



Cork Institute of Technology

Learning Portfolio Application

Submitted for Assessment of Prior Learning by -

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Module	PLAC6010 Work Placement Module		
Course	Higher Certificate in IT Support	Stage	2
Department	Computing		

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A. Curriculum Vitae and Job Description

1. Employment

1.1 Current Post

Job Title	Technical Support Engineer
Who do you report to?	Engineering Manager, Mr J. Bowen
Company	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Address	East Road Cork

I am employed as a Technical Support Engineer, Level 1 support. I provide technical support on all XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX anti-virus software installed or configured on any of the following platforms; Windows 2000, Windows NT, UNIX.

My responsibilities are:

1. To provide telephone and email based support as a first point of contact
2. To log and process support calls, if required I will escalate this to second level support
3. I will interact with other members of the team to provide solutions for minor technical issues
4. I will stay with the reported and escalated customer problems until they have been resolved. I will inform management of any unusual customer problems or incidents.
5. I provide detailed guidance on the use of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX products to the customer base

1. Employment

1.2 Previous Relevant Employment

Duration – From	November 2014	To	January 2018
Job Title	Analyst: Continuous Improvement		
Company	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Address	Rocky Point, Cork City		

1. Develop new process models and improve existing process models and scripts

For our service desk, I develop new and improve existing processes. New scripts are based on operational management review. Script is a step-by-step guide that a service desk agent uses when he gets a call from the user or service recipient. When I get an operational management review, I review it, and make changes to existing script or create a new one.

2. Liaise with development and technical teams to ensure quality of new and existing processes.

Where significant changes are due we take a team approach; teams or a range of individuals will be involved to create a process. We organise meetings to discuss changes and make clarifications.

3. Generate reports; Root cause analysis of issues and report to Operations Manager.

Each day I generate reports for Operational Manager to track all user care KPS's and performance indicators, and service level agreements.

1.2 Previous Relevant Employment

Duration - From	July 2008	To	November 2014
Job Title	Analyst on Feedback Team		
Company	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Address	Western Wharf, Cork City		

1 - IT support to users

As part of the Feedback Team, we provide support for users as the need arises. There were over a hundred such users. We acted as a first point of contact for them.

2 - Problem/issue resolution and root cause analysis

My task was to review the ticket and email from the escalators. We had to resolve the case and also we had to find out the root cause of the problem and make sure that it was resolved, and unlikely to happen again.

3 – Feedback and support for processing escalations

Some escalations acted as a link in the chain between our service desks. Usually they were service delivery managers. They would send us escalation email regarding tickets that were not resolved in time or not resolved at all. Sometimes they asked for an urgent request. There were a variety of reasons for these escalations. When this occurred, we took a team approach to effectively resolve the issue.

1. Employment

1.2 Previous Relevant Employment (cont.)

Duration - From	January 2007	To	June 2008
Job Title	IT Helpdesk Support		
Company	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Address	Little Island Cork		

I worked at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX as a call-support staff at the IT Helpdesk. My responsibilities were as follows:

1. I was the first point of contact for users. My role was to provide problem resolution and support.
2. I had the responsibility for training newly hired first level staff.
3. I provided coaching and mentoring for first level staff.
4. Provide resolution for problems where they arose
5. Maintained timely logging of problems. A ticket would open for each call and email. This ticketing system logged the call and reported the problem and its resolution. I logged the data into the system.

2.2 Training

This includes attendance on external courses (e.g. City & Guilds, IMI, etc.) and on other internal training courses completed in the workplace.

T r a i n i n g

Provider Training Support.ie
Accrediting Body FETAC level 3
Location of Training North Western Way
 Cork

Name of Course	Date Attended From - To
Communications – half day course, 9 th April 2015	April 2015
Customer relations – half day course 10 th April 2015	April 2015
Reporting – half day course, 11 th April 2016	April 2016

T r a i n i n g

15th December 2014

Manual Handling training course – this course covered safety in the workplace and the correct procedures to use when lifting or moving heavy objects at work

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3. Relevant Additional Information

3.1 Voluntary Work and/or Leisure Activities

I am part of the Tidy Towns team with my local volunteer group. We maintain a shared rota of:

1. Cleaning and tidying of pavements or pathways
2. Collecting any papers or empty bottles strewn around the neighbourhood
3. Every spring we meet to plant flowers in local areas
4. Every summer we select a location and paint railings or improve it with the addition of seating

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B. Learning Achieved

Basis of application

Please fill in the module and stage for which this portfolio is being prepared for assessment.

Module PLAC6010 Work Placement Module

Stage 2

Course Higher Certificate in IT Support

State the basis for exemption.

[Please tick relevant box(s)]

Prior Academic Learning ☐

If ticked, please complete section 1.

Prior Work-based Learning **X**

If ticked, please complete section 2.

Case presented against the learning outcomes

In this section you are asked to compare your learning achieved to the Learning Outcomes of the subject in question. Please verify that you have the most current version of the Learning Outcomes (these are subject to regular update). Please use a separate page for each Learning Outcome and response, using the format below.

Learning Outcome 1

Analyse the enterprise, its culture and its organisation

Learning Achieved

To respond to this learning outcome I will be analysing the operations and culture of XXXXXXXXXXXX where I have been employed since 2018 as a Technical Support Engineer.

To describe the organisation, XXXXXXXXXXXX is a well known anti-virus company, and is a global leader in network antivirus and internet content security. The company was founded in 1990 and the Headquarters are located in XXXX. We support the most flexible and customizable internet security solutions to address the ever-changing threats on the Web. To analyse XXXXXXXXXXXX's in terms of market share, and brand awareness, it is in a strong position and well placed globally. However, online threats and viruses pose a mobile threat to online users as they are always emerging. Therefore, it is a highly mobile market place and companies operating in this context must always remain at the forefront of developments to remain viable. It could be argued that taking an aggressive approach with R&D in anti-viral software is an essential requirement of an anti-virus company.

When I commenced employment, we completed an induction day which was provided by the HR Department. This gave me a general introduction in the first week, to the company, its mission, its vision and the major operations, products and services that are delivered.

In Ireland the company is located on the East Road in Cork. We provide technical support on all XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX anti-virus software installed and or configured on any of the following platforms, Windows NT, Windows 2000 and UNIX.

There are other offices located globally, but only two of them are providing the direct support to the customers. We have an R&D development team which is located in the global headquarters. The Irish office is responsible for the XXX region (this is level 1, 2, and 3 support). The office in Germany is responsible for other users (again level 1, 2, and 3 support) and the level 3 and level 4 for teams are located in China, with another team located in the USA.

See **Attachment 1**.

I provide level 1 support for XXX customers. There are 20 people in the Cork office providing level 1 and level 2 support between Cork and the Germany. See **attachment 2**. From a cultural point of view, we are a multicultural mix of Irish, American, German and Indian and span a range of ages from 25 to 55. Our operations protocol provides an environment where all can contribute to the ongoing technical support issues as they arise. We have the opportunity to interact with the global supports on a regular basis and learn of new developments and approaches to protect our customer. The culture promotes a mindset where continuous learning is encouraged.

There are good career opportunities available in XXXXXXXXXXXXX. The overall technical support model and structure is provided in **attachment 3**. Being a level 1 (Technician), there is the potential to be promoted to level 2 (Engineer). Then, based on experience (technical skills and knowledge) or profile it may be possible to be promoted to Technical Senior Engineer or Pre-sales Technical Engineer. Please see **attachment 4** for potential career moves.

Our day to day operations value strong health and safety awareness on site. These form a key part of our culture and operations. For instance, the test of fire alarms is done twice a month. We have exit signs and emergency signs placed on exits.

We carry out operational checks routinely. These span a range from ergonomics, to the fire regulations, manual handling and accident reporting. In my first week I had a VDU assessment done. This visual display unit assessment tests all employees' eyesight. The training showed the ideal posture to adopt, and how to use the mouse. The course covered correct sitting posture, correct monitor height and keyboard location. Another course was a manual handling course which I completed at the start of my employment. Manual handling is any transporting or supporting of any load by one or more employees and which may include lifting, carrying or moving a load. The safe postures to adopt when carrying equipment was covered.

To conclude, XXXXXXXXXXXXx , my employer, has provided me with good opportunities for my professional development in the field of anti-viral software. I can see that it is very much a continuously changing market, one with a global reach, and it provides exciting opportunities for those in the field. I am invested in the people that I work with and am making my contribution by providing technical support to the customer each day.

Attachment 1 – Team structure

Attachment 2 – Cork office structure

Attachment 3 - technical support model and structure

Attachment 4 – career options

Learning Outcome 2

Communicate in a professional manner within the workplace

Learning Achieved

Professional communications are at the heart of all transactions in the workplace. To respond to this learning outcome I am drawing on my learning from each of the four roles that I have been employed in. My learning has been gained experientially, and I have maintained a professional rapport with both colleagues and customers.

Communications take place in person, in face to face meetings, in presentations and also in online fora. Written communications are historically important, however there are many additional options to communicate professionally available today. The use of email is an important communication method. Today, many communications are facilitated by remote means, using cloud based platforms such as Zoom, Teams, Skype etc. These are a vital part of professional interactions and support remote working, and project meetings where participants can contribute from anywhere in the world. I will focus on email, conference calls, and the face-to-face communications used in presentations.

Email as a business communication tool

Email is a core communications tool and is used by me every day. Clearly written communication is an essential business skill. I have learned how to create email with a clear, logical structure that can organise ideas and key points.

I completed a course on effective communications and customer relations in April 2015 with TrainingSupport.ie. This training provided me with the communications skills required to effectively interact with a diverse range of clients and customers.

Attachment 5 presents the overview of the training that I completed. I learned in this training that communication must be effective, appropriate and responsive. Written communication must be very clear and to the point. We also learned the golden rules for business communication:

1. Use active language
2. Use simple language

3. Avoid politically incorrect or sexist terms
4. Sue specific timelines rather than generalities
5. Avoid excess jargon
6. Link points
7. Use the person's name

I take care to make sure that the key message is easy to understand in the text. I use business language in my email. Please see example attached in **attachment 6**.

Meetings and conference calls; online platforms, Skype, Teams, Zoom

In XXXXXXXXXXXX meetings form a key part of our working day. We rely on cloud based platforms to interact with our colleagues across the globe and also with our customer base. Setting up and hosting a conference call takes skill to deliver; routinely I am responsible for setting up a conference call, the calendar, and then to conduct the order of business in an informal yet forthright way. I make sure that the participants can communicate with me, and can seek the information they need. Before concluding the call, I re-state the key actions, and make sure that all questions are responded to. An example that I can share is our Business Security Project. See **attachment 7**. As you can see from the attachment, at this meeting we discuss the product, its problems and possible solutions, provide feedbacks and ask questions. We also have another meeting that discusses transfer of information about the product. These meetings are delivered by a staff member who know a product at an expert level. They deliver information to participants who know less. It is an internal training approach that works very well.

When I worked in XXXXXXXXXXXX as a continuous improvement analyst I also had a lot of meetings and conference calls. There was a conference calls scheduled every Friday. Other meetings such as process update meetings, quality improvement meetings and meetings with the clients at the service desk were routinely held. These meetings formed the core of our work, along with direct interaction.

Communication; a presentation

To present to an audience and communicate a key message, takes skill and practice. There are several aspects to get right; the setting, the audience, the formality required or not. Also the pace of delivery, body language and dress-code must be suitable. I make sure that my preparations takes these factors into account.

I was given the opportunity to present to our Overseas Strategic Operations Team as a result of my involvement with a project called Future Operations and Processes which contributed to the strategic vision. I had to give regular presentations to management. I was responsible for the migration of all of the computers belonging to a client. The computers had to be migrated from Current Mode of Operations to Future Operations and Processes. The final stage of the project was transferred to Germany. During this transfer I presented the project to the German staff and subsequently trained some of their staff who were going to be involved at that point.

Attachment 8 shows some of this presentation.

I also refer to this learning against learning outcome 3, as I demonstrated initiative and leadership skills during the work on this project.

Attachment 5 – Training programme outline

Attachment 6 – Business correspondence email

Attachment 7 – meeting notification for project

Attachment 8 – presentation slide training

Learning Outcome 3

Demonstrate initiative and leadership skills whilst working alone and or in teams

Learning Achieved

Presently, a key part of my day to day work involves supporting product on different platforms. These operating systems require detailed knowledge. I use this knowledge of the operating system to trouble shoot and to resolve issues related to the operating system. These issues require initiative and skill to solve.

Another aspect that I wish to share is my time with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX and my work in the Executive Feedback Centre. I believe that this role required leadership skills, combined with a strong team focus. I had to deal effectively with escalations as they arose. A key part of this involved taking the initiative to deliver a solution for the customer. There were six of us employed in the Executive Feedback Centre and we delivered a customer focused solutions based service. While I worked alone, we operated as a team, and regularly reported the outcomes to our management. All cases opened in the Executive Feedback Centre were logged into the excel file called the EFC cases. This file contained the case number, the owner and the root analysis which was done in terms of escalation/feedback/complaint. The root cause detailed what went wrong. See **attachment 9**.

One of the initiatives I took was to create a list of root causes, and set them as options in a list. This step involved collaborating with team-mates to consider the various range of root causes that were possible, and how best to present them.

A second initiative that I would like to share came from my time working with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX as an IT Helpdesk Support Specialist. This work involved the use of the ticketing system for customer queries. I improved the reporting of this system by creating a template on an excel sheet for every shift to report their queries on. This approach provided greater visibility for the kinds of problems that were coming up routinely, and allowed management to see the range and scope of what we were dealing with. I believe that this system is still in use today. I don't have access to this system now as I am no longer an employee.

Attachment 9 - Exel file capturing data from Feedback Centre

Learning Outcome 4

Reflect on and analyse the learning experience resulting from the work placement

Learning Achieved

Over the past thirteen years I have worked in the IT industry. This time will form the basis of my reflection. I began in 2007 when I started with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX and then in July 2008 I moved to XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. Both companies are well known global brands. In XXXXXXXXXXXX I started in the position of IT Helpdesk Support Specialist (2nd level support). My responsibilities were:

1. Provide second-level support and problem resolution
2. Perform coaching and mentoring for first-level agents
3. Provide accurate and timely logging of problems and resolution for problems

Over the years, my roles and responsibilities have grown steadily. I have changed focus, all the while growing professionally. A key aspect of this commitment was taking on my studies at third level, which I am actively pursuing. In January 2009 I started my work on the project. Within this project I was responsible for;

- Co-ordination of the project
- Implementation of new ideas and improvement of the project
- Training, coaching of staff involved

When the project work finished, I was moved to the Executive Feedback Team. It was very interesting work because we mainly did deal with the problems that regular Service Desk was not able to resolve. We did deal with escalations. My responsibilities were:

- Problem/issue resolution and root cause analysis
- Giving IT support to VIP users
- Processing escalations and feedbacks

In November 2014 I was promoted to Continuous Improvement Analyst. This job was very interesting and acted as summary job for my work in Service Desk. Doing this job I was able to look at the Service Desk from another perspective. I was able to take a macro look at the role of the work on the helpdesk. My responsibilities were as follows:

- Work with the development and technical teams to ensure the quality of new and existing processes.
- Generate reports, and carry out root cause analysis and report to the Operations Manager
- Improve existing process models, and develop new ones

In February 2010, I began working for XXXXXXXXXXXX. This role had a different focus, with 90% of my time on troubleshooting an issue and problem solving. Then less time on testing the product and localisation of it. I continue to work for XXXXXXXXXXXX today.

I feel that I have developed professionally over the past thirteen years, I would consider that the learning I achieved as a Project Co-ordinator for the FMO Project was significant, and for another related task that I was assigned in XXXXXXXXXXXX. I will provide some details of what I learned here;

Example 1 - My role as Project Co-ordinator.

A small team of four employees delivered on the Future Ops Project. I was the co-ordinator. I trained the team and provided them with updates and feedback information as the project proceeded. I was involved in maintaining the timelines and the overall spend in the budget. All correspondence relating to the running of the project went through me.

Our project was migrating our client's computers from their current mode of operation to a particular Future Operations and Processes. This was based on the Windows XP operation system. In delivering the project, I carried out the following:

1. Created the set-up and instructions for team
2. Created the template for ordering migration on excel **(see attachment 10)**
3. Weekly reports were delivered **(see attachment 11)**
4. Created template so the team could communicate with the client efficiently **(see attachment 12).**

Key Learning gained in this role

The key learning that I achieved was developing the ability to manage the project. This provides me with future professional opportunities in project

management. In delivering the training and providing the updates and feedback for the team, I established a professional rapport, and mode of communication which I maintained. I used this approach again to progress a variety of issues as they arose. I know now that keeping everything on track, in terms of time and budget is demanding, and that good communication and provision of timely information is critical to all parties. This will make the difference between success or delay.

Example 2 – Customer satisfaction report

When I worked as a Continuous Improvement Analyst I became aware that the Customer Satisfaction Performance Indicator was less than the preferred level. Instead of achieving the target of 85% the indicator was averaging at 50%. Our Operations Manager set me the task of investigating the figures and the reasons behind this.

To deliver on this task, I did some background research into the reasons behind the data, and set about reporting my findings to the Operations Manager. I created a report listing all of the unresolved problems, with another column suggesting further steps to provide solutions **(see attachment 13)**.

Key Learning gained in this role

The key learning that I took from this was the ability to manage and analyse the data. By dividing the complex problem into smaller steps, sorting out the most common issues arising, I was able to provide clarity as to what was happening. The task also raised the issue of unresolved customer satisfaction issues generally with the Operations Manager. This raising of the profile of customer satisfaction significantly impacted on the culture operating in XXXXXXXXXXXX which I was really pleased with as an outcome.

Attachment 10 - Template for migration

Attachment 11 – weekly report on project

Attachment 12 - Communications template for staff

Attachment 13 – Exel file showing unresolved issues

C. Portfolio Inventory

List the evidence included in this portfolio. Then carefully scan the evidence to this section. Original transcripts must be presented before assessment.

List each separate document and other material you are submitting to substantiate this claim. If you are submitting more than one claim it is important to have more than one copy of each document as they will be assessed by different assessors.

|<----- For Office Use Only---> |

Description of Item Submitted	Date Original Seen	Verified by
Learning outcome 1		
1 - Team structure at XXXXXXXXXXXX		
2 - Cork office staff, presentation slide		
3 – Model of team structure		
4 – Career paths profile		
Learning outcome 2		
5 – Training programme outline		
6 – email of business correspondence		
7 – meeting notification for project		
8 – presentation slide for training		
Learning outcome 3		
9 – Exel file with data from Feedback Centre		
Learning outcome 4		
10 – Template for migration		
11 – Weekly report on project		
12 – Communications template for staff		
13 – Unresolved issues captured on exel		

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D. Appendix


Attachment 1 – the team structure in XXXXX

The Team Structure

Program management	Management of Operations	Sales Engineers	Technical Training	Customer care	Sales team	Anti threat team	USA market					
							Asia and China					
							Western region	India	Southern region	Northern region	Support central region	Level 2 technical support
												Level 1 support

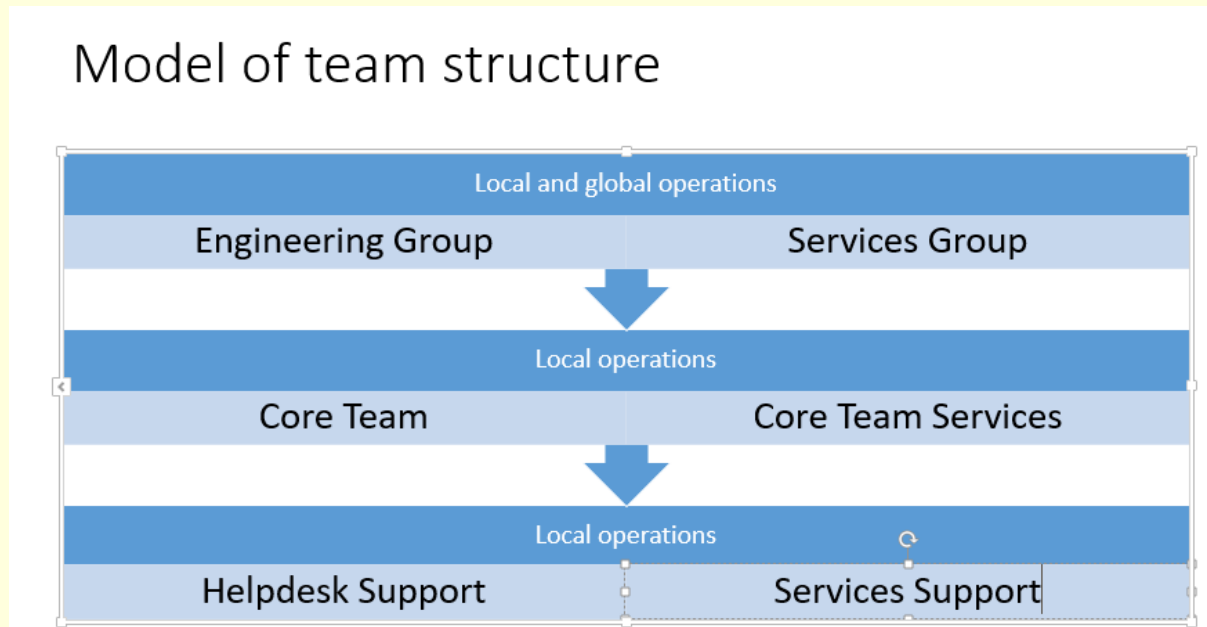
Attachment 2 – slide describing the Cork office

Team in Cork Office

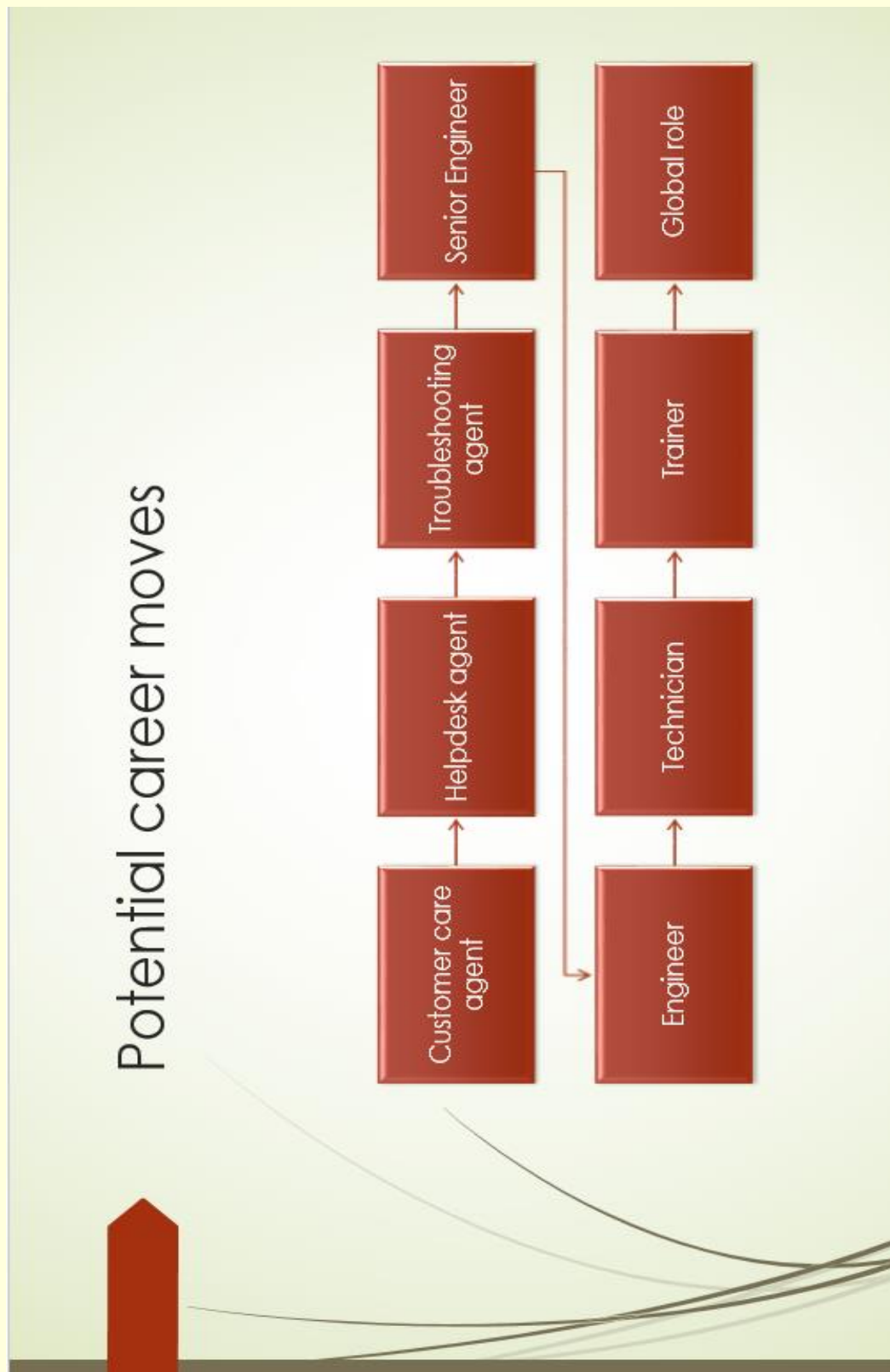


Staff	Number
Technical Managers	2
Team Engineers	2
Training Specialists	2
Customer Care	4
Helpdesk	4
Direct Support Engineers	4
Sales	2

Attachment 3 – Model of team structure



Attachment 4 Career paths



Attachment 5 – Training programme completed



Appendix 6 E mail of business correspondence

Team update for next quarter

Colleagues,

Please find the following updates for the forthcoming quarter;

- Updated script for Active Directory Fault Handling Process. Added instructions to determine if the modified script needs amending for requests related to errors on Logon.
- Added instructions to determine if Enduser is logging in for the first time after reinstallation for requests related to errors on Logon
- Updated script for Network Support Process
- Ongoing updates as they are needed

Appendix 7 Meeting notification for business security project

Subject: Updated: Bi-weekly meeting - WFBS - Project

Location:

Label:

▼

None

Start time:

Fri 26/03/2010

14:30

▼

☐ All day event

End time:

Fri 26/03/2010

15:00

▼

☐ Reminder:

15 minutes

▼

Show time as:

Busy

▼

☐ Meeting Workspace ...

☐ This is an online meeting using:

Microsoft NetMeeting ...

▼

Hello All,

This will be a bi-weekly meeting for the

WFBS

 project to keep you informed and hear about your experience.

We will have it every second Friday. Also I will update you about the location. Meeting on the 26.02.2010 will be in James Joyce room.

Contacts...

Categories...

▼

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Appendix 8 Presentation in Future Operations and Processes training that I delivered

Future Operations and Processes Project

Today's training will cover:

1. Timeline of the project
2. Budget
3. Staff involvement
4. Deliverables and other outputs

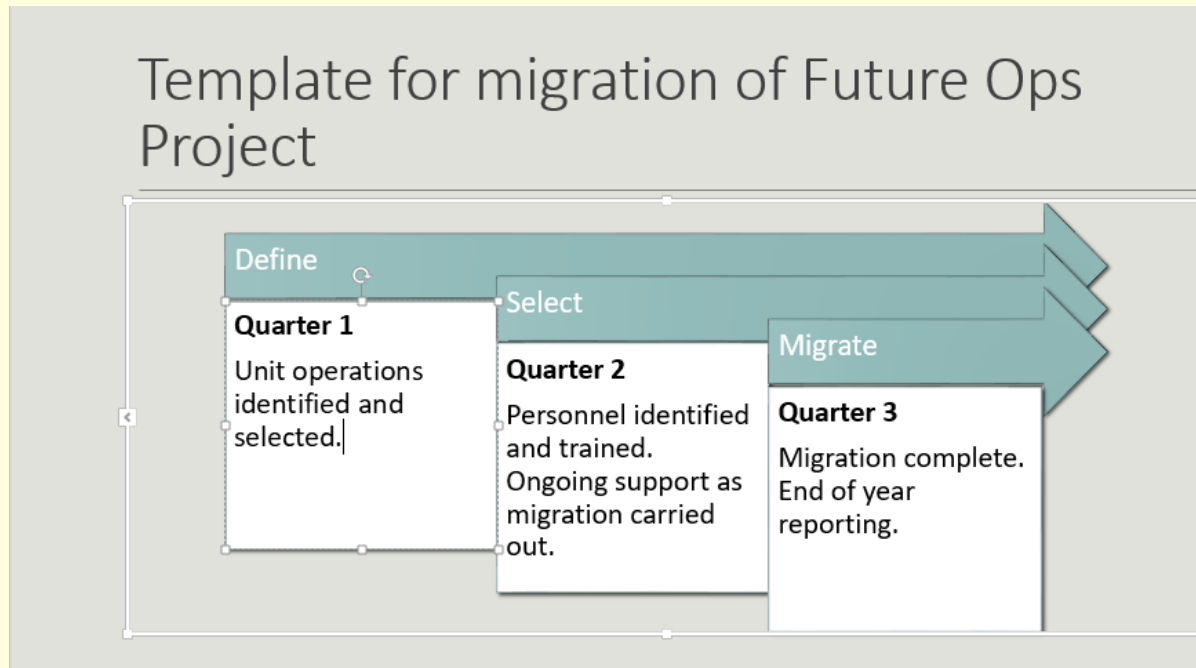


Appendix 9 – Data from Feedback Centre

Data from Feedback Centre

Ticket ID	Category	Type	Item	Issue	Resolved
00047999	Request	New	-	File corrupted	Yes
00378700	Request	New	-	File corrupted	Yes
00399657	Service	Re-occurring	12	Serial number checked	Yes
00987772	Request	New	-	Reboot for user	Yes

Appendix 10 – Template for migration



EXAMPLE OF A CASE BASED ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Appendix 11 – Weekly report delivered for project

2						
3	Week 18.05 - 25.05	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	Total E-mails received	40	26	49	16	19
5	Tickets to be created	52	29	62	16	21
6	Administrative	12	5	20	11	4
7						
8	Week 26.05 - 31.05					
9	Total E-mails received	38	42	37	24	33
10	Tickets to be created	34	51	23	20	18
11	Administrative	26	9	15	7	21
12						
13	Week 01.06 - 07.06					
14	Total E-mails received	31	32	44	36	22
15	Tickets to be created	35	29	52	40	23
16	Administrative	10	4	15	7	4
17						
18	Week 08.06 - 14.06					
19	Total E-mails received	31	28	29	23	35
20	Tickets to be created	30	26	23	22	31
21	Administrative	7	2	7	7	6
22						
23	Total E-mails received (weekdays)	140	128	159	99	109
24						

Appendix 12 – Communications template for Future Operations and Processes project

3	Communications template for Future Operations and Processes project					
4						
5	Initial response					
6						
7	Dear					
8	Thank you for contacting the Future Ops team.					
9	We have logged your query as <Future Ops reference number> and will process this immediately.					
10	We will send you an update by end of business today.					
11						
12						
13						
14	Follow up					
15						
16	Dear					
17	I would like to inform you that your query is still being processed.					
18	We have escalated the issue with our engineering team.					
19	I will send you an update tomorrow.					
20						
21	Close of request					
22						
23	Dear					
24	Your query logged as <Future Ops reference number> has now been resolved.					

Appendix 13 – Exel detailing unresolved issues on customer satisfaction

Log of unresolved issues		
Client details	Issue	Solution
Xxxxxx	Installed application does not work on laptop	Selected the app, and issued instructions to uninstall. Ran the trouble shoot to resolve the issue
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	Older version of software causing issues	Re-installed updated version of software, provided ongoing customer support while they resolved the issue.

Declaration

Name John Smith R00091911
Address 17 Stoney Street, Tralee

Home Telephone 022 422432
No. 022 422432

I wish to claim credit/ exemption based on my prior learning in respect of the module listed below. I submit claim documentation in accordance with the college's requirements. I accept that any advice or instruction given to me by the college or its staff in preparing the claim does not confer any entitlement to credit/ exemption in respect of the subject listed below.

- I Declare that I have registered for the module listed below in the current academic semester
- I enclose my Learning Portfolio
- I certify that all information submitted with this claim is an accurate description of my relevant learning to date.

Module for which exemption is being claimed PLAC6010 Work Placement Module

Course and Stage Higher Certificate in IT Support, stage 2

Signed **John Smith**

Date 25th March 2019

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