Handbook.
  - Discussion forums on which they can post discussion points and respond to other student's points.
  - Their own electronic learning journal.
  - Additional information relating to the module assessments.
- The College also provides 'Hotline' support that allows the student immediate telephone access to a tutor should unexpected problems arise.

### **4. Course features**

There are three key features in the presentation of the course:

#### **i. Open learning materials**

The open learning materials have been designed to cover the main course content. The material is interactive, requiring the student to respond in various ways. The material is highly structured and designed to highlight the main points being discussed. Additional readings from texts and journal articles are essential, to augment the open learning materials. These readings are drawn from varied sources and provide essential background information, and are supplied at the back of each module. Additional links to relevant web-based articles are made available to students through the Moodle site.

#### **ii. Skills development workshops**

The course design incorporates a number of skills development workshops each year, usually in blocks of two or three days each. These workshops add a strong skills element to the course and, where practicable, will be led, by the module author. The workshops are an excellent opportunity for participants to learn from each other's experience, and to develop the social side of the course. The workshops also

BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies (Disability) QA Report 2007/08 provide an opportunity for face-to-face individual meetings with the course tutor, along with group tutorials. Workshops are considered an essential component of course learning and attendance is compulsory unless the College has granted exemption from the workshop for a specific reason.

iii. Practical assignments

The assignments are an intrinsic element in the learning process. Assignments are not merely a means of assessing student's work, but an opportunity for them to put learning into practice and reflect on that experience.

**5. Partnership with employing agency**

All participants on the course secure a commitment of support from their employing agency. The employer provides practical support in relation to:

- Course fees. The employing agency often pays a percentage of the course fees.
- Work-based mentor. An agreed mentor, usually a senior manager, provides practical support on work-related aspects of the course.
- Attendance at workshops. The agency grants study leave to cover the student's attendance at skills workshops.
- Work-based assignments. Participants may undertake work-related assignments as part of their normal work, by agreement with their line manager.

In turn, the Open Training College provides the open learning materials, the course tutor, the practical skills workshops and the assessment and certification. The course participant invests time - studying, preparing assignments, and attends the workshops.

This partnership is illustrated in **Figure 2**, the Partnership Approach and Partnership Agreement on the next page.

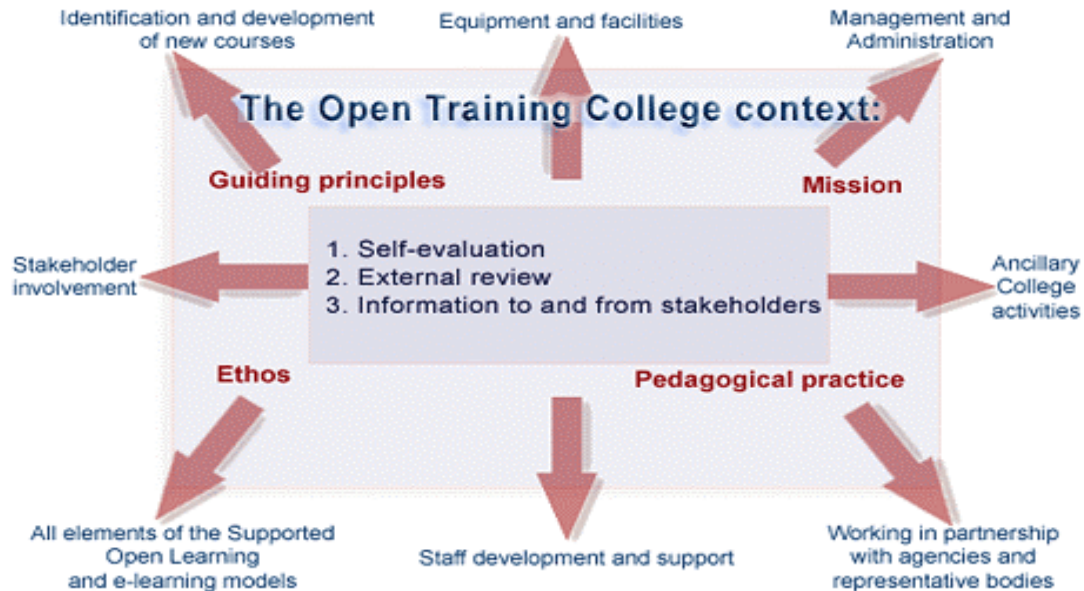
Figure 2



## 4. OTC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Open Training College's Quality Assurance (QA) Policies and Procedures were authorised by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in 2003.

**Figure 3: The Open Training College Quality Assurance Model**



### PROGRAMME BOARDS

Findings arising from the analysis of evaluation procedures are presented to the College Programme Boards. Recommendations for actions arising from the findings of the evaluation procedures are identified and discussed at the Programme Board meetings. Each Programme Board provides a mechanism within the Open Training College for the review of the data generated by the evaluation procedures.

The Programme Board(s) are responsible for the ratification of decisions in relation to quality improvement. The proceedings of Programme Board meetings are recorded and the minutes are circulated to Board Members and are available to other stakeholders on request.

Ratified decisions are presented to the Academic Council. Where a Board is unable to reach a decision, that matter is referred to the Academic Council. The decision of the Council is final.

The composition of each Board varies slightly but in general comprises of the following people:

- The Course Director (chairperson)
- Course Tutors (numbers vary)
- Student and/or graduate representative(s) two people
- Agency representative – one person
- A member of the College administration team – one person
- Representative of an organisation for people with disability – one person

The Open Training College currently has two Programme Boards for the following HETAC accredited programmes:

1. Bachelor of Arts (Hons&Ord) in Applied Social Studies (Disability)
2. Certificate in Applied Management

Each Board meets twice during the academic year.

**Programme Board Meetings for the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Disability) Ord & Hons Degree 2007/2008:**

19<sup>th</sup> September 2007

5<sup>th</sup> June 2008

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

Academic Council members are academics from other third level bodies and/or people with disability who have knowledge and experience of third level education and service provision.

Academic Council ratifies student's results as presented to them by the Examination Board on HETAC broadsheets. Following ratification, the broadsheets are then sent to HETAC for conclusion of the process.

Academic Council also make final decisions in relation to student appeals.

Ratified decisions relating to QA monitoring are also presented to the Academic Council. Where a Programme Board is unable to reach a decision, that matter is referred to the Academic Council. The decision of the Council is final.

**Academic Council Meetings for the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Disability) Ordinary & Honours Degree 2007/2008:**

21<sup>st</sup> May 2008: Postponed due to unavailability of external board members.

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008

**Academic Council Board Members:**

Ms Karen Finnerty (College Director & Acting Chairperson)

Dr Francesca Lundstrom (Vice chairperson)

Dr John Roache

Dr Shay Caffrey (resigned September 2008)

Aine Melinn

Conor Murray

Raymond Watson

Ray Lynch

**QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORTS**

As indicated in the Open Training College Policies and Procedures (2003), the College is committed to the publication of the outcomes of the Quality Assurance monitoring procedures and further results of findings will be published as they become available.

### EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS 2007-2008

External Examiner Reports are completed by the external examiners to the College, on completion of their visit to evaluate and provide feedback on the following categories:

1. Preparation for their visit
2. Assignments
3. Examinations
4. Meeting with candidates
5. Examination Board Meeting
6. Comparative Standards
7. External Examiners Visit
8. Aspects worthy of commendation
9. Suggestions for improvements in the External Examination process
10. Final Comments

<b>Feedback from the External Examination process 2007/2008</b>
<p><b>Section 1: Preparation for External Examination:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examiners received:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An External Examiners 'brief' describing the roles and duties of an Open Training College External Examiner;</li> <li>• Appropriate and sufficient documentation relating to the course;</li> <li>• Details of their accommodation and the schedule for their visit.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 2: Assignments:</b></p> <p><i>Across all the assignments the feedback was very clear, pertinent and informative. Guidance was given on how to improve with positive statements that were encouraging.</i></p> <p><i>The marking schemes used were very helpful. In the year 3 research module students could be encouraged to 'add in' a section to the questionnaire that they devise themselves. A table with more numerical data for students to comment on the trends and differences between groups (gender/age/SES) might help insight into data analysis. Also it would help if students could focus more on discussing the findings rather than the topic (obesity) in general. In the honours year students should be encouraged more to discuss methodological issues such as generalisability, reliability, validity and so forth. Students might also be encouraged to base their projects on topics related to modules undertaken previously e.g. Systematic Instruction.</i></p> <p><i>Standard of feedback and tutor remarks detailed, clear, precise and helpful to the students. The marking schema very helpful in correlating marks with content.</i></p> <p><i>It is my impression that the marking system is more precise and 'user friendly' than hitherto.</i></p>
<p><b>Section 3: Examinations:</b></p> <p><i>Changes were made to incorporate exams earlier into the course which was a positive alteration to the course. Students with particular needs were accommodated in the exams in a fair and respectful manner.</i></p>
<p><b>Section 4: Meeting with candidates:</b></p> <p>N/A</p>

**Section 5: Examination Board Meeting**

*This was well chaired and very fair in the consideration of all results presented. Whenever relevant the extenuating circumstances of particular students was raised reflecting the strong connection of year coordinators with their student groups.*

*Good level of discussion and evidence of college staff having an in-depth knowledge regarding student performance. Examination Board meeting open and transparent and administered efficiently.*

**Section 6: Comparative Standards**

*My comments here are similar to those I made in previous reports. In general, the standard of OTC students is higher in terms of the application of theory to practice and reflective work. However, in the third and honours years the writing style of the students could have reflected greater objectivity and critical discussion of theory and concepts.*

*The course is of similar standard and compares well with other applied social care courses. However, the college must continue to ensure that students demonstrate a good theoretical knowledge of their subject area along with the ability to critique different points of view, particularly at honours level. The application of knowledge to the practical arena continues to impress.*

• **Relevance/applicability of the course for the sector:**

*Extremely relevant- the open flexible mode of learning is to be commended. The modules are very pertinent and address developments and training needs in the sector.*

*This course is highly relevant to the sector. The application to practice and reflective learning evident is most impressive.*

**Section 7: Your Visit**

*The Open Training College are to be commended on the progress they have made on comments made during last years visit. In addition, a number of procedural changes have taken place, which clearly enhance the course provision for the students.*

**Section 8: Aspects worthy of commendation:**

*The modules, in terms of structure and content are very well designed and delivered. Staff support for students and teamwork within the OTC. The way the OTC is using communication technology, such as text messaging and moodle to enhance and support student learning and peer discussion.*

*Marking schema*

*Exam and assignment feedback from tutors*

*Reflective practice*

*Applied nature of course*

**Section 9: Suggestions for improvements in the External Examination process:**

*None*

**Section 10: Final Comments**

*I would like to thank all at the OTC for having me as an external examiner over the past 3 years and for facilitating my work in such a professional, hospitable and friendly manner. I appreciated the responses to suggestions made and want to wish everyone there all the best.*

*Consider further support for student on citing and referencing. A clear and consistent method of referencing should be encouraged throughout all subject areas and at all stages of the degree course.*

*Consideration might be given to structured assignments or the adoption of case study/problem solving style assignments particularly during the earlier parts of the course. This may encourage and enhance an improved writing style and more explicit expression of original ideas on the part of the students.*

*Encourage students to 'cross-reference' knowledge and ideas between modules.*

*Consider the use of audio recording student discussion and workshop presentations for later access via computer,*

*I would like to thank the Director and course team for their efficient administration and warm hospitality.*

## 5. STUDENT RETENTION AND ASSESSMENT RESULTS 2007-2008

**Table 1: Student retention for 2007/2008**

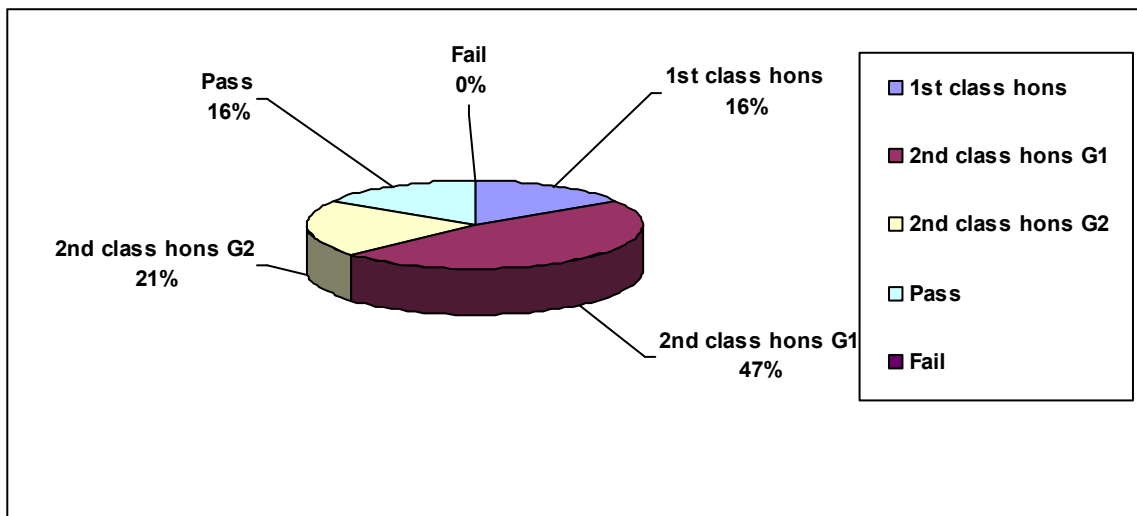
Year group	Total students (Start of year)	Deferred	Left
BDD H3	24	5	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 2 and Figure 3** below illustrate the number of students who achieved pass, merit and distinction grades in their assessment results for the year.

**Table 2: Student assessment results 2007-2008**

	First Class Honours	Second Class Honours Grade 1	Second Class Honours Grade 2	Pass	Deferred
BDDH3	3	9	4	3	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

**Figure 4: Student assessment results 2006-2007**



## **6. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION PROCEDURES 2007-2008**

### **Workshop Evaluation Feedback Forms**

On completion of the workshop, students complete a Skills Workshop evaluation form. Results from these are collated and formatted onto a 'Skills Workshop feedback form' which is then circulated to relevant tutors and visiting speakers.

### **End of the Year Evaluation**

In May 2008 the OTC commissioned Channel Content Ltd to undertake an online survey to gather student's opinions about their studies with the OTC during 2006-2007. Students were invited to provide opinion and feedback on the following categories:

- Course materials
- Tutorial supports
- Assessments and feedback
- Using Moodle
- The OTC administration
- How studying with the OTC has impacted on their personal and professional development.

As the findings of this survey represent feedback relating to all courses and College services they have been presented in a separate report. Key findings of this survey, which relate specifically to the BA (Hons) programme are summarised for discussion in this report.

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Research**

The aim of this module is to introduce the student to the language and concepts of qualitative research and to develop the students' ability to read research critically and have the skills necessary to evaluate published research articles. It will also provide the student with some practical experience of using a qualitative approach in relation to the research process. The difference between qualitative and quantitative research are identified and discussed as is the various stages in the research process and key concepts in qualitative research.

**Module Assessment Grades: Introduction to Qualitative research**

PBC	Pass	Merit Grade 2	Merit Grade 1	Distinction	Exempt	Deferred
35-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-100%		
1	4	4	7	3	0	5

**Skills Workshops**

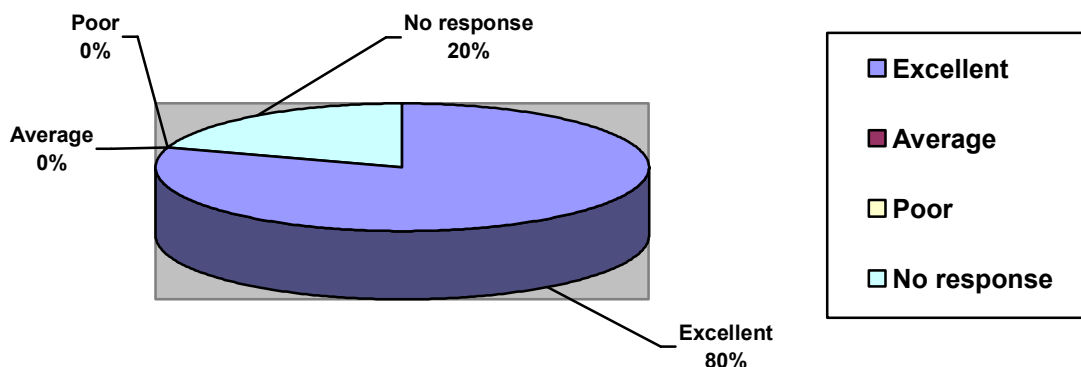
The **Introduction to Qualitative Research** workshop was held in the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin.

Dates of Workshop:  
24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> September 2007

**Workshop Evaluation Feedback**

Number of evaluation forms returned: 23  
(Total number in year group: 24)

**Overall Workshop Ratings: Introduction to Qualitative Research**



**Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshops in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<i><b>Definitely</b></i>	<i><b>Somewhat</b></i>	<i><b>Not really</b></i>	<i><b>No response</b></i>
<b>Knowledge</b>	87%	4%	4%	5%
<b>Skills</b>	83%	4%	4%	9%
<b>Attitudes</b>	83%	4%	4%	9%

**Achievement of stated objectives of Workshops:**

	<i><b>Definitely</b></i>	<i><b>Somewhat</b></i>	<i><b>Not really</b></i>	<i><b>No response</b></i>
<b>Knowledge</b>	91%	4%	0%	5%
<b>Skills</b>	83%	9%	0%	8%
<b>Attitudes</b>	87%	4%	0%	9%

**Workshop strengths – Selected comments:**

- ✓ Clear structure/Well explained in detail
- ✓ Presenters: motivated/organised/focused
- ✓ Systematic/step by step approach
- ✓ Discussion/Interactive

**Workshop weaknesses – Selected comments:**

- A lot of information to take in
- Large group – sometimes getting bogged down in one area

**Ratings of Workshop methodologies:**

	<i><b>Excellent</b></i>	<i><b>Average</b></i>	<i><b>Poor</b></i>	<i><b>No response</b></i>
<b>Overheads</b>	83%	0%	0%	17%
<b>Role plays</b>	70%	17%	0%	13%
<b>Group work</b>	61%	22%	0%	17%
<b>Handouts</b>	57%	13%	0%	30%

**Module 2: Essential Social Care Management Skills**

This particular module aims to provide students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to effectively perform those aspects of their role relating to the management and delivery of a quality driven user-centred service with a specific emphasis on skills for effective self and people management. Issues that are crucial to effective social care and the way that all social care settings are managed are identified and discussed in this module, such as the role of a manager in the context of a service for people with disabilities and standards of care, with a strong emphasis on adhering to national standards.

**Module Assessment Grades: Essential Social Care Management Skills**

PBC	Pass	Merit Grade 2	Merit Grade 1	Distinction	Exempt	Fail
35-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-100%		
0	7	5	7	3	2	0

**Skills Workshops**

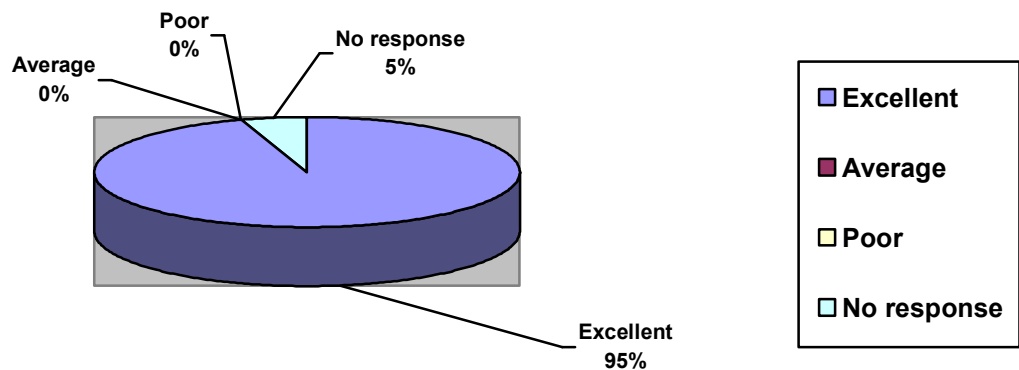
The **Essential Social Care Management Skills** workshop was held in the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin.

Dates of Workshop:  
15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007

**Workshop Evaluation Feedback**

Number of evaluation forms returned: 20  
(Total number in year group: 24)

**Overall Workshop Ratings: Essential Social Care Management Skills**



**Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshops in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	95%	5%	0%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	95%	0%	5%	0%
<b>Attitudes</b>	90%	0%	5%	5%

**Achievement of stated objectives of Workshops:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Attitudes</b>	95%	0%	0%	5%

**Workshop strengths – Selected comments:**

*Represented as themes e.g. similar suggestions made by at least 5 or more students.*

- ✓ *Interactive Group Work*

**Workshop weaknesses – Selected comments:**

- *None*

**Ratings of Workshop methodologies:**

	<b><i>Excellent</i></b>	<b><i>Average</i></b>	<b><i>Poor</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Overheads</b>	80%	20%	0%	0%
<b>Role plays</b>	40%	15%	0%	45%
<b>Group work</b>	90%	5%	0%	5%
<b>Handouts</b>	70%	15%	0%	15%

**Module 3: Disability and Social Policy in Ireland**

Many social care professionals find themselves operating within frameworks that are being called into question and which are changing rapidly and constantly. Through this module, students will learn to recognise the national, European and international origins of the many changes that have occurred in some key areas of disability policy in Ireland. The module aims to provide students with an understanding of how the creation and implementation of social policy was informed by the concepts of rights, partnership, integration and inclusion.

**Module Assessment Grades: Disability and Social Policy in Ireland**

PBC	Pass	Merit Grade 2	Merit Grade 1	Distinction	Exempt	Deferred
35-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-100%		
0	2	5	10	3	2	2

**Skills Workshops**

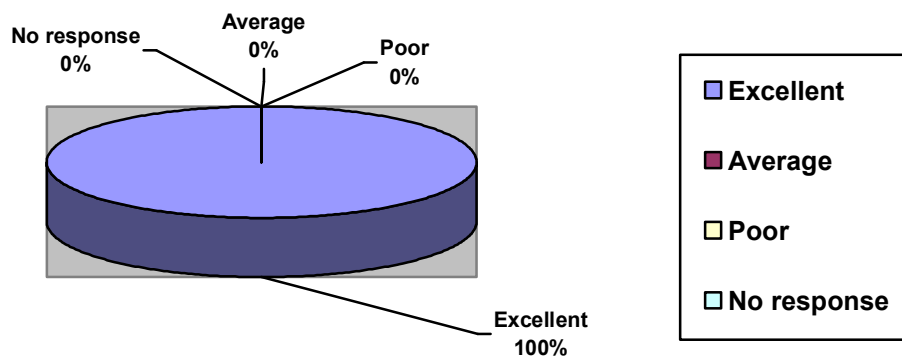
The **Disability and Social Policy in Ireland** workshop was held in the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin.

Dates of Workshop:  
26<sup>th</sup> 7 27<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**Workshop Evaluation Feedback**

Number of evaluation forms returned: 15  
(Total number in year group: 24)

**Overall Workshop Ratings: Disability and Social Policy in Ireland**



**Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshops in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	93%	0%	7%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	86%	7%	7%	0%
<b>Attitudes</b>	86%	7%	7%	0%

**Achievement of stated objectives of Workshops:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	93%	7%	0%	0%
<b>Attitudes</b>	93%	7%	0%	0%

**Workshop strengths – Selected comments:**

*Represented as themes e.g. similar suggestions made by at least 5 or more students.*

- ✓ *Presenter (Dr. Conroy) informative & interesting*

**Workshop weaknesses – Selected comments:**

- *None*

**Ratings of Workshop methodologies:**

	<b><i>Excellent</i></b>	<b><i>Average</i></b>	<b><i>Poor</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Overheads</b>	40%	27%	0%	33%
<b>Role plays</b>	13%	0%	0%	87%
<b>Group work</b>	33%	0%	0%	67%
<b>Handouts</b>	47%	7%	0%	46%



<b>Module 4: Disability in the context of Social Equality and Inclusion</b>
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This particular module aims to provide the student with an understanding of the historical and sociological factors that influence equality, inequality and diversity. While the content of the module is draws on general thinking, theory and policy in relation to inclusion and equality, the intent is to facilitate the learner in applying their learning to the social reality for people with disability

**Module Assessment Grades:****Disability in the context of Social Equality and Inclusion**

PBC	Pass	Merit Grade 2	Merit Grade 1	Distinction	Exempt	Deferred
35-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-100%		
0	3	6	8	3	2	2

**Skills Workshops**

The **Disability in the context of Social Equality and Inclusion** workshop was held in the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin.

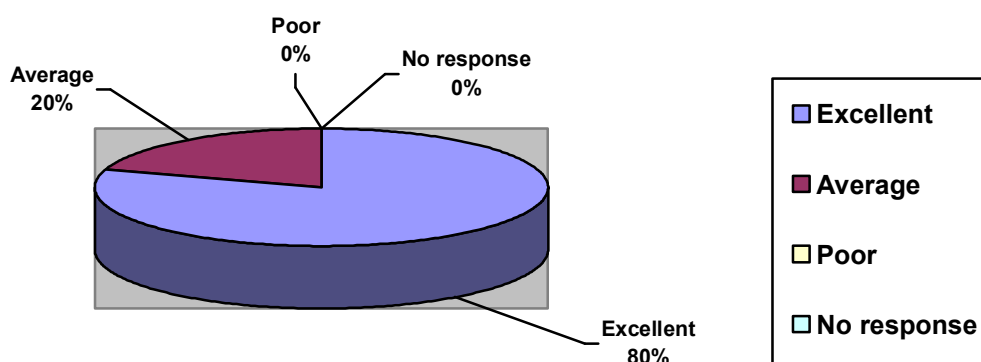
Dates of Workshop:

22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008

**Workshop Evaluation Feedback**

Number of evaluation forms returned: 16

(Total number in year group: 24)

**Overall Workshop Ratings:****Disability in the context of Social Equality and Inclusion**

**Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshops in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	75%	13%	6%	6%
<b>Skills</b>	56%	19%	6%	19%
<b>Attitudes</b>	56%	19%	0%	25%

**Achievement of stated objectives of Workshops:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	87%	13%	0%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	63%	25%	0%	12%
<b>Attitudes</b>	69%	12%	0%	19%

**Workshop strengths – Selected comments:**

*Represented as themes e.g. similar suggestions made by at least 5 or more students.*

- ✓ *The two presenters*

**Workshop weaknesses – Selected comments:**

- *Lengthy/heavy on content & theory*

**Ratings of Workshop methodologies:**

	<b><i>Excellent</i></b>	<b><i>Average</i></b>	<b><i>Poor</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Overheads</b>	56%	31%	0%	13%
<b>Role plays</b>	31%	0%	6%	63%
<b>Group work</b>	69%	19%	0%	12%
<b>Handouts</b>	31%	25%	0%	44%

### Module 5: Essential Social Care Leadership Skills

This module aims to provide students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to become effective leaders within social care settings, regardless of whether or not they hold formal managerial positions. This module makes the distinction that there is a difference between being a leader and being a manager. The need for strong leadership, particularly in social care settings is of increasing importance as many organisations struggle to stay abreast of challenges presented by an ever-changing environment.

#### Module Assessment Grades: Essential Social Care Leadership Skills

PBC	Pass	Merit Grade 2	Merit Grade 1	Distinction	Exempt	Deferred
35-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-100%		
0	3	2	11	3	1	4

#### Skills Workshops

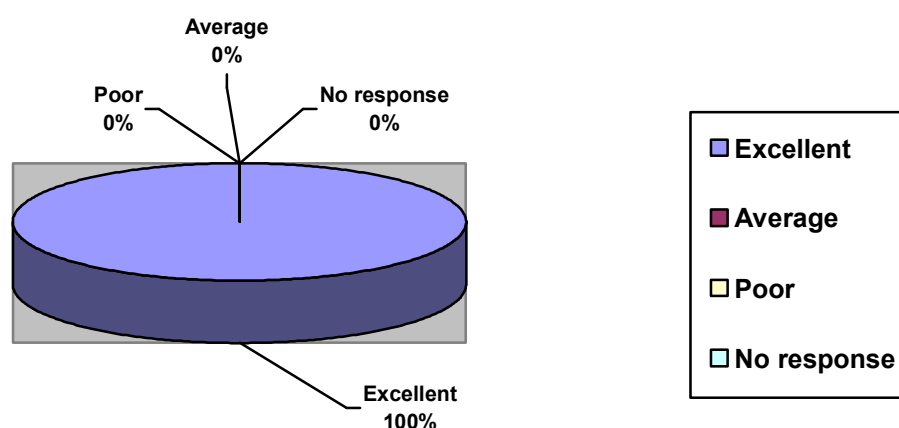
The **Essential Social Care Leadership Skills** workshop was held in the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin.

Dates of Workshop:  
25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008

#### Workshop Evaluation Feedback

Number of evaluation forms returned: 18  
(Total number in year group: 24)

#### Overall Workshop Ratings: Essential Social Care Leadership Skills



**Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshops in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	89%	6%	5%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	89%	0%	6%	5%
<b>Attitudes</b>	89%	0%	5%	6%

**Achievement of stated objectives of Workshops:**

	<b><i>Definitely</i></b>	<b><i>Somewhat</i></b>	<b><i>Not really</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	89%	11%	0%	0%
<b>Skills</b>	89%	5%	0%	6%
<b>Attitudes</b>	94%	0%	0%	6%

**Workshop strengths – Selected comments:**

*Represented as themes e.g. similar suggestions made by at least 5 or more students.*

- ✓ *Group discussions*
- ✓ *Presenter's delivery/Informative content*

**Workshop weaknesses – Selected comments:**

- *None*

**Ratings of Workshop methodologies:**

	<b><i>Excellent</i></b>	<b><i>Average</i></b>	<b><i>Poor</i></b>	<b><i>No response</i></b>
<b>Overheads</b>	72%	6%	0%	22%
<b>Role plays</b>	28%	5%	0%	67%
<b>Group work</b>	89%	5%	0%	6%
<b>Handouts</b>	33%	17%	0%	50%

## 7. KEY FINDINGS OF EVALUATION PROCEDURES 2006-2007

### Workshop Evaluation Forms- Key Findings

Generally the workshop evaluation procedures indicated a very high (average of 91%) level of satisfaction with the workshops among the students. The workshop presenters and facilitators were highlighted as a particular strength of the workshops. The workshops content was also rated highly by students, with the workshops often being described as 'interesting and informative'. Groupwork and interaction within the workshops continue to be favoured by students and were often identified as particular strengths.

Students rarely identified weaknesses within the workshops. When comments were put forward regarding perceived weaknesses these suggested that the amount of information provided through the workshop was excessive. The College often receives feedback of this nature. While it is recognised that the workshops do present a lot of information to students in a short space of time, this is considered unavoidable due to the model of delivery employed by the College. It is also felt that administering the workshop evaluation forms at the end of a two day workshop may yield distorted results as this is the time when students are most likely to feel tired and overwhelmed by information.

### End of Year [on-line] Evaluation- Key Findings

The end of year student survey, administered on-line in conjunction with Channel Content invited students to give their feedback on the following aspects of studying with the Open Training College:

- Course materials
- Workshops
- Tutorial Supports
- Assessment and Feedback
- Using MyOTC
- Administration
- Personal and professional development.

All 24 of the Honours students in 2007/08 were invited to take part in the survey and 13 completed, representing a 54% response rate. Notable findings related to each area of the survey are as follows:

#### Course materials

Feedback on the learning materials for the Honours degree programme was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of respondents indicating that they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the materials and that they found them *easy to use* and *up to date*. The additional readings are noted as a particular strength with 92% indicating that they *assisted their learning for the module*. As relevancy of programmes to situations being faced in disability services is one of the guiding principles of the College it is encouraging to receive the feedback that most or all of the content was relevant to 77% of the Honours degree students.

#### Workshops

Workshops received very positive ratings from respondents with 92% agreeing that the workshop significantly *increased their understanding of the module content*. *Listening to guest speakers* and *meeting other people on the course* were rated as respondents' favourites aspects of the workshops. Workshop presenters received an average *excellent* rating of 68% for their *knowledgeability, approachability, preparation, organisation and provision of a learning environment*. Overall 100% of respondents were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the workshops.

#### Tutorial Supports

Results of this year's survey indicate a drop of 5% in the number of honours students who use tutorial supports for every module, a drop of 7% in the amount of

BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies (Disability) QA Report 2007/08  
students who use hotline support for every module was also observed. This may be due to the significant rise (36%) in students using e-mail to contact their tutor on either a weekly or monthly basis. 62% of respondents also indicated that e-mail is their preferred method of communication with their tutor, in comparison with 11% of last year's respondents. Specific aspects of the tutorials were rated favourable by respondents, with *help understanding the module content* and *help preparing for exams* rated highest (each 62% excellent).

#### **Assessment and Feedback**

This year's survey marked the first time that student preferences for assessment methods was surveyed. Respondents from the Honours degree programme indicated that their first preference was for applied written assignments (54%), followed by essays (31%). 15% indicated a preference for exams, with no respondents choosing assessment by group work, online quizzes or My Learning Centre. All respondents indicated that the written feedback they received following an assessment is *useful* or *very useful*, with the majority (92%) agreeing that the feedback *helped them to improve their work on subsequent assignments*.

#### **Using MyOTC**

The My Mail and My Learning Centre aspects of MyOTC were rated as *useful* and *easy to use*. However Turnitin was not received so favourably with 39% of respondents rating it *not useful* and 62% indicating it was *difficult to use*. Given that this was the first year in which students of this programme used Turnitin to submit their assignments these ratings are treated with caution and student feedback on this will be continuously monitored. It is anticipated that as students become more familiar with the process and submission of assignments in this way becomes more routinised feedback will become more positive. Student use of MyOTC significantly increased this year with 100% gaining access weekly, compared with 44% last year who indicated they *rarely* or *never* accessed the resource. The study skills and the Student Handbook resources on My Learning Centre were highlighted as underutilised aspects of the resources, with 54% and 85% (respectively) of students accessing them *rarely* or *never*.

#### **Administration**

Administrative supports within the College continue to be a major strength of the service being provided to students. All aspects of administration surveyed (Day-to-day contact; speed and quality of responses to queries; accuracy of information provided; approachability of staff; quality of written communication; telephone, text and e-mail communication and IT support) were rated very highly (average excellent rating of 49%).

#### **Personal and professional development.**

Professional and personal development continue to be the main motivating factors for students to participate on the Honours degree programme (85% and 46% respectively). The most significant contribution of the programme to respondents' development was reported as *being able to provide a better quality of service to service users* (92%). This is very encouraging news as it provides us with an assurance that those aspects of our mission statement which commit to positive impact at the level of student and service user are being met.

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2006/07 EVALUATION REPORT: FOLLOW-UP**

	<b>Key Outcomes</b>	<b>Arising From:</b>	<b>Status at end of academic year 2007/08</b>
1	Introduce marking rubric into assessment procedures	External Examiners report	Following the pilot of marking rubrics in 2007/08 staff feedback at the programme board meeting (June 08) indicated that their introduction had reduced the time required to grade assessments and provide feedback, increased consistency across assessors and made the grading process more transparent and equitable. End of year student feedback also indicated a very high level of satisfaction with feedback delivered by the rubrics in this year. Some development and fine-tuning of rubrics is still required regarding linking the learning outcomes of the module to the workshop and the assignment, this will be followed up in 2008/09.
2	Consider the uneven distribution of learning and other resources available to students in the workplace	External Examiners report	This matter has been referred to the Programmatic Review process for further investigation and full review.
3	Consider informing students of overall average and range of marks for their year group.	External Examiners report	Following discussion at programme board (June 08) it was agreed that provision of the average mark to students would be beneficial in that it would provide them with a benchmark with which to compare their own performance on the programme. The Administration support team have indicated that this information would be feasible to calculate and provide via MyOTC. This will be implemented in 2008/09. Range of marks is not considered appropriate to provide as it may lead to the identification of those students who scored highest and lowest.
4	Integrate additional readings into module content, indicate to students their applicability to assessment activities and discuss readings on Moodle.	External Examiners report	Feedback from students in the 2007/08 end of year survey indicated that 92% of students found the additional readings, provided through recommended texts assisted their learning for that module. Further work will continue into 2008/09 to provide students with links to web based reading material.
5	Facilitate time management and study skills	External Examiners report	Feedback from students in 2007/08 did not highlight time

	sessions at the start of each year.		management as an issue. The study skills module however was highlighted as an underutilised resource. Students need to be directed to use this resource to address any study skills development issues.
6	Facilitate sessions for 3 <sup>rd</sup> year and Hons students on expectations/standards/answer styles at level 8.	External Examiners report	Documented statements of standards expected of students has been referred to the programmatic review process as it relates closely to the programme outcomes. The introduction of rubrics into the assessment process is felt to have made standards and expectations of students regarding their assignments more transparent.
7	Include an account of students Moodle involvement for cases presented to the Externs as Borderline	External Examiners report	This was done for the External Examiners visit in September 2008. Access to student work online was also made available to the Externs.
8	Consider the removal of critiques of the research articles in assessment of the Honours research module (or the inclusion of these as a workshop exercise but not as a marked assignment)	External Examiners report	Following changes made to the Research module assessment (one assignment with longer word count) in 2007/08 staff are of the opinion that the assignment is now more focused on the learning outcomes of the module and that the additional word allocation allows students more flexibility in their approach to the work required.
9	Consider following up on student feedback that they would prefer to have the year four exam after submitting all their assignments for other modules rather than before it.	External Examiners report	Feedback from students in the end of year evaluation 2007/08 did not indicate dissatisfaction regarding the scheduling of assessments or exams in the Honours degree programme. No further action is required.
10	Consider making the module available to the students prior to the workshop	Workshop Evaluations	Discussion has taken place with the administration department of the College regarding provision of the module prior to the workshop. It has been agreed that the module will be made available electronically via MyOTC in 2008/09.
11	Maintain the inclusion of case studies and practical examples as positive training techniques in the workshops.	Workshop Evaluations	Feedback from students regarding workshops in 2007/08 indicated a continued high level of satisfaction with the methodologies used. This practice will continue.
12	Consider and implement strategies to encourage student engagement with e-mail as positive and constructive way to maintain contact with their tutor.	End of Year Survey	2007/08 saw a significant increase in the use of e-mail as a communication tool for Honours degree students. Students feedback in the end of year survey indicated e-mail as the preferred method of communication for the majority of respondents.

13	Consider and implement strategies to encourage student engagement with e-learning as an on-going support system and aid to their learning.	End of year Survey	Student use of MyOTC significantly increased this year with 100% gaining access weekly, compared with 44% last year who indicated they rarely or never accessed the resource.
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## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2008-2009

	<b>Key Recommendation</b>	<b>Arising from:</b>	<b>Actions for 2008/09</b>
1	Increase student engagement with the Student Handbook.	End of year survey 2007/08	The format of the Student Handbook has been revised for 2008/09 and is now in downloadable and printable PDF format. Student engagement with this new version will be monitored.
2	Encourage students to discuss methodological issues relevant to research.	External Examiners Report 2008	Methodological issues will be introduced into third year of the Ordinary degree to provide a foundation knowledge for students. More focus on issues such as generalisability, reliability and validity to be placed in the research module workshop and students to be encouraged to identify issues with research reports they read as part of completing other modules.
3	Develop students' skills of objective writing and critical analysis.	External Examiners Report 2008	This is considered an area which merits further investigation and research, and as such will be referred to the Course Directors and managers meetings for follow-up.