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COLLEGE

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# Hibernia College Framework for International Student Support



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## 1. Introduction

Student support plays a vital role in fostering a positive learning environment, facilitating staff and student wellbeing, and supporting academic success. Hibernia College understands that supporting international students through the provision of inclusive practices is integral to the College's development as a provider of high-quality education on an international platform. International students often face additional challenges such as adapting to unfamiliar academic systems and interacting with peers from diverse cultures while continuing to navigate through all the complexities of higher education. The provision of adapted, structured and appropriate supports is fundamental to the provision of educational programmes of quality on an international stage.

Hibernia College also recognises the value that international students bring to the college, enriching the diversity of cultures, potential for international networking, research, innovation and wealth of experiences. The diversity of perspectives, customs and traditions enhance the cultural awareness and sensitivity of the student body whilst also fostering a more inclusive and internationally aware culture.

The Hibernia College Framework for International Student Support sets out the mechanisms in place to support and enable international students. The framework is designed to support international students in the context of blended or fully online learning<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the supports are built around the advantages of combining the flexibility of online learning with the specific challenges and opportunities of international students.

This framework encompasses pastoral care, administrative, technical and academic guidance. It sets out how Hibernia College supports international students to enhance their academic experience, increase engagement and foster a sense of belonging throughout their programme of studies. Moreover, it facilitates the College in providing clear support mechanisms and signposting to international students to ensure the quality of their experience.

## 2. Purpose of this Framework

The purpose of this framework is to outline the support and enablement strategy for international students engaging with programmes of study at Hibernia College. By offering a comprehensive support system, the Hibernia College Framework for International Students aims to create an environment that promotes student success, engagement, and a sense of belonging within the educational community. The framework supports the enactment of the principles set down in the Hibernia College Collaborative and Transnational Provision Framework, specifically

- Students enrolled on collaborative and/or transnational programmes which lead to awards of an Irish awarding body (QQI), receive an equivalent learning experience to that of students studying in Ireland.
- Due consideration is given to the academic and pastoral support of students enrolled on transnational programmes with consideration given to cultural and ethnic sensitivities.

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<sup>1</sup> Fully online learning as defined by QQI, and adopted by Hibernia College, [refers to a type of education where teaching, learning and assessment occur online, either synchronously, asynchronously, or in combination and where no onsite instruction is required. Fully online learning can offer flexibility and accessibility to a range of learners including, but not limited to, geographically isolated students, working professionals, learners with mobility or health constraints and learners for whom traditional educational pathways are not appropriate or sufficient for their needs. As such it can enhance a UDL informed approach to teaching and learning. Learners can complete their programme of study from a distance and with no in-person or on-site requirements](#)

- Hibernia College is committed to respecting the rights of staff, faculty, adjunct faculty, partners and students in ventures and recognition is given to the ethical considerations of working and learning environments in a transnational provision context.

### 3. Context

#### 3.1 National Context

In July 2015, Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) published a [Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners](#). The Code ensures international learners can expect a high quality of education experience from admissions to completion of their programme. It represents a set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners.

This document sets out how Hibernia College meets these requirements and is informed by QQI communications, guidelines and requirements for the International Education Mark (QEI): <https://www.qqi.ie/news/update-the-international-education-mark> The IEM represents a statutory quality mark and is a legislative instrument conceived to protect international learners. IEM covers the learner experience from pre-enrolment to programme completion and graduation. IEM seeks to assure learners that their educational experience will be both a consistent and quality experience.

#### 3.2 College Context

The Framework sits within the Hibernia College Quality Framework and informs best practice in conjunction with Framework on Collaborative and Transnational Provision., It functions within the context of a suite of policies and procedures that support the student experience at Hibernia College. The Framework has been approved by Academic Board, the academic primary decision-making body in Hibernia College.

Hibernia College is committed to providing support to all learners to enhance their journey and to afford them the best possible chance to complete their programme of study successfully. The principles for learner support within Hibernia College are set out within the College’s Student Support Policy.

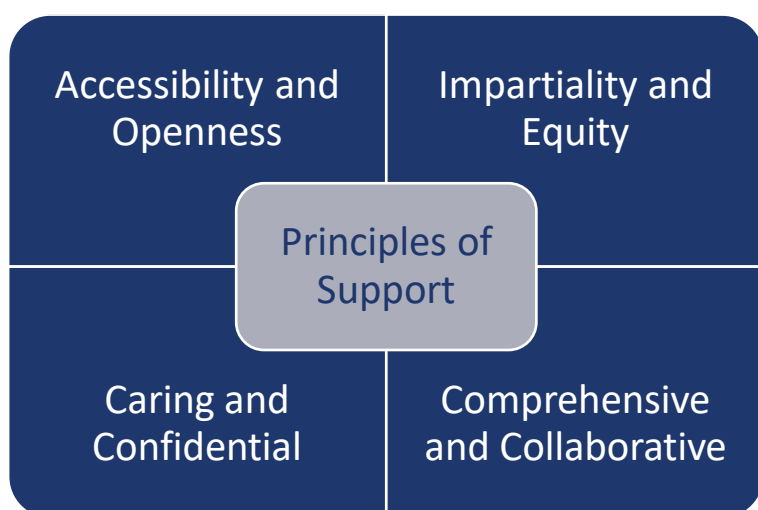


Figure One: Principles of Support

### 3.3 The Student Charter

The Hibernia College [Student Charter](#) provides a framework that allows staff, faculty and students to collaborate, innovate and thrive in an environment of mutual respect and structured support. Its purpose is to establish the context in which all members of the Hibernia College community can adhere to standards of excellence and codes of professional conduct during all operational and pedagogical activities whilst always enshrining integrity, empathy and understanding as the principles of our communications. The Student Charter outlines the values and beliefs that the College commits to – Respect, Trust, Autonomy, Removing Barriers, Engagement and Sustainability. The Charter also outlines the reciprocal responsibilities shared by staff and students of Hibernia College. This principle of reciprocal responsibility involves fostering a space where students feel safe, respected and valued, regardless of their background. In essence, it helps to create a balanced and respectful relationship between students and the institution in their educational journey.

The Framework is in line with the College’s purpose and vision to make learning accessible and, engaging so that learners can fulfil their potential and realise their ambitions. The College vision is to be valued, respected and trusted as an organisation that, through outstanding learning experiences, enables people to reach their learning goals. This framework enhances the high standards currently in place by focusing on the specific challenges and opportunities of providing high quality education to diverse learners within different contexts. Specifically, the framework identified additional actions that the College takes to meet the needs of international learners and to ensure compliance with the IEM standards and guidance. These include reference to accommodations to current support mechanisms to guarantee that learners are afforded equal access to support systems available to those within Ireland. The Framework documents approaches taken to ensure that timetabling and the delivery of synchronous content will not disadvantage international learners, finally the framework is explicit in the means and content of communications with students both pre- and post-enrolment with regard to the standing and recognition of any particular qualification or award.

## 4. Marketing and Admissions

### 4.1 Marketing

Communication with potential learners is by multiple means including live and recorded information webinars, publication of the relevant Programme Brochure online at the Hibernia College website, and provision to applicants of a copy of the terms and conditions of the programme itself. It is understood that developing a marketing strategy for international students starts with a deep understanding of the demographic and therefore market research is prioritised. Academic, cultural and social backgrounds are all considered, and marketing documentation is reviewed by the marketing team with sensitivity as a priority. Documentation is written in plain and accessible English. When deemed appropriate, specialised marketing materials are developed for the target market. The Programme Brochure and Programme Terms and Conditions are specific to each programme and identify, using plain English:

- The qualification the programme leads to;
- Information on the recognition of this qualification;
- Information regarding the validation status of a programme and any accreditation status of the programme where relevant.
- Details of the programmes learning and assessment modes, including details of any synchronous online learning or assessments that may take place

- Details and information regarding the availability of support to learners from outside Ireland with specific regard to learning and academic matters, technical support, and pastoral/welfare support
- Details of the relevant financial information including tuition fees, costs of protection of enrolled learners (PEL) arrangements and supplementary costs of joining the programme.

Information and communication with potential learners is concise, clear and user friendly and in plain English as per the Hibernia College Quality Framework Policy. Should Hibernia College engage with a third-party during recruitment this arrangement is subject to a due diligence assessment and any contract conforms to the principles set out in the London Statement<sup>2</sup>.

Hibernia College, specifically the Marketing Department, employ a strategic and targeted approach to marketing educational degree programmes to an international audience. To support global applicants and students, the Marketing Department:

### **Conduct research to understand our target audiences**

- Identify the countries or regions where there is a demand for our programmes.
- Understand the cultural and educational backgrounds of target audience.
- Create marketing personas for new target audiences to include demographics, interests, goals, frustrations, preferred channels of communication and experience with technology.

### **Leverage digital marketing and expand our strong online presence**

- Use targeted online advertising on platforms directed to landing pages (Google Ads, Facebook, LinkedIn and other relevant channels).
- Track and monitor from country location provided and build country-specific landing pages.
- Develop engaging and culturally relevant content, including social media posts, images, videos and blog posts to showcase the benefits of our programme and to engage with potential students.
- Host webinars and virtual events to reach a wider audience in various time zones and provide more in-depth information.
- Continue to develop our professional and user-friendly website with detailed information about our global programmes.
- Implement search engine optimization (SEO) strategies to improve the visibility of our programmes in online searches.

### **Communicate clearly**

- As per the [Public Information, Promotion and Recruitment of Students Policy](#), the Department ensures information is accurate and truthful, up-to-date and complete.
- Consider the language preferences of target audiences and ensure marketing materials and webinars are appropriate for potential students whose first language is not English.
- Provide explanations of acronyms that are common in Ireland such as 'NQF'. An understanding of the NQF and how to map to this to frameworks of qualifications outside of Ireland would be crucial to communicate, as well as the recognition of qualifications and how all are mapped to the NQF and EQF and how previous qualifications are mapped to EQF.

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<sup>2</sup> UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) document, The Code of Ethical Good Practice for UK Education Agents 2021

- Make the format of the programmes clear (i.e. blended or fully online) and what that means for international students. Manage expectations by clearly conveying that the College does not support visa applications in any way.
- Provide clear instructions on documentation, language proficiency requirements and deadlines.
- Simplify and streamline the application process for international students.

## 4.2 Admissions

The publicly available Hibernia College [Admissions Policy](#) supports admissions decision making that is fair, transparent and timely to ensure all learners can participate in their chosen programme. Programme specific entry requirements are clearly identified for all learners, and for International Learners the College makes use of and adheres to the guidance of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Recognition Convention, promoting recognition of qualifications and learning gained abroad. Assessment of learner's qualifications are conducted within reasonable timeframes and where assessment of assessment of qualifications may exceed a reasonable timeframe International Learners are informed in a clear and concise manner of this. Should further documentation be required before an Admissions decision can be issued, requests for additional documentation are made in a timely manner with a rationale for all requests. All communication with International Learners regarding any assessment of their qualifications for the purposes of admissions makes reference to NARIC Ireland guidance and identifies the appropriate NFQ Level requirement. Where the admissions process is a multi-stage process this is clearly identified to Learners through the Programme Terms and Conditions, including the requirements to progress from each stage(s) and any cost that may be incurred.

Where admission to a programme is refused, International Learners are provided with a written decision and rationale for any such decision; this rationale makes reference to the appropriate NARIC guidance. Where possible the College highlights the potential for remediation of any shortfall or possible measures an International Learner may take to address the rationale for an unsuccessful application. All College admissions decisions are subject to appeal where there has been a breach of procedure or bias in the decision-making process. The Appeals Policy is publicly available to all students for consultation.

## 5. Orientation

All Hibernia College programmes commence with an orientation programme. It is how the College introduces students to the practicalities and logistics of being students on a Hibernia College programme. The principles for student orientation are set out on the HCQF – Orientation Policy. <https://qualityframework.hiberniacollege.com/document/view-current.php?id=44>

Hibernia College understands that participating in a fully online or blended programme may be a new experience for many students and in addition, international students may have other concerns about studying with an institution based in a different country. Orientation for International Students serves several purposes including helping them to acclimatise to the online learning environment, proving crucial information about student services and enabling networking and socialising.

Orientation gives students an opportunity to engage with fellow students and the academic and support teams at the beginning of their programme of studies. Students are given access to information about how the programme and modules are structured; the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the modules; and how to access student supports. Students are introduced to the online Library, the learning platform, MyHELMS and the technical applications they are provided with as students of the College.

The purpose of the orientation programme is not only to introduce to the student to their programme of study but also to foster a culture and sense of socialisation and belonging amongst the student body. Orientation combines scaffolded online activities such as videos, webinars, forum discussions, Cohort App activities, Digital Café's, blogs, and quizzes.

Additionally, Hibernia College provides guidance for international students on how to connect with their peers in an online environment. The CohortApp facilitates group and individual communication which can be formal or informal in nature. At Orientation, opportunities are provided to share interesting insights about traditions and the culture of Ireland and other countries. Furthermore, the College uses a short informal survey to better understand the student body.

An innovative role in the College is the Alumni Ambassador. Peer-to peer support is something which is highly valued by the College and the alumni voice can provide a worthwhile connection between the student and the wider environment. Alumni Ambassadors present at orientation and include videos with tips and insights into various challenges and enjoyable aspects of student life. For International Students, international alumni ambassadors are invited to share their experiences. The orientation programme has a dedicated space on MyHELMS and is a resource that students can return to at any time throughout their studies.

## 5.1 Study Skills

At orientation, students are provided with the key academic information they need to engage with the programme of study at Hibernia College. The orientation period includes Study Skills and Academic Writing Workshops. Throughout the programme, the College offers optional support webinars on a diverse range of topics including referencing, time management and wellbeing. The wellbeing supports specifically address the challenges to wellbeing for international students.

## 6. Student Support Services for International Students

International Students can avail of the full suite of support services available to all Hibernia College students. The College has a dedicated support staff who are responsible for the support, guidance and pastoral care of all students. Inhouse training and upskilling on supporting International Students is provided on a regular basis and both formal and informal upskilling and training options are facilitated under the College's staff training policies.

### 6.1 Pastoral Support and Services

The Student **Support Officers** provide pastoral support and guidance for students. They can help students who:

- are experiencing difficulties or emergencies that are affecting their studies
- are looking for advice on what supports are available to them
- need guidance on a College policy or procedure
- need a listening ear

The Student Support Officers are available by phone and email and hold regular online clinics (via Zoom) where students can book one-to-one flexible appointments at times that suit them. This is a particularly useful service for International Students. They can also direct students to appropriate support mechanisms within the College including the counselling service.



They also help and support the integration of International Students starting at orientation and throughout their studies. The Student Support Officer works with students to facilitate cultural events through the platforms that are available to the student. The Student Representatives election process and training and the Alumni Ambassadors process is coordinated and managed by the Student Support Office.

## 6.2 Student Counselling

All students have access to a free and confidential **Student Counselling** service. The College understands that students experience engagement with study differently and that for some it can be a challenging experience. When students feel overwhelmed or anxious, it can be helpful to speak with someone who is separate from the normal and familiar daily environment — someone who is also separate from College faculty. All students have access to a free and confidential counselling service. This service can help students who are experiencing stress, anxiety or depression; family or relationship issues, social problems or issues with exam nerves; decision-making; time management or public speaking.

The Counsellor can help International Students who are having difficulties adapting to a new programme of study and new social environments. Counselling sessions are offered online via Zoom and the College is flexible in scheduling the sessions to suit the student. The Counsellor can also help over email. Often one or two sessions may be all that is required to help the student see clearer or overcome a problem they are experiencing but the service is open for further sessions as necessary throughout the programme of study.

## 6.3 Disability Support Services

The College's **Disability Support Services** and Reasonable Accommodation [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) are also managed through the Student Support Officer. The Student Support Officer provides ongoing pastoral support and guidance to students who are availing of reasonable accommodations. Typical Reasonable Accommodations provided by Hibernia College include:

- Assistive Technology and Software
- Assessment Support Tutor
- Awareness Accommodations
- Examination Accommodations
- Scheduled support check-ins

## 6.4 Student Representatives

Student representation is crucial to strong student engagement as students are amongst the most significant stakeholders in their own education. Each programme has a student elected Student Representative and for larger programmes, a Co-Representative and Class Representatives for small tutor groups. Student Representatives come from across all programmes and cohorts. They are the voice of that programme and cohort and work in partnership with the College to amplify student voices in shaping and enhancing the learning and student experience. The Cohort App is used to set up groups for the Student Reps to communicate with each other, share ideas, experiences and support.

There are also opportunities for all students to become involved in a number of other College committees including the Teaching and Learning Committee, Ethics committee and Student Engagement Committee. The voice of the international Student in the Student Representative

Forum and on committees is strongly encouraged and opportunities and information webinars are provided.

#### 6.4.1 Student Engagement Committee

The purpose of the Student Engagement Committee is to advise and promote student voice on matters relating to student engagement and student partnership. It promotes the strengthening of the student voice in College governance, innovation in student engagement and enhancement in areas such as academic affairs but also on inclusivity and wellbeing and staff-student projects such as the creation of a Student/College Partnership agreement.

The [Terms of Reference](#) for this committee's membership includes a representative from the international student body.

#### 6.4.2 Alumni Ambassadors

Alumni Ambassadors help and encourage students by sharing their experiences. They serve as a liaison point between the College and the International Student community. Ambassadors are empathetic, enthusiastic, positive and great communicators. They meet with students at events such as Orientation, Wellbeing and Careers fairs. Events are hosted online via Zoom and are recorded, and the College creates videos and blogs on an ongoing basis with alumni on their experiences as a Hibernia College student. This includes areas such as student representation, the importance of peer support, placement and 'a day in a life'.

Some Alumni Ambassadors are living and working in countries around the world. As programmes grow and the College welcomes more International Students, this ambassador programme will continue to grow and include further international alumni ambassadors. Alumni Ambassadors will be recruited as students complete their programmes of study and prepare for graduation. The recruitment while co-ordinated by the Student Support Team will take place, or be targeted at, the programme level; students may be identified to act as alumni ambassadors either through the student engagement committee or through the graduate survey.

#### 6.4.3 Digital Cafés

The College is profoundly aware that the peer relationships students form over the programme hugely impact their college experiences personally, socially, and academically. To that end there is a commitment to providing more flexible meeting spaces for all students. Hibernia College facilitates Digital Café as an informal virtual space in which groups of students can meet, chat and connect. They are introduced at orientation

These are for the students, staff do not attend, although the College is happy to help facilitate and help with any ideas students have around them. A weekly Café is set up for each programme and cohort in small groups – this can be based around the location of the students or particular areas of study they have in common. Students are also actively encouraged to organise their own Café's at different days and times as suits.

#### 6.4.4 Cultural and Extra Curricular Events

At orientation we issue a short survey to gather interests of the students and gather information on cultural and social interest that we can organise groups of students with shared interest to meet and/or to organise ways of marking events, charities or matters that are important to students. For international students these can include meeting with student who are from the same country, cultural, religious. Informal meet up are arranged online through dedicated Cohort App groups and Digital Cafés.

## 7. Ongoing Student Engagement

The College regularly engages with students to seek formal and informal feedback. Each programme devises a feedback schedule in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Officer, who ensures this satisfies the College's minimum requirements as outlined in the Hibernia College Quality Framework. The Records and Data Manager collates the responses and produces reports, which are sent to the Programme Director, who is responsible for analysing the data and initiating any appropriate action required.

Feedback is also gathered in several different ways including:

- Through meetings with student representatives (either College or Student Rep initiated)
- Using the Cohort App
- Focus groups
- Short anonymous and instantaneous feedback surveys
- Virtual suggestion box
- Student voice on College committees and boards

The College works collaboratively with students and student representatives on any issues raised and communication is often through the student representatives to their fellow peers through dedicated Cohort App groups, this can be supported through by the College through emails and notices to students.

International students are provided with easy and quick mechanisms to encourage feedback on support services as well as the academic aspects of their studies.

## 8. Academic Support Services

### 8.1 Academic Administration

Programme Administrators are given regular training on communication skills, which is of particular significance when supporting International Students. They contact students regularly with pertinent information and assist students with general queries and guidance and sign-posting. Programme Administrators are available through a variety of forms of communication including by phone, email and through a dedicated helpdesk. This is important for International Students as it enables them to make contact in the way they are most comfortable with. The Programme Administrator is responsible for the administrative procedures of the programme. Additional central administrative support is provided by the Assessments and Awards Office. The Programme Administrator can help students with many types of queries including:

- Non-academic guidance around assessments
- Calendar queries
- Guidance on policies and procedures such as applying for an extension and applying for a review
- Issuing of grades

## 9. Technical Support

An experienced **Technical Support Team** supports all students across several contact channels. The team is available by phone, email and a live chat facility linked to all student sites. The team regularly updates the comprehensive and searchable knowledgebase, providing answers to the most common student enquiries, 24x7x365. This team supports students on all technical queries, including:

- Uploading course work
- Accessing online content
- Accessing live webinars and recording
- Using any of the platforms provided to the students by the College

## 10. Library

The Digital Library is available 24/7 and accessible from anywhere in the world, once an internet connection is available. Students are provided with a comprehensive digital library experience on the VLE, Hibernia College Home. The digital library holds all the key library resources that students will need throughout their programme. An integrated library search tool is provided, which searches across most library resources at the same time. Student support materials are also available from the digital library, including a library knowledge base, library guides, help videos, and a dedicated academic writing and referencing support page. Students are kept up to date about the digital library through regular library news posts. Library staff provide hands-on support for students by phone, email or video call. They offer induction webinars for all students and host optional drop-in workshops on using the library, referencing and advanced library skills. These webinars are also recorded and so available to students who are not able to make them live.

## 11. Academic Support

Each programme is led by a Programme Director and an academic team of lecturers.

**Lecturers** are available to answer student queries throughout the programme by email, through dedicated assessment forums and through Hibernia College Cohort App. The academic team comprises of experienced experts in their field of study. The College values an open and approachable structure and students are encouraged to engage directly with academic faculty through tutorials, group chats and forum. Where there is a dissertation as part of their programme, Students are allocated a **Research Supervisor** who supports them throughout the supervised dissertation. Supervisors are chosen carefully with the individual needs of the student in mind. The programme director will ensure that appropriate guidance is provided to ensure that there is cultural sensitivity in the preparation of materials and content, acknowledging pedagogical differences, and sensitivities in assigning group tasks.

### 11.1 Academic Writing workshops

Students are offered workshops in Academic Writing and have access to a comprehensive [Academic Writing Toolkit](#) on MyHELMS. International Students benefit from these structured supports which acknowledge and cater for the additional challenges these students may face with extended written assignments. The assessment content and structure are rigorously reviewed to ensure a balance between forms of assessment to prevent an over-reliance on a narrow interpretation of assessment.

## 12. Staff Training

All staff, academic and support staff with responsibility for supporting International Students complete the [ICOS Training Sessions for Staff](#). This training is aimed at increasing intercultural awareness and intercultural competency for those who work with or teach International Students.

## 13. Technologies, the Virtual Learning Environment and Time Zones

All students are provided with a Hibernia College account on MS Office 365 for the duration of their studies. This is their secure Single Sign On to all college services, including email, OneDrive, Office, ZOOM, Library, MyHELMS, E-Portfolios and Cohort.

There are no specific hardware requirements although students are expected to access the main course content via a reasonably modern desktop or laptop (Windows 10/11 or Mac OS 11 or later) running a recent browser version. Many of our services can also be accessed fully on mobile devices (Android or iOS). A reliable broadband or mobile-data connection would be essential to participate fully in synchronous webinars.

The College MyHELMS virtual learning platform is hosted on a dedicated, high-availability server cluster with unlimited storage capacity available within the Microsoft Azure environment. This is matched with a dedicated Content Delivery Network delivering video and other high bandwidth content. All learners and faculty have access to full Microsoft Office accounts and Professional ZOOM licenses. MyHELMS is monitored by a 24x7x365 support contract, ensuring platform availability to students at all times. Our internal technical support teams using Dynamics 365 Customer Support Management systems and real-time online chat, to provide dedicated student support across all systems.

### 13.1 The Cohort App

The Cohort app is a communication and collaboration tool that allows lecturers and students to work together in private online workspaces on all of their devices. The aim of this platform is to enable greater collaboration in learning, teaching, research, and social activities. It is a tool to facilitate communication more easily and enhance overall the student experience. Workspaces are created for student and lecturers, but this tool is also used for informal communication, and social groups that are student led. Students can chat, share and meet. All students can set up their own groups and the College is happy to facilitate groups for students with specific interests, whether cultural, educational, social, hobbies etc. The tool is demonstrated at orientation and International Students are introduced to its capabilities and how they can use it as a student of the College. The orientation survey can help facilitate a number of groups. The Cohort App can be used on all kinds of devices including desktop computers, tablets or smartphones. The College see's this tool as a great way to promote social interactions outside of the normal programme webinars and study, it enhances the overall experience of the students particularly students who are studying in different countries, wo cannot meet up in person, it helps build communities and diminish any feeling of studying a fully online or blended programme in isolation.

In addition to support and academic staff, Hibernia College has excellent points of information and resources available to students 24/7 on the virtual learning environment, **MyHELMS** – a Knowledge base with a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions and answers, dedicated pages including - Student Support home page, Technical Support home page, Registry home page, a My Programme page, Library home page and a page dedicated to support and resources for International Students.

The College's VLE (MyHELMS) combines all the benefits of accessibility and flexibility inherent in digital education and allows learners to interact with their lecturers and fellow learners through webinars, online group activities and our mobile collaboration app, Hibernia College Cohort.

Its features include:

- Access to media-rich digital learning content
- Discussion forums, blogs and other collaborative tools
- Personalised calendars and submission deadline countdown timers
- Announcements feed
- Facilities for uploading, grading and providing feedback on assessments
- Resources on academic integrity and good practice
- Text-matching software
- Access to administrative, placement and support resources
- A digital library
- A live chat facility for technical support
- A technical support helpdesk with searchable knowledge base articles
- Access to live online tutorials in Zoom

VLE online activities may take place synchronously with every learner logged in and cooperating in real-time, or asynchronously with learners participating at their convenience following a flexible timeline. As well as hosting the highly interactive digital learning content, it features a comprehensive digital library and personalised calendars and announcements — providing learners with a sense of campus community. The VLE offers a fully secured online learning environment that ensures user confidence and adheres to national and international data protection standards.

The College has invested significantly in making the VLE as secure, user-friendly and interactive as possible. It allows staff and faculty to monitor learner progress closely, providing detailed reports on engagement with digital learning content and attendance at live events.

## **14. Key Principles for International Calendars**

Firstly, Hibernia College ensures transparency and sets out expectations clearly throughout the marketing and admissions stages to ensure students are well informed of the requirements of the programmes before accepting an offer of a place.

The blended and fully online nature of programmes enables the College to address the challenges of different time zones by providing recorded content, live forums and a variety of modes of communication. The combination of synchronous and asynchronous content is highly appropriate to international provision. Prior to each programme of study commencing, a detailed calendar is developed by a working group inclusive of academic, registry and student support staff to ensure that the schedule is as fair and equitable as possible. Where relevant, students are grouped appropriately according to time zones to ensure the best provision of service.

Students are given access to asynchronous content through MyHELMS in a structured and timely manner, giving international students ample time to study the content at a time that suits them

The flexibility of blended learning allows the College to assess the time zones and consult with International Students in scheduling tutorials and webinars to come up with the time that will suit most participants.

There is an expectation that students attend and actively engage with as many of the live webinars as possible. However, all webinars are recorded and can be revisited at any time.

Students are able to access their calendar on MyHELMS when they commence the programme in order for them to plan their schedules accordingly.

Asynchronous content and recorded webinars are available to students to access and revisit at any time that suits them.

## **15. Conclusion**

International Students are a valuable part of the College community, and every care is taken to ensure a transparent, flexible and agile approach to their support. Hibernia College welcomes ongoing and meaningful student engagement and works to actively encourage strong and sustained communication with students from all backgrounds. Cultural diversity strengthens the College and supports the fulfilment of a forward focused College strategy.