Academic Framework 2
Learning and Teaching

This policy and the subsidiary documents it governs are aligned to the [Quality Code for Higher Education (2018 edition)](#).

1. Principles

1.1 This chapter of the Academic Framework articulates the principles the College follows in learning and teaching. It builds on the shared wisdom of learning and teaching strategies in the British higher education sector, and emphasises what is distinctive in the approach of the College. It presents a framework which contextualises and guides the College's activity in this area, enabling delivery of the best possible learning experience for all students.

1.2 Moorlands College is registered as a charity "to maintain, advance and promote the Christian Religion by the conduct of a College or Colleges for the study and teaching of the Bible, Christian Doctrine and related subjects and by the training of Ministers of Religion, Christian teachers, missionaries and other Christian workers … in strict accordance with [its] doctrinal basis."[1] The College's higher education programmes are its chief means of fulfilling this aim, and as such they are designed to provide opportunities for holistic growth within diverse communities as the College seeks to equip students for employment in the Christian sector and for other, comparable professional roles.

1.3 The College's theological principles provide particularly strong underpinning to its commitment to certain core values of the higher education sector, including integrity, accountability, the drive for learning, and the intelligibility of the world. In addition, three notable educational commitments flow from the specific mission of the College.

- The College understands learning as a holistic process. This reflects a long tradition within Christian education, flowing from biblical perspectives on the human person as a complex whole with multiple facets and on the importance and interconnectedness of the spiritual and the material. More widely, such a holistic approach was established within the broader field of education studies by Bloom and others.[2] Learning is conceived of as a process of personal development, addressing inter-relating aspects of human personality. These dimensions of learning may be characterised in different ways, e.g., as affective, behavioural, cognitive or knowing, acting, being, or knowledge, skills and

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[1] Articles of Association 4(1).

[2] Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle: Langham, 2014), 67-77; Benjamin S. Bloom et al., eds., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*, vol. 1: Cognitive Domain, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956); Ronald Barnett and Kelly Coate, *Engaging the Curriculum in Higher Education* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005).

practice.[3] The College recognises that both the nature and the degree of importance of these dimensions vary between modules, levels, programmes and disciplines.

- The College is committed to the concept that learning is a situated[4] and active process.[5] This reflects the foundational importance within Christian thinking of context and the individual-community dialectic. In accordance with this commitment, the College fosters safe, but challenging environments of learning, so that students learn as part of supportive and diverse communities. Thus, the College encourages a high level of interaction between academic staff and students, and normally eschews solely individual distance-learning. The College ensures its communities are inclusive, recognising the diversity of its students, and providing equitable learning experiences for all students across all the College's locations and programmes.

- The College was founded to train people for professional practice. This reflects the biblical priority of mission worked out in vocation. This professional-vocational orientation results in a commitment to a pedagogical approach to higher education that typically emphasises the linking of theory and practice, the facilitation of programme placements and/or appropriate practice, reflection on personal practice or other experiences, the deployment in teaching of appropriate numbers of professional practitioners, and, where programmes provide initial formation for a vocation, the incorporation of professional ethical codes in the College's expectations of conduct.

1.4   As a result of these commitments, the College's programmes integrate discipline-specific and transferable skills, so that graduates are equipped with attributes to enable them to flourish in a changing world. Graduates should be:
- people of spiritual, personal and professional integrity who act in line with the ethical expectations of their vocation and faith commitments and beliefs
- competent professionals with in-depth subject knowledge, skills and understanding that is relevant to the complexities of the contemporary world
- innovative investigators who think critically and can identify problems, investigate possibilities, and find creative solutions
- adaptable communicators who seek to listen to, engage, and positively influence audiences in varied social and cultural contexts
- flexible co-workers who are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and have the resilience to adapt to new roles, challenging situations and changing contexts
- service-oriented community members who prioritise respectful relationships, interdependence and growth of others over individual agendas
- lifelong learners with the curiosity and passion to keep growing and developing, and encouraging others to do the same.

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[3] See Bloom et al and Barnett and Coate, respectively, and The Quality Assurance Agency, *UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Learning and Teaching, 2018, 1.*

[4] Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[5] Thomas M. Duffy and Donald J. Cunningham, "Constructivism: Implications for the Design and Delivery of Instruction," in *Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology*, ed. David H. Jonassen (New York: Macmillan, 1996).

1.5 Throughout its provision, the College encourages independent, analytical, critical and creative thinking. In line with the legal mandate of its charitable purpose, the College designs programmes principally to serve a broad evangelical constituency. However, following its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the College does not discriminate on the basis of religion: admissions decisions are based on criteria relating to the proposed studies' likely success for and benefit to the applicant irrespective of the applicant's faith commitments; assessment operates on the basis that every argument is evaluated on its own merit, irrespective of its alignment or otherwise with traditional Christian teaching.

2. Pedagogy

2.1 The College's teachers are a team of highly able and experienced communicators, committed to the principles described in 1.1-1.3 to form graduates with the attributes described in 1.4. Requirements and expectations of the academic staff are covered in *Academic Framework 2A: Academic Staffing*. The key pedagogical principles by which learning is facilitated are as follows.

- The College's programmes are academically rigorous, upholding national threshold academic standards and appropriately quality assured.

- The College motivates and involves students in their own learning.

- The College both challenges and encourages students' previous theological, ethical and social commitments.

- The College recognises different educational backgrounds and abilities. The College is committed to facilitating the learning of students without standard academic qualifications where and as appropriate. (See *Academic Framework 9: Student Support*.)

- The College uses a wide range of teaching methodologies both to make teaching of different topics effective and efficient, and to acknowledge the variety of student preferences. These methodologies include active and experiential learning techniques, personal and group tutorials, field-trips, placements and reflection on practice, lectures and seminars. Technology is used as appropriate to facilitate teaching methodologies.

- The College provides resources to support learning, including sufficient resources to enable higher education students to pursue interests related to their studies beyond the immediate requirements of the material being taught. This includes access to physical libraries in various locations. The library at the Christchurch campus makes available a rich array of current and classic items. All higher education students also have easy electronic access to a substantial bank of resources from introductory academic texts to writings at the forefront of the relevant disciplines. (See section 5 below and *Academic Framework 2F: Library Collection Development Policy*, which includes a policy that prioritises the purchasing of new resources in electronic form.)

- The College invests appropriate resources to induct students and facilitate successful progression to higher levels of study.

- The College benefits from student feedback on teaching and continually seeks to improve the learning opportunities it provides. (See *Academic Framework 12: Student Engagement.*)

2.2 Programme-level strategies for learning and teaching are required to be consistent with the College-level strategy outlined in this chapter of the Academic Framework, and tailored to the specific needs of the relevant discipline, which, where relevant, take account of relationships with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. (See *Academic Framework 3: Programme Approval* and *Academic Framework 6: Programme Periodic Review and Approval*.)

2.3 For its academic staff, the College emphasises the integration of excellence in teaching, scholarship, professional activity and personal integrity (see section 4 below).

2.4 The College is committed to the provision, for all its students across all locations, of a learning environment which is digitally enabled to best support learning, teaching and assessment, and to the ongoing enhancement of this environment.

2.5 The College provides appropriate Learning Assistance to all students with disabilities to enable them to fulfil their potential. The College values its reputation for facilitating students with Specific Learning Difficulties to find and adopt strategies to maximise their learning.

2.6 The College regularly monitors and reviews its methods of teaching, learning and assessment and their implementation at module and programme levels. This is undertaken through processes that benefit from the contributions of external professionals and academics, as well as students. (See *Academic Framework 5: Annual Monitoring* and *Academic Framework 6: Programme Periodic Review and Approval)*.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment, in both its formative and summative forms, plays an important part in the pedagogy of the College. Assessment (of both forms) provides students with feedback on their learning and indicates how their work can be improved, as well as enabling the student to demonstrate achievement. The College's policies and procedures relating to assessment are found in *Academic Framework 10: Awards and Assessment* and its subsidiary documents.

3.2 The College formulates assessment tasks that are:
- aligned with programme and modular learning outcomes and teaching activities
- relevant to programmes and to students
- fair as opportunities to demonstrate learning achievements
- appropriate to module level and size.

3.3 For more information on assessment tasks, see *Academic Framework 10E: Setting Assessments*.

3.4 The College maintains a clear and reliable system of quality assurance in marking and moderation. This is understandable and explained to students, transparent to validating bodies, and produces results that are accurate and trustworthy. The College's Marking and Moderation procedures are found in *Academic Framework 10P: Marking and Moderation Procedures.*

3.5 The College is committed to giving timely, high quality feedback on assessments, with summative and formative comments enabling students to improve their performance in the future. Details about assessment feedback and timescales are given in *Academic Framework 10P: Marking and Moderation Procedures.*

3.6   The College values a diversity of assessment tasks within programmes. Depending on the nature of the provision, the appropriate methods of assessment may include verbal presentations, seminars, exams**,** professional practice, and reflection on practice (the student's or others'), as well as essays and reports. The module learning outcomes assessed often relate to professionally valuable strengths, such as self-understanding and the linking of theory and practice. The College recognises the value of written examinations for assessing more declarative, decontextualised knowledge and knowledge that should be instantly recallable. The College recognises the challenge of written examinations for some students with Specific Learning Difficulties.

4.   Academic staffing

4.1   The College is committed to ensuring that it has sufficient staff, appropriately qualified both academically and in character and appropriately skilled in both pedagogy and practice, in order to maintain academic standards and deliver a high-quality academic and vocational experience, across all the College's locations and programmes. The College also ensures that all its staff are appropriately supported and developed.

4.2   Minimum academic qualification requirements for academic staff appointments ensure that all staff are competent to teach and assess students at the level(s) and in the subject(s) they are teaching. These qualifications requirements can be found in *Academic Framework 2A: Academic Staffing*. New teaching staff are inducted according to *Academic Framework 2B: Academic Staff Induction*.

4.3   The College is committed to enabling staff, individually and corporately, to enhance their capability and competence for the benefit of all associated with the College, especially students, and for their own continuing professional and spiritual development.

4.4   All academic staff are expected to actively engage in scholarly and professional activities and pedagogic development, as relevant to the subject and level being taught, maintaining currency of knowledge, understanding and skills, which directly informs and enhances their teaching. How this is worked out is detailed in *Academic Framework 2A: Academic Staffing*. Arrangements for one-off study support requests are governed by *Academic Framework 2D: Staff Study Support*. The College operates a regular system enabling teaching colleagues to reflect on their own work (see *Academic Framework 2C: Peer Teaching Observation*).

4.5   The College recognises the importance and potential for benefits (for staff members and the College, as well as for the wider sector) in supporting academic staff in both external examining roles and in gaining HEA fellowships of appropriate categories.

4.6   Further details of the College's expectations of academic staff, and its policies and procedures for academic staff development are found in *Academic Framework 2A: Academic Staffing.*

5.   Student experience and success

5.1   The College is committed to delivering a high-quality academic experience to all students from all backgrounds and in all the College's locations, providing facilities, support and learning resources that are accessible and relevant to students' development of their knowledge and skills.

5.2 The College seeks to provide effective academic support to all its students throughout their time with the College, irrespective of location or mode of study. This support aims to enable students to monitor, understand and manage their academic development, especially at transition points and where the student is faced with decisions about their studies or their vocational direction. Details can be found in *Academic Framework 9: Student Support* and its subsidiary documents.

5.3 The College recognises the role of Learning Assistance in enabling the studies of certain groups of students, including students with disabilities, students who enter the College following the Recognition of Prior Learning, and students who have English as an additional language. The College's policies and procedures for such students are covered in Academic Framework documents including *Academic Framework 9A Learning Assistance Policy; 9B Students with Disabilities* and *9C Supplementary Study Skills.*

5.4 Reflecting the College's commitment to learning as a process of holistic development (see 1.3 above), the College emphasises the pastoral well-being of its students. To aid this there are a variety of support structures in place, reflecting the diversity of the needs of the student body. Details are found in *Academic Framework 9H: Support Structures.*

5.5 Students are key partners, and are engaged individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience. For details of student engagement, see *Academic Framework 12: Student Engagement* and its subsidiary documents.

5.6 The College's physical learning spaces are designed to support students' academic, personal and professional development, comprising well-equipped teaching spaces, private study spaces and social spaces at all locations.

6. Document History

7 April 2022	Approved by Academic Board. New document based on the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework, relevant sections of the College's Quality Manual, and with reference to Learning and Teaching policies of other HE institutions. Graduate attributes based on earlier list developed for MA LCD, see Phil King, '"Graduate Attributes" and the Bible Translation Movement' (Bible Translation Conference, Dallas, 2017).