

National College of Ireland

Quality Assurance Handbook



3 Policy on Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation

November 2018

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3.1 Policy on Programme Development, Delivery & Evaluation

This document outlines the overarching and constituent policies on programme development, delivery and evaluation in National College of Ireland (NCI). These policies and the associated procedures do not exist in isolation, so cross reference will be made to other related policies and procedures where appropriate.

3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the contexts in which new programmes of study are developed and all programmes of study are delivered and reviewed.

3.1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all programmes developed and delivered by NCI. Where there are variations dependent upon awarding body, programme type or mode of delivery, they will be highlighted in the policy statement and/or related procedures.

3.1.3 Policy Statement

Programmes will be developed to ensure that graduates will be competent in a specific discipline. This competency will be measured in achievement of stated Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPOs) which are based on the knowledge, skills and competence framework of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Except where approved by Academic Council, all programmes developed by NCI will be placed on the NFQ or other equivalent and according to the award standards and criteria for validation of the appropriate awarding body.

All programmes regardless of their mode of study, modality of delivery or location are developed for validation in an accordance with the quality assurance procedures outlined in this handbook. Programmes will be designed to ensure that the National Policy on Access Transfer & Progression is adhered to and that there is a simple articulation and progression route within NCI or, alternatively, that arrangements can be made for such routes with named educational institutions and programmes.

Programmes will be developed that are **consistent with NCI's mission**, current strategic plan and learning, teaching & assessment strategy and where there are appropriate resources to deliver and support those programmes. Programme development is informed by consultation with stakeholders such as sectoral interest groups, prospective employers, national policy makers and learners.

Programmes are developed by Programme Development Teams, led by a Programme Director with oversight from the relevant Dean and/or Vice Dean. The project management of programme development is overseen by the Quality Assurance & Statistical Services (QASS) Office to ensure that the programme meets its development schedule and coincides with QQI deadlines

Apprenticeship programmes are developed and delivered in accordance with the ***Policy and Procedures for Apprenticeship Provision***. Programmes involving online and blended learning

are developed and delivered giving due regard to the *Guidelines on Technology Mediated Learning*. Programmes will be developed and delivered using the principles of universal design to ensure that all learners can access the programme and its curriculum. Programmes will be delivered and supported by appropriately qualified staff as outlined in *Policy on the Recruitment of Staff*.

3.1.3.1 Collaborative & Off-Campus Delivery

Where relevant, off-campus locations should be chosen so that they can support the semesterised delivery of programmes to coincide with on campus delivery. Off-campus centres shall be chosen using the procedures for the selection of off-campus locations (see Section 3.11 below). Programmes being developed or delivered for and/or with other organisations are required to adhere to the Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision (see Section 3.6 below). Opportunities for programme development and/or delivery with other institutions must adhere to the *Policy on Tendering for Educational Programmes* (see Section 3.7 below)

3.1.3.2 Programme Management

Programmes are managed using the *Guidelines for Programme Delivery* as set out in Chapter 5 (Section 5.5).

3.1.3.3 Annual Evaluation & Programme Review

Programmes and their delivery will be annually evaluated by their Programme Committee to ensure that they are being delivered according to their original validation, that minor amendments informed by learners and faculty can be incorporated and that their MIPLOs are being met.

Feedback will be sought from learners on their programme and/or modules studied using techniques such as anonymous survey, focus groups and national student engagement initiatives such as ISSE.

Programmes validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) will be reviewed at least every 5 years, while others will be reviewed in accordance with their awarding body's regulations. Any programmes which require variation to their *original* validation i.e. extension to an off-campus centre, another jurisdiction or introduction of blended learning components will require differential validation from their awarding body.

3.1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The following individuals have particular responsibilities in the development, delivery and review of programmes at NCI.

3.1.4.1 Programme Director

The Programme Director is responsible for the ongoing development of the programme, monitoring learner feedback and ensuring that delivery of the programme is in accordance with the quality assurance procedures of the College and the approved programme schedule

as validated by the awarding body. Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.7.10) for further information on the role and responsibilities of the Programme Director.

3.1.4.2 Dean of School

The Dean of School is responsible for ensuring that programmes submitted by their School are developed, delivered and evaluated in accordance with this policy. They are also responsible for reviewing all programmes to ensure that the learner is at the centre of all teaching, learning and assessment activities. Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.7.5) for further information on the role and responsibilities of the Dean of School.

3.1.4.3 Vice Dean of School

The Vice-Dean of School is responsible for the day-to-day oversight and practical delivery of programmes. They are responsible for timetabling teaching, learning and assessment activities and allocating responsibilities and resources in a line management capacity. Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.7.6 – 2.7.8) for further information on the role and responsibilities of the Vice Dean of School.

3.1.4.4 Dean of School

The Dean of School is ultimately responsible for ensuring that programmes submitted by their School are developed, delivered and evaluated in accordance with this policy.

3.1.4.5 Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services

The Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services (DQASS) is responsible for ensuring that this policy is compatible with the policies of the **College's awarding bodies. They are also** responsible for the project management of programme development and review and for submitting programmes for validation to the awarding body. Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.7.4) for further information on the role and responsibilities of the DQASS.

3.1.4.6 Vice President – Academic Affairs & Research

The Vice President is responsible for the strategic development of the programme portfolio in consultation with Deans of Schools. Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.7.2) for further information on the role and responsibilities of the Vice President – Academic Affairs & Research.

3.1.4.7 Registrar

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the records of validated programmes are held accurately on College systems. They are responsible for the due diligence processes for programmes developed and delivered under collaborative provision.

3.1.5 Related Documentation

[QQI \(2016\) Validation Policy & Criteria for Validation](#)

[QQI \(2016\) Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Statutory Apprenticeships](#)

[QQI \(2018\) Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning](#)

[QQI \(2013\) Policy on Access Transfer & Progression](#)

[QQI \(20XX\) Policy on Access Transfer & Progression](#)

3.1.6 Contacts

Queries regarding this policy should be addressed to the Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services (DQASS).

3.1.7 Policy Review & Indicators of Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and in accordance with QQI or other awarding body policy updates.

3.1.8 Related Procedures & Guidelines

- Policy and Procedures for the Development & Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Higher Education Awards (see Section 3.2 below)
- Guidelines on Programme Structures (see Section 3.5 below)
- Guidelines on Technology Mediated Learning (see Section Chapter 13)
- Policy on Collaborative & Transnational Provision (see Section 3.6 below)
- Policy on Tendering for Education Services (see Section 3.7 below)
- Policies and Procedures for Apprenticeship Provision (see Chapter 12)
- Policy on Programmes that do not Lead to Awards (see Section 3.14 below)
- Policy on Accreditation (see Section 3.12 below)
- Policy on Delivery of Professional Programmes (see Section 3.13 below)

3.2 Policy & Procedures for the Development & Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Higher Education Awards

3.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that programmes being submitted to QQI for validation are developed consistently and in accordance with QQI requirements. It also ensures that programmes are developed with sufficient regard to the resources required to deliver them once validated by QQI.

3.2.2 Scope

This policy applies to all programmes that are developed for submission to QQI for validation.

3.2.3 Policy

Programmes for validation by QQI should be developed having due regard from the outset to QQI's [Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training](#). Programmes are developed in accordance with the following principles:

- New programmes are proposed on behalf of a School
- Opportunities for programme development with other institutions adhere to the ***Policy on Tendering for Educational Programmes*** (see Section 3.7 below)
- Programmes are developed by Programme Development Teams, led by a Programme Director.
- Programmes developed in collaboration with other institutions adhere to the ***Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision*** (See Section 3.6 below)
- The project management of programme development is overseen by the Quality Assurance & Statistical Services Office to ensure that the programme meets its development schedule and coincides with QQI deadlines
- Apprenticeship programmes are developed in accordance with the ***Policy & Procedures for Apprenticeship Provision*** (Chapter 12 of the QAH)
- Programmes involving online and blended learning are developed giving due regard to the ***Guidelines for Technology Mediated Learning*** (Chapter 13 of the QAH)

As outlined in Table 3-1, a new programme undergoes 3 phases of development prior to being submitted to QQI for validation.

1. Initial programme feasibility study
2. Development to Interim Checkpoint
3. Development to Completion

3.2.3.1 Initial Programme Feasibility

This stage of development examines the feasibility of the programme, paying particular attention to the strategic and academic rationale for the proposed programme. Whilst the

programme being proposed may have been agreed during the strategic planning process, this process must be completed to ensure that the programme still has relevance to the strategic direction of the College and is viable, both academically and financially. This phase is supported by the Marketing & Student Recruitment Department.

In this phase, provisional programme learning outcomes are developed and a benchmarking process undertaken. The purpose of this stage is to review existing provision in the programme/subject area and to provide information according to which the proposed programme can be benchmarked. The outcome of the market analysis will inform the decision of the School to propose a programme for development.

The proposal template should be completed as completely as possible as this then allows programme development to formally commence. An outline project plan with target delivery dates based on the intended programme commencement date should also be provided. The paperwork to be submitted to Executive Group, Academic Operations Committee and Academic Council is the Programme Proposal Form (see Appendix 3.1).

3.2.3.2 Development to Interim Checkpoint

During this phase, the programme team will further develop the proposal to include programme learning outcomes, curriculum structure and learning, teaching & assessment strategy. The programme team should consider the viability of all modes of study and of delivery at this point. The likelihood of the requirement to deliver off-campus or transnationally should also be considered at this point.

This stage of development ends as an interim checkpoint in the programme development process which will allow further review of the viability of the proposal. It is expected that this will be at a time when sufficient development will have taken place for the programme team to provide indicative costs associated with delivering the programme and enable support services to commence planning for delivery of the programme. The alternative outcome of this phase may be the programme team recommending that development is ceased or postponed due to changing priorities, unforeseen costs or other issues affecting the academic and economic viability of the programme.

The date of this checkpoint will depend on the nature of the programme being developed and therefore will be indicated by the Programme Development Team in its outline project plan which will be developed in Stage 1. The paperwork to be submitted to Executive Group is the Interim Checkpoint Form (see Appendix 3.2).

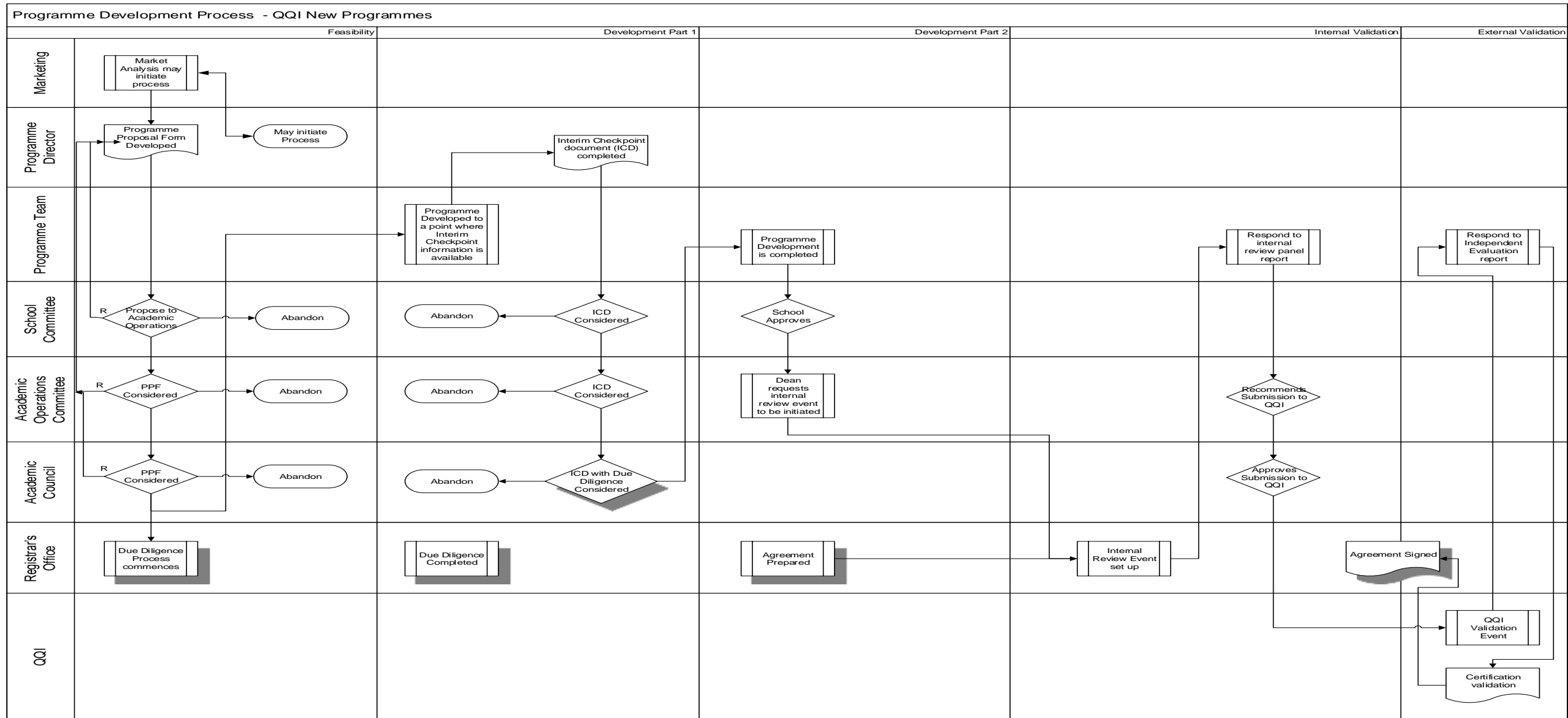


Figure 3-1 Programme Development Process

The likelihood of the requirement to delivery off-campus or transnationally should also be considered at this point.

Stakeholder groups such as sectoral organisations, prospective employers, national policy makers and learners should be consulted with at this stage of development.

It is expected that this will be at a time where sufficient development will have taken place for the programme team to provide indicative costs associated with running the programme and enable support services to commence planning for delivery of the programme.

An outcome of this phase may result in the programme team recommending that development is ceased or postponed due to changing priorities, unforeseen costs or other issues affecting the academic and economic viability of the programme.

The date of this checkpoint will depend on the nature of the programme being developed and therefore will be indicated by the programme development team in its outline project plan which will be developed in Stage 1. The paperwork to be submitted to Executive Group and Academic Operations Committee is Form : QASS-3.PD.PD1

3.2.3.3 Development to Completion

Once approved to proceed, the programme will proceed to final completion. The programme development and documentation should be completed with reference to the above criteria and templates for submission. Programme developers should ensure to use the correct templates for submission for the type of programme under development. These are available at QASS resources page.

When the programme is deemed fit by the Programme Development Team, an internal review will be scheduled in association with the QASS Office to critically and reflexively assess if the programme is ready for formal application for validation to QQI.

3.2.3.4 Self-Assessment Report

Prior to submitting a programme for validation, the programme team should prepare a self-assessment report detailing how it believes that the programme meets the validation criteria outlined by QQI. This self-assessment should be evaluative, noting areas that will require monitoring to ensure that the quality and standards of the proposed programme can be maintained.

3.2.3.5 Internal Review Panel

This is a critical phase of the development process. The purpose of the Internal Review Panel is to make an impartial judgement on the standard, content and conduct of the proposed programme. **The term 'internal' refers to the ownership of the process. The panel will have members external to NCI.** The Internal Review Panel must satisfy itself that the validation criteria laid out above are met.

Composition of Internal Review Panel

The School proposing the programme is responsible for nominating members to the Internal Review Panel (IRP). The IRP should include members that familiar with current practice and developments in the relevant discipline. Industry, Academia and the College shall be represented on the Internal Review Panel. The IRP shall use the Outline Timetable and Content of a Typical Internal Review Event (see Appendix 3.3) as its agenda. The QASS Office will provide secretarial support to the panel.

The IRP comprises no less than four persons nominated by the School as follows:

- A chairperson, generally the Vice President, Academic Affairs & Research, the Registrar or a senior academic from a School not involved in developing the programme;
- A member or a nominee of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee;
- Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services or nominee
- At least one external academic in the proposed programme discipline
- An external Industry representative in the area of the proposed programme
- Learner representative for the NCI student body
- Additional members may be added to the Panel where this is deemed necessary by to address to address the specific aspects of the Programme Submission Document.

Report of Internal Review Panel

Where an IRP is satisfied that the validation criteria have been met, the QASS Office shall prepare an Internal Review Report to be sent to the Programme Director for consideration by the Programme Development Committee. This report will follow the template outlined in Appendix 3.3 and will indicate the outcome as either:

- Satisfactory
- Satisfactory with conditions, or
- Not satisfactory

The report of the IRP and response from the School shall be circulated to the Academic Operations Committee for approval to proceed to validation. Where an IRP is not satisfied that the validation criteria have been met, the Programme Committee will be requested to resubmit the programme for further evaluation. This may require re-convening the panel.

The report and response of the Programme Development Team forms part of the final self-evaluation assessment provided to QQI on application for validation.

3.2.3.6 Approval by Academic Operations Committee

On recommendation from the relevant Dean of School, the Academic Operations Committee (AOC) will approve submission to QQI on receipt of the recommendation of the IRP. The AOC should receive the following documentation:

- A brief overview of the programme outlining the rationale, intended audience, programme level learning outcomes and the proposed course schedule
- A copy of the internal review report and the School response to that report

- A copy of the programme team's self-assessment report

3.2.3.7 Arrangement of Protection for Enrolled Learners

As a provider subject to section 65(1) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, NCI is required to submit details in writing to QQI of the arrangements it has in place in accordance with section 65(4) of the 2012 Act when making an application for validation. NCI has an arrangement under the HECA PEL Scheme which is agreed with QQI. Under this arrangement, agreements to provide learner protection by two members of HECA should be made prior to the application being made to QQI.

3.2.3.8 Application to QQI

The Programme Director provides all documentation to be submitted to QQI. This documentation should be provided to the QASS Office together with a signed declaration from the relevant Dean of School that it has undergone the internal validation process above and that the programme is ready for application to QQI.

The QASS is responsible for submitting the documentation to QQI in accordance with Unit 5 of ***Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training***. The documentation typically required is:

1. The programme submission document(s) and any appendices
2. Self -Assessment Report
3. Fee Cover note which includes PO for QQI validation fee
4. Documentation confirming PEL arrangements

3.2.3.9 Validation by QQI

Programmes are validated by QQI using its processes for programme validation as outlined in Unit 5-7 of ***Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training***. Where advised by QQI, the QASS Office will take responsibility for elements of the process which have been devolved under Memorandum of Agreement to NCI, unit 6.2. of its policy. This process is undertaken according to the procedure outlined in Section 3.4 below.

3.2.3.10 Communication with QQI

All communication with QQI takes place from the QASS Office only.

3.2.3.11 Preparation for External Validation Event

The External Validation Event, which includes the visit by the External Validation Panel to the College is organised by the QASS Office, in co-operation with the Dean of School. The QASS

Office agrees a date and location for the external Validation Event with QQI and notifies the Dean of School of the agreed arrangements.

3.2.3.12 Preparation within School for External Validation Event

The Programme Director undertakes the following duties in preparation for the External Validating Event:

- Ensures that final copies of the Programme Submission Document are available to the members of the Programme Development Team in adequate time prior to the Validation event.
- Organises meetings of the Programme Development Team to prepare to present the Programme Submission Document in the best way possible to the External Validation Panel.

3.2.3.13 Validation by QQI

Validation of a programme is undertaken by the programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC). A programme should not be considered approved to commence until such time as the Certificate of Validation is received by the College or permission has been given by QQI. The programme status is then updated on the College MIS system (QuercusPlus) **by the Registrar's Office**.

The title, duration, mode, award, curriculum and assessment structure are cross checked against the approved course schedule **by the Registrar's Office to ensure that the correct record is available for Certification** when learners complete the programme. The Registrar will, within 6 months of course approval, independently verify that the programme delivered corresponds to that approved by QQI.

3.2.3.14 Programme Commencement

Executive Group approves the commencement of a programme. A programme may not commence until receipt of the Certificate of Validation from QQI.

3.2.4 Programme Records

The Approved Programme Document consists of the final version of the Programme Submission Document as submitted to QQI, and includes the Approved Course Schedules. A copy of this documentation and of the formal approval from the Awarding Body will be held on the college document management system as the definitive approved document. Any changes undertaken under Programme Delivery and Evaluation as outlined below will be added to this record.

3.2.4.1 Protection for Enrolled Learners

Under NCI's obligations for Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) and membership of the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) PEL Scheme, the HECA Executive should be informed that the programme has been approved and the database containing the list of NCI programmes is to be updated. The programme records should be uploaded to the agreed location under NCI's action plan for PEL.

3.2.5 Roles & Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|--------------------|--|
| Programme Director | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing the programme forward for approval through each of the stages of development Managing the development of the programme according to the agreed timelines Provision of final documentation to QASS for submission to QQI |
| Dean of School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreeing that the initial proposal can be brought forward for approval Sign off that the programme is ready for internal review panel Sign off that the programme is ready for submission to QQI |
| DQASS (or nominee) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the project management of the programme within the overall programme development portfolio Set up internal validation events Write the internal validation report Request PEL cover from HECA partners where appropriate Submit validation documentation to QQI Liaison with QQI for validation of the programme Set up where responsibility is devolved the Independent Evaluation Review panel. Advise the programme director of feedback from QQI on programme screening or from the Independent Evaluation Panel after validation Advise the HECA executive of approval for PEL purposes |
| Registrar's Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross reference QQI Certificate of Validation with programmes submitted for title and programme schedule accuracy |

| Role | Responsibility |
|----------------|--|
| | Update the student information system to reflect the status of the programme |
| | Manage the programme record on the College's document management system |
| Registrar | Chair Internal Validation Event |
| | Verify that the approved programme is that being delivered. |
| Vice President | Chair Internal validation event |
| | Recommend overall portfolio development strategy |
| | Recommend commitment of resources to Executive Team |

3.2.6 Related Documentation

| Policies, Procedures & Guidelines | Forms & Templates |
|--|---|
| Policy on Tendering for Educational Programmes (see Section 3.7 below) | Programme Proposal Form (see Appendix 3.1) |
| Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision (see Section 3.6 below) | Interim Checkpoint Form (see Appendix 3.2) |
| Policy & Procedures for Apprenticeship Provision (see Chapter 12) | Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships, 3 rd Edition, 2018 (see Appendix 3.4) |
| Guidelines on Programme and Module Structure (see Section 3.5 below) | Internal Review Report (see Appendix 3.3) |
| Guidelines for Technology Mediated Learning (see Chapter 13) | |
| Policy on Devolved Responsibility for Arranging an Independent Evaluation Report (see Section 3.4 below) | |

3.2.7 Contact

Any questions arising from the interpretation of this policy or application of the outlined procedures should be made directly to the DQASS.

3.2.8 Policy Review & Indicators of Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years or as QQI policy is amended. Effectiveness will be measured based on:

1. the successful referral of programmes for validation at internal validation stage

2. the successful validation of programmes when submitted to QQI
3. the number of programmes rejected at feasibility stage
4. the quality of the information available to programme delivery teams post validation
5. the convergence of assumptions on the resources required to deliver a programme before and after validation
6. the convergence of the findings of the self-evaluation of the Programme Development Team and the independent evaluation panel.

3.3 Policy for the Development of Programmes Leading to QQI FE Awards

Proposals for programmes leading to QQI FE awards shall be proposed as outlined in Section 3.2 above. **Programmes shall be developed and internally approved in accordance with QQI's [Policies and Criteria for the validation of programmes leading to Common Award System \(CAS\)](#).** Application for validation will be made using QQI procedures.

3.4 External Validation Process where the Arrangement of the Independent Evaluation Report has been Devolved

3.4.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that programmes being submitted to QQI for validation are developed consistently and in accordance with QQI requirements. It also ensures that programmes are developed with sufficient regard to the resources required to deliver them once validated by QQI.

3.4.2 Scope

This policy applies to taught programmes at level 6-9 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications for submission to QQI for validation. The scope of devolved responsibility is limited to taught programmes up to NQF Level 9 in Business, Computing, Psychology (excluding clinical psychology) and Education excluding:

1. First time collaborative provision of programmes where there is no collaborative agreement or relationship already in place
2. Transnational programmes delivered in new transnational destinations
3. Programmes leading to joint awards
4. Statutory Apprenticeship programmes

Programmes may be offered on a full or part-time basis, and delivered in traditional, or **blended modes**. **Programmes developed for blended modes are developed using NCI's quality assurance guidelines for blended learning** (see Chapter 13).

Programmes leading to major awards may be delivered at the IFSC campus only. Those leading to minor or special purpose awards may be delivered at the approved locations indicated in

Appendix 2 of the memorandum of agreement or those selected using agreed quality assurance procedures as outlined below.

3.4.3 Policy

QQI's *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training* prescribes the process and criteria to be used for validation as well as the documentation required when submitting an application for the validation of a new programme. The steps below are based on this policy.

3.4.4 Responsibilities within NCI:

- Dean of School
- Programme developer
- Programme Development Team (provisional programme committee)
- Registrar
- Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services
- Academic Council
- Executive Group

3.4.5 Pre-Requisites

This process cannot commence until the programme to be validated has completed the internal validation process as defined in Section 3.2.3.5 above and the programme team has satisfactorily responded to its conditions and/or recommendations of the internal review report.

3.4.6 Related NCI Policies and Processes

- Policies and procedure for the development of new programmes
- Policies and procedures for the validation and revalidation of new programmes
- Policies and procedures for the delivery of programmes
- Policies and procedure for collaborative and transnational provision

3.4.7 Validation Process

Devolved responsibility commences at Step 3: Independent Evaluation (see Section 3.4.10 below) and ends at Step 7: Final Panel Assessment (see Section 3.4.14 below) of the process as outlined. These steps are situated in the context of the overall validation process which applies to all proposed QQI validated programmes.

3.4.8 Step 0: Pre-Application Processes

In order to facilitate as efficient a validation process as possible, there are 3 activities that take place shortly before the programme is due to be submitted to QQI for validation

1. Notification of the application to QQI
2. Final check of programme documentation
3. Preparing nominations for the independent evaluation panel

3.4.8.1 Notification to QQI

The DQASS or nominee will formally advise QQI that an application is expected to be made one month before the application is scheduled to be completed. As part of this notification, a purchase order is generated and the fees cover note will be completed. This process triggers the issue of an invoice from QQI.

3.4.8.2 Documentation Check

The DQASS, or other person appointed by Academic Council, shall conduct a Pre-Validation Check of the submission documentation to determine whether or not the programme:

- addresses the validation criteria and programme description and accords with the guidelines in *QQI's Programme Validation Manual for Programme of HET and Apprenticeships* (see Appendix 7)
- **has been developed and internally validated using NCI's agreed quality assurance procedures**
- has appropriate measures for the Protection for Enrolled Learners in accordance with QQI Protocols for Implementation

The DQASS must also ensure that the self-assessment document is completed and demonstrates a critical evaluation of the programme based on the validation criteria and that the invoice relating to the validation has been paid.

Outcomes of the Pre-Validation Check can include:

- a. A recommendation that the programme is submitted to QQI for validation. Such a recommendation will only be made where all of the validation documentation required by the CPCV is fully complete and finalised including a Self-Assessment Report against the QQI validation criteria;
- b. The documentation is returned to the Programme Development Team for reworking based on specific weaknesses outlined in the Pre-Validation Check; or
- c. A recommendation that the programme not be submitted to QQI for validation at this time. The documentation is returned to the Programme Development Team for reworking based on specific weaknesses outlined in the self-assessment report.

3.4.8.3 Preparing Panel Nominations

An external evaluation of the programme(s) submitted for evaluation is carried out by a panel of independent evaluators (the Panel). The Panel is required to make an impartial judgement on the standard, content and conduct of the proposed programme. Independent evaluators must be competent to make a recommendation on whether or not the programme should be validated. Competence means the capacity to make judgements against the applicable QQI validation criteria. Specifically, an evaluator or an evaluation group will be selected to have the competence to justify their recommendation whatever it may be.

All nominees for panel membership will be external to and independent of NCI. The Panel is constituted on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the validation criteria **and QQI's [Guidelines Participating on Evaluation Panels as a Peer Reviewer \(2015\)](#)**. The Panel will require expertise in the **programme's discipline** area and in generic areas including pedagogy, assessment, and quality assurance.

Nominees to the Panel should be competent to make national and international comparisons. Nominees to the Panel must include a learner and must have at least 40% of equal gender representation. The Chairperson must have attended a QQI training event or at least been briefed by QQI on the requirements.

Sourcing Nominees

The DQASS is responsible for constituting the nominated panel and approving nominations made to QQI. These nominations are made as part of the documentation set outlined in Step 1: Application to QQI.

Panel nominees may be sourced via the following mechanisms:

- staff and faculty networks
- **the College's CRM system,**
- Media such as HEI websites, LinkedIn etc.
- Nominees suggested by QQI

The panel must be agreed by QQI prior to its confirmation of engagement. QQI will revert on whether or not it agrees the panel composition within 2 weeks of receipt of nominations and a complete application for validation.

When contacted, nominees should be provided with sufficient information to allow them to decide whether or not their workload permits them to fully participate in the programme evaluation. Information such as listed below should be provided at minimum

- Number and levels of programmes being evaluated
- The expected commitment in terms of documentation to be evaluated in advance of the meeting
- The expected duration of the site visit, including any pre-meetings
- Commitments in respect of correspondence with the Chair, Secretary and expected turnaround times for reports

Panel Composition

The panel is comprised of not less than four members as follows:

- A Chairperson, generally a Registrar or a senior academic
- A Secretary to the panel who will ensure that the report is finalised.
- At least two academics in the proposed programme discipline (normally including at least one from the university sector for programmes leading to awards at Honours Bachelor's Degree or higher NFQ levels).
- An Industry/sectoral representative in the area of the proposed programme.
- At least one person who is familiar with QQI and NFQ standards, policy and criteria.
- A learner on a programme similar to the programme being evaluated.
- Additional members may be added to the Panel where this is deemed necessary to address the specific aspects of the Programme Submission Document.
- The panel should be gender balanced (40% of each)

The QASS Office will provide administrative support to the panel.

Please Note: QQI is responsible for appointing the panel **as outlined in Section 6.1 of QQI's Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training**, "QQI will exercise its judgment as to the number of evaluators that may be required in respect of the programme in question and the competences required having regard to the particular programme and the relevant QQI awards standards."

Criteria for the Nomination of Panel Members

- Nominees as Members of the panel must be external to and independent of NCI
- Expert panel members must be included in the QQI Register of Experts. Where the NCI nominates a person who is not already in the QQI Register of Experts it should complete a nomination form to include this person in the Register. This form is provided by and should be submitted to QQI as part of Step 1.
- Participation in an expert panel is normally on a pro bono publico basis, and expenses are covered for all relevant activities. Standard public sector norms apply and a suitable expenses guideline is issued to all panel members on appointment to a specific panel. Where a panel member is not a serving public servant, they may be paid in accordance with current QQI policy on panel expenses.
- A period of five years should have elapsed before former staff members of NCI can be nominated to a panel
- A period of five years should have elapsed before former external examiners can be nominated to a panel
- A period of five years should have elapsed before graduates of NCI may be nominated of the panel but this must be declared. In all cases, persons with family or other relationship with any members employed by or attending NCI cannot be nominated to a panel.
- Any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest should be considered when approaching a prospective nominee.
- Panel members must formally accept nomination and the terms of participation on the panel in accordance with QQI policy on participation on panels.
- When contacting prospective nominees to ascertain availability and willingness to participate, the QASS Office will make it clear to nominees that their participation on

the panel is subject to agreement of QQI and that non selection in the final agreed panel is subject to ensuring balance and is not a reflection on their suitability.

- Due regard should be taken to ensure that nominees come from a variety of institutions or organisations.
- Due regard should be taken to ensure that there is sufficient rotation of the nominated Chairperson so that there is variety in role of the chairperson

Conflict of Interest

Panel Nominees will be required to read QQI's [Guidelines Participating on Evaluation Panels as a Peer Reviewer \(2015\)](#) and sign the relevant declarations provided by QQI.

Communication with Panel Members

Communication with Panel members in relation to the validation process is made exclusively by members of the QASS Office. No other member of staff may communicate with any panel member on matters relating to the validation/revalidation event.

3.4.9 Step 1: Application to QQI

As part of the application to QQI, the following documents should be finalised and **submitted via QQI's QHELP facility**:

- a. The programme submission document
- b. Self-Assessment Report
- c. Fee cover note and confirmation that the fee required has been paid.
- d. Confirmation of Protection for Enrolled Learner arrangement where appropriate and completed documentation
- e. Panel Nominations pack which includes for each nominee;
 - a. completed nomination forms
 - b. Signed QQI confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration
 - c. Signed data protection form
- f. Confirmation that the invoice for validation has been paid

Step 1 must be completed at least 6 weeks in advance of any planned panel date. Application to QQI is made by the DQASS or nominee within the QASS office.

3.4.9.1 Step 2: Application Screening by QQI

Upon receipt of the application, QQI will conduct a screening process as outlined in Section 5.5 of the CPCV. It is at this point that QQI will formally advise NCI if the site visit and arrangement of the independent evaluation report are to be managed under devolved responsibility.

The site visit and independent evaluation cannot take place until QQI advises in writing that screening has taken place and that the site visit can proceed.

3.4.10 Step 3: Independent Evaluation

In arranging site visits, due regard should be given to the time available to panel members and the workload associated with participating in panels. Sufficient time must be allowed for consideration of materials in advance of the panel meeting and for the programmes to be evaluated during the course of the site visit itself.

3.4.10.1 Provision of Documentation to the Panel

Documentation must be provided to members of the panel at least 3 weeks prior to the site visit. The documents provided must include:

- Programme documentation as outlined in Section 3.4.8.2 above
- Agenda for the day
- Membership of the panel
- Terms of reference if the panel is involved in programmatic review leading to revalidation

They should also be provided with links to:

- Relevant awards standards
- ***Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training*** (QQI)
- Assessment & Standards (QQI).
- NCI's Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

3.4.10.2 Pre-Panel Meeting

Panel members are invited to complete an 'Initial Comments' form provided by QQI in advance of the meeting and forward this directly to the panel chairperson. In the case of major award programmes, the panel will normally meet the evening before the panel event in order to discuss the application and arrange the structure of the panel meeting. In all cases, the agenda will allow sufficient time for the panel to deliberate before, during and after the meeting with programme staff.

The Chair of the panel may request additional supplementary documentation to elaborate context or background relating to the programme being considered for validation. This may be quality assurance procedures, operational procedures, annual reports etc. The DQASS will provide such additional information as the Chair deems necessary for the site visit to take place.

3.4.10.3 Panel Event (Site Visit)

The External Validation Event, which normally includes a site visit by the External Validation Panel to the College, is organised by the QASS Office. At the event, the panel evaluates the submitted programme(s) according to **QQI's Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training**.

QQI shall be invited to send a representative to observe the event. Should a conflict of interest arise during the site visit, the relevant procedures outlined in current QQI guidelines should be used.

3.4.11 Step 4: Preparation of the Independent Evaluation Report of the Panel

The Chairperson/Secretary shall prepare an agreed Independent Evaluation Report (IER) to be sent to the Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services within an agreed time frame, normally within two weeks of the site visit. The report **shall be written using QQI's template** (see Appendix 5).

3.4.12 Step 5: Factual Accuracy Check

The Chairperson of the panel shall invite the College to point out in writing within one week of receipt of the draft report, to the Chairperson of the panel, if there are any factual inaccuracies in the report. If there are factual errors in the draft IER, these will be corrected and a revised report will be agreed by the panel and issued to the College. If the College is satisfied that the draft IER is factually accurate, or where inaccuracies are uncovered and corrected, the Chairperson of the panel shall submit the final IER to the DQASS.

3.4.13 Step 6: Submission of the Independent Evaluation Report to QQI

The DQASS, or nominee, will send the final draft IER to QQI along with an account of the conduct of the independent evaluation process. NCI will also provide a memorandum on the context for and conduct of the process, noting any concerns or complaints expressed by participants in the process.

QQI shall review the IER and, normally within 2 weeks of receipt, will formally request that the College responds in writing, within an agreed specified time, on the panel's findings, conclusions, prerequisites for validation, conditions and recommendations.

3.4.14 Step 7: Final Panel Assessment

Following consideration of the programme team's response, the panel agrees a brief statement setting out its reaction and its final recommendations to QQI regarding validation. This statement shall be included as an addendum to the IER and included in the submission to QQI

3.4.15 Step 8: QQI Decision

The DQASS will submit a final set of documentation to QQI for consideration by the Programme & Awards Executive Committee (PAEC). Documentation is provided at least 3 weeks prior to the PAEC meeting scheduled to consider the documentation. The pack will contain revised programme documents, the **'consolidated report'**, which includes;

- The IER;
- the **panel's addendum to the report if applicable**;
- the response to the report;
- a report from the DQASS on the context for and conduct of the process, including any concerns raised by the College during the process;
- proposed programme schedule; and

- revised outline of the programme as per the IER.

The report may be adopted without amendment or additional conditions may be imposed.

The Certificate of Validation and Approved Course Schedule is forwarded by QQI to the **Registrar's Office, where it is checked against the final documentation submitted.** Any anomalies should be reported immediately to QQI.

The DQASS will advise relevant departments of the decision of QQI. This may include

- Relevant School
- Admissions Office
- International Office
- Marketing
- Collaborative Partners

3.4.16 Role of the QASS Office during the Process

3.4.16.1 Support to the Panel

The QASS Office will provide administrative and logistical support to the panel immediately prior to and during the panel event. At the outset and in agreement with the Chair, the office representative will review the terms of reference with the panel members and answer any queries in relation to the process.

3.4.16.2 Communication with QQI

All communication takes place from the Director Quality Assurance & Statistical Services Office only.

3.4.17 Disputes and Failure of the Process

If the College is concerned about the validity of the IER it may refer the matter in writing to QQI along with an account of the process and the draft panel report. At this point the responsibility for managing the remainder of the validation process will revert to QQI. QQI may charge up to 50% of the full validation fee for this service depending on the complexity of the issues and will apply its standard processes.

Disputes or complaints regarding the process will be managed using QQI's policy on complaints and appeals (available [here](#)).

3.4.18 Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Both QQI and NCI are subject to Freedom of Information legislation. The final report is the record of this process and the final programme submission document is the record of the approved programme. These records are subject to the document retention and disposal policies of NCI.

Personal data relating to nominated and actual panel members will be retained by the QASS Office in accordance with current data protection legislation and the document retention and disposal policies of NCI (see Chapter 9 (9.11)). Personal data relating to nominated and actual

panel members will be transferred to QQI only with the consent of the person involved and for the purposes identified.

3.4.19 Evaluation of the Process

At the close of each event, a questionnaire is sent to each panel member by QQI. QQI will share the overall outcomes of surveys relating to NCI as part of this process. At the discretion of the DQSS, a periodic evaluation of the process and outcomes of both internal and external validation events will be undertaken to review themes such as:

- Patterns in conditions & recommendations
- Sourcing of panel members
- Faculty and other relevant staff members' perceptions of the validation process

The timing of this review will be determined by the level and volume of validation activity. The outcomes will inform review of policy and procedure with respect to programme development and validation, professional development events and/or sectoral consultations. Both NCI and QQI will monitor the implementation of the process and provide feedback on its operation.

3.4.20 Responsibilities

3.4.20.1 Director Quality Assurance & Statistical Services or nominee within QASS Office

- Programme management of the development of the programme
- Organise the internal validation event
- Carry out Step 0 of this process
- Prepare nominations list for panel of experts and seek agreement from QQI
- Forward relevant documentation to QQI as per Step 1 of this process
- Organise the panel site visit and briefing documents
- Communicate with panel Chair, Secretary and members
- Maintain records of the process
- Communicate QQI decisions to relevant stakeholders
- Commission evaluation of the process

3.4.20.2 Registrar

- Maintain the record of approved programme schedules
- Maintain the record of programme approval certificates

3.4.20.3 Dean of School

- Approve programme submission documents for submission to Step 0: Pre-Application Process of this process.
- Provide confirmation that the conditions and/or recommendations of the panel report are met

3.4.20.4 Programme Developer

- Provide final documentation to DQASS for consideration at Step 0: Pre-Application Process including the Self-Assessment report
- Provide appropriate response to the conditions and /or recommendations of the expert panel
- Upon successful validation and prior to programme commencement, appoint Programme Director and Programme Committee

3.4.20.5 Provisional Programme Committee

- Rework on documentation resulting from Step 0: Pre-Application Process or Step 1: Application to QQI.
- Provide appropriate response to the conditions and/or recommendations of the panel

3.4.20.6 Academic Council

- Approve initiation of programme development process
- Appoint persons other than the DQASS or Registrar to undertake Step 0 of this process as appropriate.
- Consider the Consolidated reports submitted to QQI and any issues arising
- Record outcomes of the process in the minute of Council

3.4.20.7 Executive Group

- Approve initiation of programme development process
- Approve commencement of programme delivery

3.5 Guidelines on the Structure of Programmes and Modules

3.5.1 Introduction

These guidelines have been created to give programme teams guidance on how to structure programmes and modules when designing programmes. These guidelines are technical by their nature and do not provide guidance on issues of pedagogy.

3.5.2 General Principles for Higher Education Programmes

- Programmes are developed as Major, Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental Awards according to [Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications](#). The size of the programme will determine the award type. Programme size is expressed in terms of credit.
- There are national and European guides to the use of credit, which should be applied to the development of programmes at National College of Ireland.
- Modules on higher education programmes should be expressed in credit sizes of a minimum of 5 and thereafter in multiples of 5 where 1 credit = 25 effort hours (ECTS). Please see [ECTS Users' Guide](#) for further information.

- Programmes are developed and delivered in Stages. For undergraduate major awards, a stage is normally complete when 60 credits of learning has been completed. This stage may be delivered over more than 1 academic year in the case of part-time programmes.
- Part-time programmes should normally be delivered with no more than 20 ECTS per semester or term. An exception is the award year. The delivery pattern will be approved as part of the validation process.
- Where programmes are developed to be delivered in semesters, semesters consist of 15 weeks during which teaching, independent learning and assessment is completed.
- Semesters may not be appropriate for smaller volume minor and special purpose awards.

Table 1 outlines the typical structures of awards as appropriate to their level and size.

| NFQ Level | Award Type | Awarding Body | Credit Range | Award Title |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| 6 | Major | QQI | 120 | Higher Certificate |
| 6 | Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental | QQI | 10-60 | Certificate |
| 7 | Major | QQI | 180 | BA (Ord) BSc (Ord) |
| 7 | Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental | QQI | 10-60 | Certificate < 60 credits Diploma ≥ 60 credits |
| 8 | Major | QQI | 180-240 | BA(Hons) BSc (Hons) |
| 8 | Major | QQI | 60 | Higher Diploma |
| 8 | Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental | QQI | 10-60 | Certificate < 60 credits Diploma ≥ 60 credits |
| 9 | Major | QQI | 60 90 | Postgraduate Diploma Masters Degree |
| 9 | Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental | QQI | 10-60 | Certificate < 60 credits Diploma ≥ 60 credits |
| 10 | Major | MU | | |

Table 3-1: Structure of Education Awards

3.6 Policy and Procedures for the Design, Approval and Quality Management of Collaborative Provision & Transnational Education Programmes

This policy details the policy and procedures which should be followed for the design, approval and ongoing quality management of taught or research programmes operated in collaboration with other organisations in Ireland or internationally. QQI's

This policy is based on QQI's Policy for [Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards \(2012\)](#) is a key external reference point. However, the policy is interdependent with other College policies and procedures relating to programme development, teaching, learning and assessment. These should be read in conjunction with this document when relevant. Finally, it draws on the (OECD) [Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education \(2005\)](#), the experiences of other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), such as Kent University, University of Reading and Manchester Metropolitan University, and best practices developed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the UK.

Schools that are considering the development of a proposal for collaborative provision should contact the following individuals at the earliest possible opportunity prior to developing a formalised relationship with a potential partner in order to receive guidance and advice on the feasibility of developing such a proposal and the process for doing so:

- Vice-President – Academic Affairs & Research
- The relevant Dean of School (where not directly involved in development of the initiative)
- The Registrar
- Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services
- Academic Partnership Manager (Where a proposal involves an overseas institution)

This policy should also be consulted when reviewing applications for admission under advanced entry from prospective partner Colleges from other jurisdictions and where agreements are being made to guarantee places on NCI programmes under advanced entry.

3.6.1 Policy on Collaborative Provision

Collaboration with other HEIs, industry and community organisations was identified as being one of the critical aspects of achieving the goals of NCI's strategic plan. The College recognises the benefits of further developments in this area, but also the costs and potential risks, and therefore it considers proposals for collaborative provision on a case-by-case basis according to their merits.

Underpinning collaborative activity is a set of key principles which form the College's policy on collaborative provision. All activities:

- **must be consistent with the College's strategic plans, (ideally) arise from School plans and be congruent with the School's academic provision, bringing clear benefits to all those involved;**
- should only be with other organisations that have:
 - the academic OR professional standing to successfully deliver programmes of study to appropriate academic standards;

- the financial standing to sustain them;
 - adequate infrastructure facilities and resources (including appropriate staffing) to support them; and
 - the legal standing to contract to their delivery
- should be equivalent in quality and standards to comparable programmes delivered solely by the College;
 - should be comparable in student learning, support and experiences to those programmes based at the College;
 - should give adequate opportunity for student representation and feedback;
 - should be financially viable and feasible, and be fully costed and priced accordingly;
 - should not be over-reliant on an individual member of staff, either within the National College of Ireland or the other organisation; and
 - should be compliant with internal and national (Irish or EU) legislative requirements and adhere to the principles of the Charter on inclusive teaching (AHEAD 2010) and guidelines for the teaching of international students (IHEQN, 2009)

The due diligence activities of the process should test each of these principles. Except where the subject matter of the course is a language, English is the primary language of instruction and assessment.

3.6.2 Defining collaborative provision

Building on the definition of collaborative provision given in **QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards**, NCI defines collaborative provision as:

Any programme directly leading to an award (QQI or professional body) which is delivered in part or in whole through an arrangement with a partner organisation. A partner organisation may be another education provider, professional body, business or community organisation.

In this context, **'delivered'** includes any combination of one or more of the following activities: admissions decisions, teaching, programme design, preparation of learning materials, and assessment.

Activities which fulfil this definition fall into the following categories:

- The application for validation of programmes designed and delivered jointly with the partner institution where that institution:
 - is not an education provider, or
 - is one which does not have degree awarding powers e.g. another QQI provider who does not have delegated authority)
- Collaboration on research projects (see Chapter 11 (11.3))

Other types of arrangements with Partner Institutions which are deemed to fall short of true collaborative provision to a greater or lesser extent include:

- Off-campus/in company delivery

- Recruitment arrangements (entry to the start of a programme)
- Student exchange and study abroad arrangements
- Placement/Service learning
- Articulation arrangements (direct entry to an advanced point in a College programme)

These arrangements will not normally be subject to the full in-depth approval process which applies to collaborative provision arrangements, but are still subject to appropriate approval processes.

In the case of all articulation arrangements, a partner profile is required to be completed (see Appendix 8) These arrangements can be requested to undergo the full approval process at the discretion of the Vice President, Academic Affairs & Research or the DQASS. This is particularly true of due diligence of the partner organisation, which must be completed where articulation, i.e. progression, **is being guaranteed from a partner's programme of study to the NCI programme of study**. Specific College policies exist for the establishment of articulation and progression agreements. For any other arrangements, the QASS Office should be consulted for advice on how to proceed. Please refer to Chapter 6 (6.6) for further information on admissions under advanced standing.

For the purpose of this document, 'transnational education' refers to the provision or partial provision of a programme of education in one country by a provider which is based in another country. The term **'transnational'** may be understood as either cross-border or cross-jurisdictional.

At present, joint awards are not included in this policy. Should the occasion arise, this policy will be expanded to include the requirements of joint awards, which will take place in consultation with QQI.

3.6.3 Quality Assurance for Collaborative Provision

Any programmes developed or delivered with a collaborative partner are subject to the **College's** Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) as laid out in the Quality Assurance Handbook. Where the existing quality assurance arrangements require amendment to facilitate the collaborative arrangement, these changes will be submitted to the awarding body with the proposal for validation or differential validation of the programme.

Differential validation occurs where significant change to a programme results in a new programme that must be revalidated. However, the change may be such that the findings of the original validation can be re-used and the elements of difference become the subject of a **'differential validation'**. Please refer to Section 3.10 below for further information on differential validation.

3.6.4 Approval of Collaborative Provision

The Governing Body constitutes the Board of Directors of the National College of Ireland Ltd (**'the College'**) and, **as such, its members have all of the responsibilities of Directors under the Companies Acts and at common law**. In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Governing Body is responsible for managing the affairs of the College and delegates day to day management to the College President. The President of the College is responsible for planning in conjunction with the Governing Body, and for the implementation

of the strategy, policy and administrative decisions of the Governing Body. S/he plays a proactive role as a member of the Governing Body, as well as chairing the Executive Board of the College and Academic Council and other committees as appropriate. The Academic Council assists the Governors in planning, co-ordinating, developing and overseeing the educational work of the College. As Chair of Academic Council and Chief Executive, the College President signs all memoranda of understanding and/or legal agreements on behalf of the College. The risks associated with these collaborative agreements are identified and reflected in the risk register.

The Governing Body is responsible for the implementation of appropriate risk management policies. The implementation of these policies is monitored through the operation of a risk register which is reviewed periodically by a sub-committee of the Governing Body. This risk register identifies how key risks are monitored and what actions are taken to mitigate these risks. Proposals for collaborative agreements are subject to review by Academic Council which must approve all collaborative provision proposals. Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.4.9.4) **for further information about NCI's risk register.**

3.6.5 Responsibility for Quality and Standards

The arrangements for assuring the quality and standards of programmes delivered in collaboration with other institutions must be as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the responsibility of the College. The College always retains responsibility for the ensuring that the standard of the award as defined by the awarding body and the quality of the programme are maintained, although it will be necessary for it to delegate certain quality management functions to its partner(s). Award standards and programme quality will be maintained through programme committees, annual review and review of programmes on a five-year cycle, as well as through normal academic good practices in the provision of collaborative programmes on an ongoing basis.

Reviews conducted will remain the responsibility of NCI. This introduces an additional element of risk, which must be countered by rigorous quality management and reporting processes. Where areas of quality management are delegated to the partner organisation, these arrangements will form part of the agreement reached between NCI, the partner organisation and the awarding body as appropriate. Where the partner institution is not an academic institution, NCI will always retain responsibility for ensuring the quality and standards summative assessment, appointment of external examiners and learner feedback. Notwithstanding this, it is expected that all involved in teaching will be involved in the setting of assessment.

3.6.6 Responsibility for Managing the Relationship

The overall responsibility for managing the collaborative relationship lies with the Dean of the School involved in the relationship.

3.6.7 On-Going Programme Management and Monitoring

The School has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all elements of the

collaborative programme. The Programme Director is the Chair of the Programme Committee who is responsible for ensuring that the programme is delivered as approved and for ensuring that the curriculum is maintained. In the case of a differentially validated programme, the programme should either be brought under the aegis of an existing Programme Committee or, if felt necessary, a new Programme Committee created to provide oversight. It is recognised that a programme delivered under differential validation or in another jurisdiction may require a dedicated programme director to manage the variations and/or issues that may arise in such contexts. However, if a separate programme committee is created, it must be seen as a sub-committee of the overall programme committee, in order to ensure that the academic integrity of the programme is maintained. Figure 3.2 outlines the monitoring cycle.

3.6.8 Responsibility for Due Diligence

The Registrar & Company Secretary is responsible for the due diligence process (see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7.3)).

3.6.9 Monitoring Collaborative Provision

Programmes are subject to the College's existing processes for programme monitoring. The annual School and programme report reviews the outcomes of these processes i.e. Programme Committee Meetings, Class representative meetings, external examiner reports, learner feedback surveys etc. The School annual report will contain an evaluation of all collaborative provision provided by the School.

Programmes validated for collaborative provision are subject to revalidation every 5 years using the procedures outlined in Section 3.8 below. Should a programme be differentially validated out of sequence with its parent programme, the former should be included in the next review of the latter.

Collaborative arrangements with an overseas institution or organisation will normally require a greater level of initial scrutiny, on-going monitoring and review than would be the case with Irish institutions, due to the different educational culture and context that the programme will be operating within and the difficulties caused by geographical location. Academic Council may request more frequent use of the mechanisms above in order to mitigate this issue.

The contents of all material relating to collaborative provision is brought together and analysed annually in an overview report, compiled by the QASS Office. It is an opportunity to highlight good practice and identify any problems or issues that might have wider relevance beyond the individual programme. These reports will be shared with the partner organisation and the awarding body and will form part of any decision making process to continue or terminate a relationship.

3.6.10 Responsibility for Preparation of Agreement

The Registrar & Company Secretary is responsible for the preparation of the memorandum of understanding and/or agreement on behalf of the College. This is informed by the Programme Development Team and the DOASS. **Agreements should be reviewed by the College's legal advisors** prior to submitting to the awarding body.

3.6.11 Decision to Terminate Agreements

Each collaborative agreement shall have specific conditions regarding the termination of a programme or collaborative provision. Agreements should outline circumstances in which a

programme may not run e.g. insufficient numbers, availability of resources. NCI's policy on the cessation of programmes states that once a programme has commenced, NCI will not terminate the programme until all learners currently enrolled have completed the programme. In order to assure the protection of learners, this agreement should outline how learners would be accommodated by NCI should the agreement be terminated. Agreements must contain a provision for '*Force Majeure*'.

3.6.12 Timing

Schools should note that developing a collaborative programme will necessarily require often complex and lengthy discussions with staff at both partner institutions and within the College. Such discussions should take place prior to the programme being submitted for the interim checkpoint stage of development (see Section 3.2.3.2 above).

The dates of committee meetings, such as Academic Council, are set prior to the commencement of the Academic Year, however, and Schools should consider these dates when establishing their timetable.

3.6.13 Due Diligence Process

In addition to consideration of the academic suitability and business viability of the collaborative arrangement, the College will need to be assured that any proposed new partner institution is of an appropriate standing. This involves several integrated processes:

- a '**Due Diligence**' investigation of a range of relevant information relating to the partner institution;
- a visit to the prospective partner institution by relevant staff;
- a review of the socio-political environment in the case of transnational provision; and
- '**internal due diligence**' i.e. the strategic fit and benefit to the College of the collaborative partnership and any associated programmes.

This strategic fit of the partnership and programme is carried out by the School and Programme Team prior to submitting the initial programme proposal (see Section 1 above).

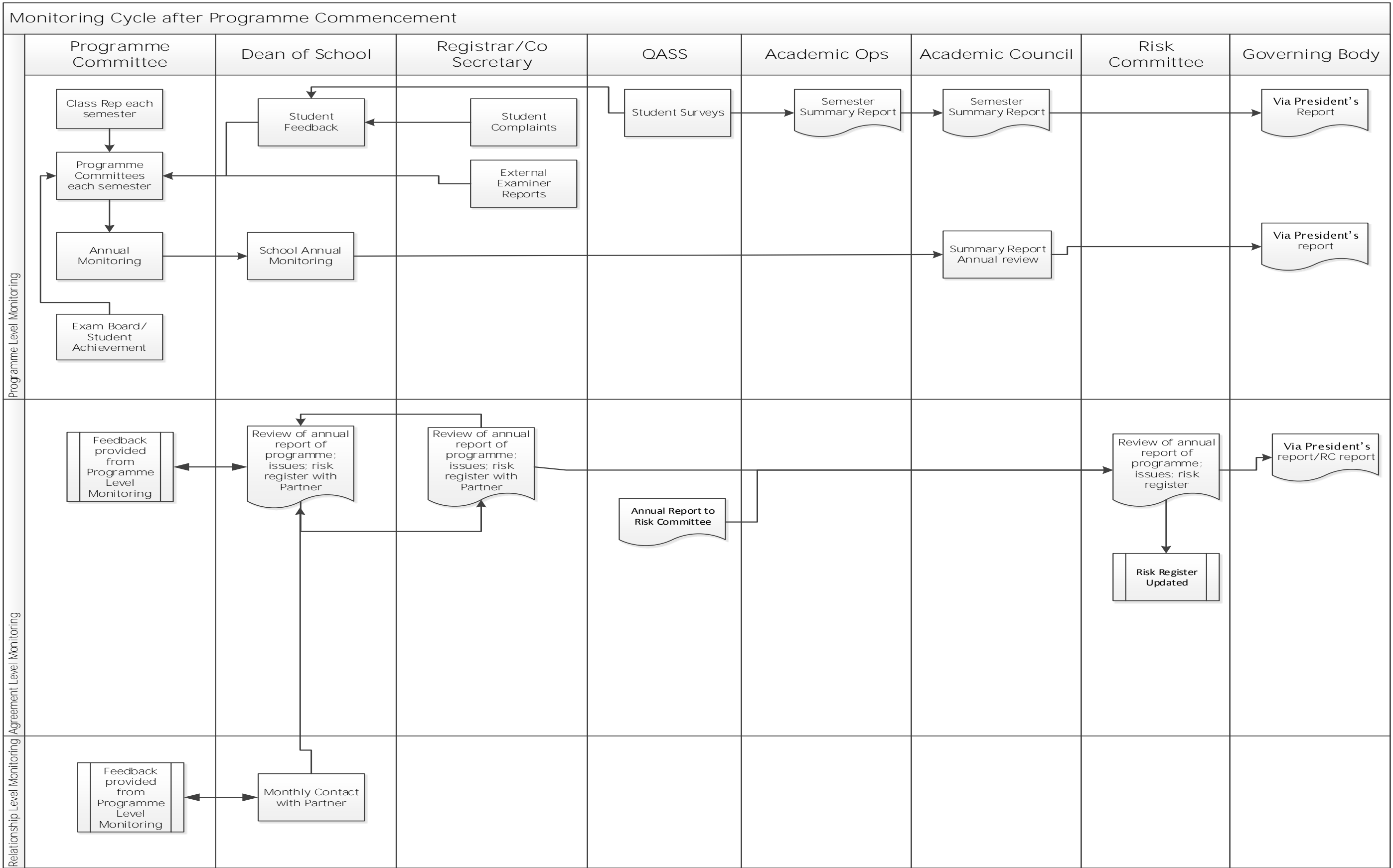


Figure 3-2 Monitoring of Programme Delivery and Agreement

3.6.13.1 Investigations of Prospective Partner Institutions

As part of the process of considering whether to work with a partner institution, the College will carry out a ‘Due Diligence’ investigation in order to assure itself that the proposed partner is one with which it would be happy to collaborate. The purpose of this visit and process is to satisfy the College that the partner has the requisite legal standing, financial and academic resources with which to engage in partnership with NCI. This investigation should include the legal status of the prospective partner or agent, and its capacity in law to contract with the College and the awarding body.

The Registrar’s/Company Secretary’s Office will ask prospective partners to supply the following documentation:

- **An Annual Report (akin to the College’s Annual Review);**
- A set of Annual Accounts;
- Details of Professional Indemnity insurance cover, such as a letter from the partner **Institution’s brokers confirming this cover and its extent;**
- CVs of staff who will be teaching on relevant programmes (where relevant);
- To support and substantiate this information, other sources of information will be investigated as follows:
 - The QASS Office will undertake a review of the proposed partner institutional website, including investigation of institutional mission;
 - The QASS Office will undertake a review of QQI, QQI, QAA (in the UK) and appropriate other websites to investigate whether there have been any reports relating to the proposed partner;
 - Where applicable, the International Office will seek information from appropriate organisations in Ireland and abroad about the standing of the proposed partner and whether they have any existing collaborations with other Irish HEIs;
 - A review of the information systems provided by the partner (where appropriate) to ensure that required data on learners can be held securely and exchanged with NCI;
 - A review of data protection legislation and arrangements to ensure that learner data can be released to NCI for submission to required regulatory and awarding bodies; and
- Where applicable, the **Registrar’s Office** will seek information from appropriate organisations about the legal standing of the proposed partner and its ability to operate within its national legislative and cultural requirements.

3.6.13.2 Partner Approval

Visits to Prospective Partner Institutions

The visit to the prospective partner institution will normally be undertaken by an appropriate member of staff of the relevant School or Department and also by a member of the QASS office. Other staff, may from time to time, accompany them. Many of the items outlined below

can be reviewed using documentary evidence. The visit should be used to explore in more depth and/or provide clarity if required.

The visit to the prospective partner institution will involve the following:

- Consideration of the quality of the teaching and learning facilities in relation to the proposed programme(s), including library and IT resources. The member of staff of the relevant School or Department will have a particular responsibility in this area;
- meeting key teaching and other staff of the proposed partner, where relevant;
- consideration and discussion of a range of academic issues relating to the partnership including:
 - **the Partner Institution's existing quality assurance arrangements;**
 - arrangements for managing the partnership (including the committee structure);
 - proposed quality assurance arrangements for the programme(s), including Annual Programme Reports and future Periodic Review and Revalidation;
 - arrangements for seeking the views of student (representation and evaluation);
 - assessment arrangements, including External Examiners;
 - student complaints and appeals procedures;
 - student welfare support and facilities;
 - admissions arrangements, including admissions criteria, English language provision (where appropriate) and the minimum and maximum size of a cohort;
 - arrangements for marketing of and recruitment to the programme (including website and publicity material);
 - staff training and development, and staff appraisal;
 - discussion of a draft Memorandum of Agreement (based, particularly, on discussions related to issues set out in (c) above);
 - where appropriate, an observation of teaching;
 - Where appropriate, meeting a group of existing students.

Following the visit, the representative of the QASS Office will produce an agreed report for consideration in the first instance by the Dean of School and Vice President Academic Affairs & Research and then by Academic Council.

3.6.13.3 Due Diligence of the Socio-Political & Educational Environment

Where collaborative provision involves provision outside of the Republic of Ireland, a full analysis of the socio-political and educational environment of the country involved should be undertaken. This will inform the risk analysis of any proposed project. This analysis will include contact with appropriate Quality Assurance agencies, ministries of education and other sources in order to ascertain the operating environment. Evidence of this analysis may be

- Legislation governing right to operate commercially and/or academically in a jurisdiction
- Reports from international organisations e.g. OECD, Economic Intelligence Unit
- Reports available from the Department of Education, Department of Foreign Affairs, QQI, etc.

3.6.13.4 Consideration and Approval of Due Diligence information

On receipt of the relevant documentation and other pieces of evidence, these will be considered as follows:

- The Finance Office will consider the set of Annual Accounts and provide a brief report **to the Registrar's Office** indicating whether these are satisfactory;
- **Where applicable, the International Office will provide a report to the Registrar's Office** relating to its findings;
- **The Registrar's Office will confirm whether the partner Institution's Professional Indemnity insurance cover is appropriate;**

The Registrar's Office will produce a summary report on the complete Due Diligence process, including the Academic due diligence process for consideration in the first instance by the Dean of School and Vice President Academic Affairs & Research by the Academic Council and also, in relation to the financial aspects of due diligence, Executive Team. This report will form part of the documentation required for the interim checkpoint of the Development phase as described above.

3.6.13.5 Timing of Due Diligence Investigations

Whilst there is the potential for the Due Diligence process to take a little time, the College will seek to ensure that this does not stop innovation and proposals for partnership coming forward. The Due Diligence process is intended to run in parallel with the development of a Business Plan and with the programme approval process for a partnership and can begin as soon as approval has been granted at the feasibility phase.

3.6.13.6 Reciprocal Due Diligence

The College is aware that the Due Diligence process is sensitive, both politically and culturally. The investigation will therefore be conducted with appropriate tact and diplomacy, particularly as it is the expectation that any future partner will be a well-established institution with an excellent reputation. Nevertheless, a Due Diligence investigation is something which the College is obliged to carry out and this should be made clear to prospective partner institutions at the outset. However, in order to act in a transparent way and to encourage the development of a partnership, the College will provide the following documents to a proposed partner on a reciprocal basis:

- The Annual Report
- The Annual Accounts (Financial Statements);
- The College Prospectus;
- **A copy of the College's most recent Institutional Review report (or equivalent);**
- **Confirmation of the College's Professional Indemnity insurance;** and
- A standard note setting out the legal standing of the College and its relationship with awarding bodies

3.6.14 Programme Approval Process

The approval process required for collaborative provision depends on the nature of the activity. Prior to developing specific initiatives, the College must be satisfied that the partner organisation is an appropriate partner and that the legal and financial requirements of a particular jurisdiction do not prohibit activity in that geographical area. In order to proceed with the process of due diligence the School must apply for initial approval to commence the process. The information required by this approval process will differ depending on the activity.

3.6.15 Research

All research proposals involving collaboration must have the approval of the Research Committee and Academic Operations Committee prior to them being submitted to an external body for funding. If the proposal is approved by Academic Operations Committee, any suggested revisions should be made and a final copy of the application documentation submitted in good time to **the Registrar's Office. It will then be submitted for signature by the President/Vice President** as appropriate.

Application documents should **under no circumstances be submitted to the President's office** directly. It is up to the proposing Dean of School to ensure that enough time is allowed for the initial approval process to take place before any external funding deadline.

NCI will collaborate with other academic institutions in order to offer research programmes, i.e. Masters and/or PhDs. In doing so, it will use the due diligence arrangements described above and will agree the quality assurance arrangements.

3.6.16 Taught Programmes

Table 3.2 outlines the four phases of programme development at NCI and the associated outputs associated with those phases for collaborative provision activities. A full description of this process is outlined in Section 3.2.3 above and graphically represented in Figure 3.2. Where new programmes are being proposed or existing programmes are being put forward for differential validation, the Programme Development Team will comprise representatives from NCI and from the partner organisation.

| Phase | Feasibility | Development | | Internal Validation | External Validation |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| | | Interim | Final | | |
| Outputs | Programme Proposal Form | Interim Checkpoint form | Programme Submission Document | Internal Report | Independent Evaluation Report |
| | Partner Profile | Due Diligence Report | Draft Agreement (As agreed by partner and NCI) | Programme team response | Signed Agreement between NCI & partner Signed Agreement between awarding body and partner |
| | Initial Risk Analysis | | Self Assessment | Final Submission Document | Certificate of Validation (QQI) or equivalent |
| | | | | | |

Table 3-2: Programme Development Process & Outputs

3.6.16.1 New Programmes

Schools must ensure that:

- The Programme is placed at the appropriate level of the NFO and that academic standards are equivalent to programmes delivered at the College, i.e. QQI or QQI award standards, CIPD professional standards, etc.
- Arrangements for **admission comply with the College's admissions regulations** (see Chapter 6 (Section 6.2))
- **Arrangements for assessment comply with the College's assessment regulations** (see Chapter 4 (Section 4.6))
- **Procedures for external examining align with the College's regulations** on external examining (see Chapter 4 (Section 4.4))
- Schools will be required to prepare a Programme and Module Handbook, developed in **line with the College's template**.

3.6.16.2 Existing Programmes

Where existing programmes are to be delivered in conjunction with a partner, Schools must ensure that

- Where the programme is accredited by QQI, QQI or a professional body (CIPD, ICM, etc.) the programme delivery in conjunction with a partner is approved by and fulfils requirements of those bodies. This is done via the differential validation process in the case of QQI awards or through a revised business case in the case of CIPD.
- **Arrangements for admission comply with the College's admissions regulations** (see

- Chapter 6 (Section 6.2))
- Arrangements for assessment comply with the College's assessment regulations (see Chapter 4 (Section 4.6))
 - **Procedures for external examining align with the College's regulations on external examining (see Chapter 4 (Section 4.4))**
 - Schools will be required to prepare a tailored Programme and Module Handbook, **developed in line with the College's template.**

3.6.17 Feasibility

The feasibility phase examines the overall merits of the proposed collaboration and/or programme so that a decision can be taken whether to further the development of the proposal. Programmes that are considered at this stage in the process will have been approved as part of the overall strategic plan of the College but it is at this point that these plans can be implemented or reviewed should the environment warrant it. The information provided at this stage is outlined in the Programme Proposal Form (see Appendix 3). An output of this process is the completion of the initial risk analysis form (see Appendix 8) and will contribute to the decision of Academic Council to proceed with programme development or applications for differential validation. Please refer to 3.2.3.1 1 above for further information about the feasibility study.

In the case of collaborative provision, once approved, the due diligence process described in Section 3.6.13 above will be commenced by the Registrar.

3.6.18 Development

The development phase is divided into 2 parts. Phase 1 involves the Programme Team completing an interim checkpoint document. In the case of collaborative provision, a detailed risk analysis will be undertaken. This risk analysis will include the results of the complete due diligence process. The purpose of the interim checkpoint is to ensure that the assumptions made regarding the financial and academic viability of the partnership and/or programme in the feasibility phase hold true and that any issues raised in the development of the programme with regard to its viability can be addressed by the College. The programme development or collaborative arrangement may be abandoned at this point.

Phase 2 of development allows development of the programme to be completed and the detail of the agreement to be completed. It will also allow the Programme Team, in collaboration with the QASS Office, to consider how quality assurance arrangements for the proposed programme are to be managed, paying particular attention to the monitoring of those quality management functions which have been delegated to the partner institution.

These arrangements must be outlined in the agreement and provided in more detail in the Programme Handbook. This will include arrangements for:

- the operation of the Programme Committee and Examinations Board, and the provision of annual reports to the School on an equivalent basis to that for programmes delivered at NCI;

- regular monitoring of the programme and related learning facilities, including frequency and purpose of visits to the partner institution by the School;
- mechanisms for students to provide feedback and to make complaints/appeals;
- on-going and regular contact between the College and its partner, and the management of operational issues;
- periodic review and revalidation (in line with the policy for programme review and revalidation of programmes).

The length of the development phase is dictated by the type of programme and whether validation is for a new programme or is an existing programme which requires a differential validation due to the collaborative activity.

3.6.18.1 Internal Validation

The validation of a programme developed with a partner is subject to the arrangements outlined in Section 3.2.3 above. The Programme Team must submit for internal validation:

- the programme submission document using the template provided
- the agreement
- its self-assessment of **the programme against the awarding body's validation criteria** and the collaborative arrangements.

3.6.18.2 External Validation

The validation of a programme developed with a partner is subject to the arrangements outlined in Section 3.2.3.5 above.

3.6.19 The Consortium Agreement

NCI and the partner organisation will establish a formal agreement to be known as the '**Consortium Agreement**'. **Academic Council will approve such agreements on advice from the Company Secretary/Executive Board.**

The Consortium Agreement will assure that education and training provision and associated services are provided in a streamlined manner and in compliance with the relevant awarding body policy and in accordance with its guidelines and with any other legitimate requirements; and will normally

- Establish and specify the consortium (indicating the partner providers and the designated address for communication);
- Establish the rights and obligations of all partner providers;
- Establish the nature of the services to be performed by each partner provider; specify the scope of the agreement and the relevant programme(s) and the award(s) that each will lead to;
- Establish the period of the agreement;
- Establish the conditions under which the agreement will be reviewed and under which it will be renewed;
- Provide for the amendment of the agreement;

- Establish the entity (normally the consortium) that learners can hold legally liable for any deficiencies in the provision of education and training;
- Specify any limitations on liability and provide for mutual indemnification;
- Provide for the resolution of disputes arising in respect of the agreement;
- Provide for the termination or suspension of the agreement (setting out the conditions under which this can be done) having regard for learners concerned;
- Make appropriate arrangements for the protection of learners as stipulated in Section 65 of the Quality & Qualifications Act, 2012, and in all cases for residual obligations to learners on termination of the agreement; and
- Name the jurisdiction within which the agreement is enacted and should be interpreted; establish a process for addressing disputes in respect of the agreement including any perceived breaches of the agreement and grievances by learners and involved employees.

3.6.19.1 Financial arrangements

The Consortium Agreement must state the financial arrangements:

- That address the distribution of any income arising from services provided by each of the partner providers;
- **That assure each partner provider's capacity to account for income and expenditure** involving the consortium;
- That meet all legal requirements in all of the involved jurisdictions;
- That make adequate provision for protection for learners as described above

3.6.19.2 Specific Programme Requirements

Specific arrangements in respect of each of the programmes covered by the agreement must be clearly stated in the Consortium Agreement, including but not limited to, prior learning and other admission requirements, programme assessment strategy and intended learning outcomes. They will also

- specify the awarding body or bodies and including the necessary awarding agreements;
- oblige partner providers to participate in the collaborative programme review/accreditation/validation process required by the relevant awarding bodies and to comply with any conditions that are attached to review/accreditation/validation;
- establish quality assurance procedures for the collaborative programme and require **partner providers to cooperate and participate in each other's quality assurance** procedures and in related quality evaluations whether internal or externally organised, while ensuring that quality assurance procedures applying to the collaborative programme should be recognised as meeting the national requirements in each **partner provider's country**;
- provide for the relevant awarding bodies to monitor the quality and standards of the programme and associated services;
- require, and provide for, the partner providers as appropriate to jointly contribute to the provision of the programme;
- specify the regulations (recruitment, access and admission, academic standard, transfer, progression, assessment, appeals, complaints etc.) that apply to learners or

prospective learners concerned while ensuring that the procedures for access, transfer and progression determined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland are implemented;

- specify in detail the rights and entitlements of learners (including necessary learner support services) at each of the partner provider sites and how the relevant services will be delivered and how access to same by learners should be assured;
- deal explicitly with the provision of, and access by learners to, human and material resources;
- specify in detail (with explicit rationale based on the learning outcome standards required by the awarding body or bodies and any other requirements needed for approval) the programme assessment strategy and learner assessment procedures for the programme and the conditions under which an award will be recommended and provide for the appointment of external examiners;
- collect and maintain the information required by external quality assurance agencies and produce a Europass Certificate/ Diploma Supplement with complete information about the ECTS credits earned on the collaborative programme;
- require that partner providers will encourage and make provision for cooperation between their staff in respect of the programme; and
- deal with intellectual property rights relevant to the collaboration.

3.6.20 Programme Information

3.6.20.1 Advertising and recruitment

Programme recruitment, publicity and marketing materials for collaborative programme may be produced by the College or by the Partner Institution, or both, subject to the conditions in the agreement. Advertising and recruitment for the programme should not, however, formally begin until the agreement has been finalised and signed by the President and Partner Institution.

The Student Recruitment & Marketing Department has a responsibility to maintain oversight of the advertisement of collaborative programmes. At regular intervals relevant websites and printed material will be checked

3.6.20.2 Provider's Handbook

The QASS Office will work in consultation with the School and the partner institution to devise an operational handbook which will detail all operational and quality assurance procedures, and forms part of the formal Agreement.

This should ideally be completed before recruitment begins but should be in place before the first students are enrolled. The Provider's Handbook should be reviewed annually.

3.6.21 References

AHEAD(2010) '*Charter for Inclusive Teaching & Learning*', Dublin, AHEAD

QQI(2012) *Policy for Collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards - Accreditation, Quality Assurance, and Delegation of Authority*, Dublin, QQI

IHEQN (2009) *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions*. Dublin IHEQN

QAA (2004) *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality in Higher Education: Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (including eLearning)*. Gloucester, QAA

UNESCO (2005) *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*. Paris, UNESCO

Other Sources

VanGalen, A ed.(2010) Internationalisation and Quality Assurance. *EAIE Professional Development Series for International Educators Vol 4*. Amsterdam, European Association for International Education.

3.7 Policy for tendering to third parties for development and/or delivery of educational services

3.7.1 Purpose:

This policy is intended to ensure that contracts for delivery of educational services entered into on behalf of National College of Ireland are properly authorised and communicated to all relevant people and departments and that they are adequately resourced.

3.7.2 Scope

This policy applies where NCI is intending to offer educational services to other organisations. It does not apply for situations where we are purchasing goods or services or entering into other contractual arrangements catered for in existing policies.

It applies to those members of staff involved in developing opportunities for educational services e.g. new programme development and/or existing programme delivery, consulting services to third party organisations.

3.7.3 When to use this process

As a guide this process should be adhered to if any one or more of the following points apply:

- **Total spend (incl. VAT) is expected to equal or exceed €5,000 (five thousand euro).**
- Involves any new programme development or accreditation.
- Requires a contractual arrangement with a third-party to provide the educational services, for example with a professional body or another institution.

In all cases due regard should be given to the following

1. Appropriate and timely consultation and approval by School management with respect to staffing and resourcing a programme. The School is bound by policy and procedure for programme delivery.
2. Appropriate and timely consultation with Central Timetabling to ensure that there is sufficient physical space to deliver the programme at the time requested by the third party
3. The basis on which the programme has been validated by QQI e.g. mode of study, location of delivery, mode of delivery. This should be confirmed with the QASS office in all cases.

3.7.4 General:

As an overarching principle staff who are entering into arrangements for the delivery of educational services should always use their best endeavours to communicate as fully and as early as possible with relevant stakeholders in the college. Widespread consultation at an early stage can help to give a more comprehensive and considered proposal in addition to stopping many problems that may otherwise arise.

This policy adheres as closely to existing programme development arrangements to keep implementation as straightforward as possible.

Underpinning this **activity is a set of key principles which form the College's** policy on collaborative provision. All activities

- **must be consistent with the College's strategic plans, (ideally) arise from School plans and be congruent with the School's academic provision, bringing clear benefits to all those involved;**
- should only be with other organisations, which have

- the academic OR professional standing to enable the successful delivery of programmes of study to appropriate academic standards,
- the financial standing to sustain them,
- adequate infrastructure facilities and resources (including appropriate staffing) to support them and
- the legal standing to contract to their delivery;
- should not be over-reliant on an individual member of staff, either within the National College of Ireland or the other organisation;
- should not be discriminatory, for example, should be compliant with internal and national (Irish or EU) legislative requirements

3.7.5 Replying to a Request for Tender (RFT):

If a Request for Tender (RFT)¹ is received the staff member considering responding should first informally consult with colleagues. This must include the Dean and relevant members of the school where the opportunity is most likely to sit. A cross school or functional opportunity may arise. In those cases, both Deans should be consulted.

If, on the basis of that consultation, it is decided that the opportunity is pursued, then the Contract/Tender Term Sheet should be prepared. See Appendix 1.

The Contract/Tender Term Sheet gives summary information to allow Executive Team or other relevant NCI committees to evaluate the tender opportunity. If the response to the tender will also involve the development of a new programme or the amendment of an existing programme requiring differential validation, then the existing Programme Proposal Form (PPF) should also be completed.

The Contract/Tender Term Sheet and if applicable the PPF must be approved before any tender is submitted. The PPF would then follow the existing process whereby the two documents would go through School, Academic Operations (AO) and to Executive Group (EG).

Note that some tenders can have shorter turnaround times and in some instances as AO meets fortnightly and EG normally sits on a monthly basis it may be necessary to gain approval for a proposal outside of the normal cycle. This should be the exception rather than the rule.

In these cases documents should be sent to all AO and EG members and approval should be given in writing to proceed by both the Finance Director, Vice President Academic and Administration and the Dean of the relevant school. This should be recorded in the minutes of the next EG meeting.

When the Contract/Tender Term Sheet and PPF are presented at EG these documents will form part of EG minutes. If at any stage there are material changes to what has been communicated to EG then this should be reported back to EG at the earliest opportunity for approval of any new arrangements.

3.7.6 On winning a tender

On winning a tender, the initial contract for services should be drawn up and circulated to the Registrar & Company Secretary and Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services.

In creating the initial contract, all relevant stakeholders should be consulted to ensure that the final agreed contract for services can be delivered to the expectation of all parties.

¹ *The term RFT should also be taken to include Registration of Interest, Entry in to Technical Dialogue or Response to Prior Information Notice*

Where appropriate a project team may be required to be formed in order to deliver on the obligations of the contract.

This contract must be signed by NCI representatives as outlined below and the third party prior to engaging in any activity.

Depending on the nature of the opportunity, additional contracts may be required where the opportunity involves the development of new programmes. These can only be completed when the programme development and delivery proposal is finalised and ready for submission to QQI. In these cases, the template agreements for collaborative provision of programmes should be used.

3.7.7 Communicating, Signing and Storage of Final Contract:

A contract is a legal document that creates legal obligations for NCI.

It is important that there is clear visibility and accountability for all contracts signed on behalf of NCI.

All contracts for educational services should be co-signed by the Director of Finance, Registrar, Vice President Academic and Administration and the Dean of the relevant school.

The contract signed should be the final agreed copy and representatives of NCI.

Any subsequent changes should be noted and initialled by Director of Finance, Registrar, Vice President Academic and Administration and the Dean of the relevant School.

This contract and record of the key representatives of the 3rd party organisation should be maintained in CRM system and available for reference to authorised NCI staff. The final contract should also be brought to and minuted at the next available Executive Team or Group meeting. In the case of collaborative provision, the contract will also be placed on the Risk Register for monitoring by the Risk Committee of Governing Body.

3.7.8 Roles & Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Staff member responding to tender | <p>Communicate widely and early regarding proposal</p> <p>Confirm basis on which an existing programme may be offered</p> <p>Confirm basis on which a new programme development may proceed</p> <p>On winning a tender, circulate contract for services to all relevant stakeholders</p> |
| Dean of Relevant School | Co sign contracts for educational services |

| Role | Responsibility |
|--|---|
| Director of Finance | Co-sign contracts for educational services |
| Registrar | Place the contract on the Risk Register in the case of Collaborative Provision |
| Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services | Advise on programme development and programme delivery issues with respect to the scope of a programme's basis of validation |
| Vice President Academic Affairs & Research | Co sign contracts for educational services |

3.7.9 Related Documentation

| Policies, Procedures & Guidelines | Forms & Templates |
|---|--|
| Policy on Development and Validation of Higher Education Programmes | Contract or Tender Term Sheet (3PD.PD5) |
| Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision | Programme Proposal Form (3PD.PPF1) |
| | Off-campus location audit form (3PD.PD4) |

3.7.10 Policy Review & Indicators of Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed in July 2020.

Effectiveness will be measured based on

1. The convergence of actual resources required to deliver opportunities before and after tender/contract.
2. The satisfaction of tendering companies based on expectations raised through the tendering process, contract signing and delivery.
3. The satisfaction of internal stakeholders with the quality of the information provided to them through the tendering process, contract signing and delivery.

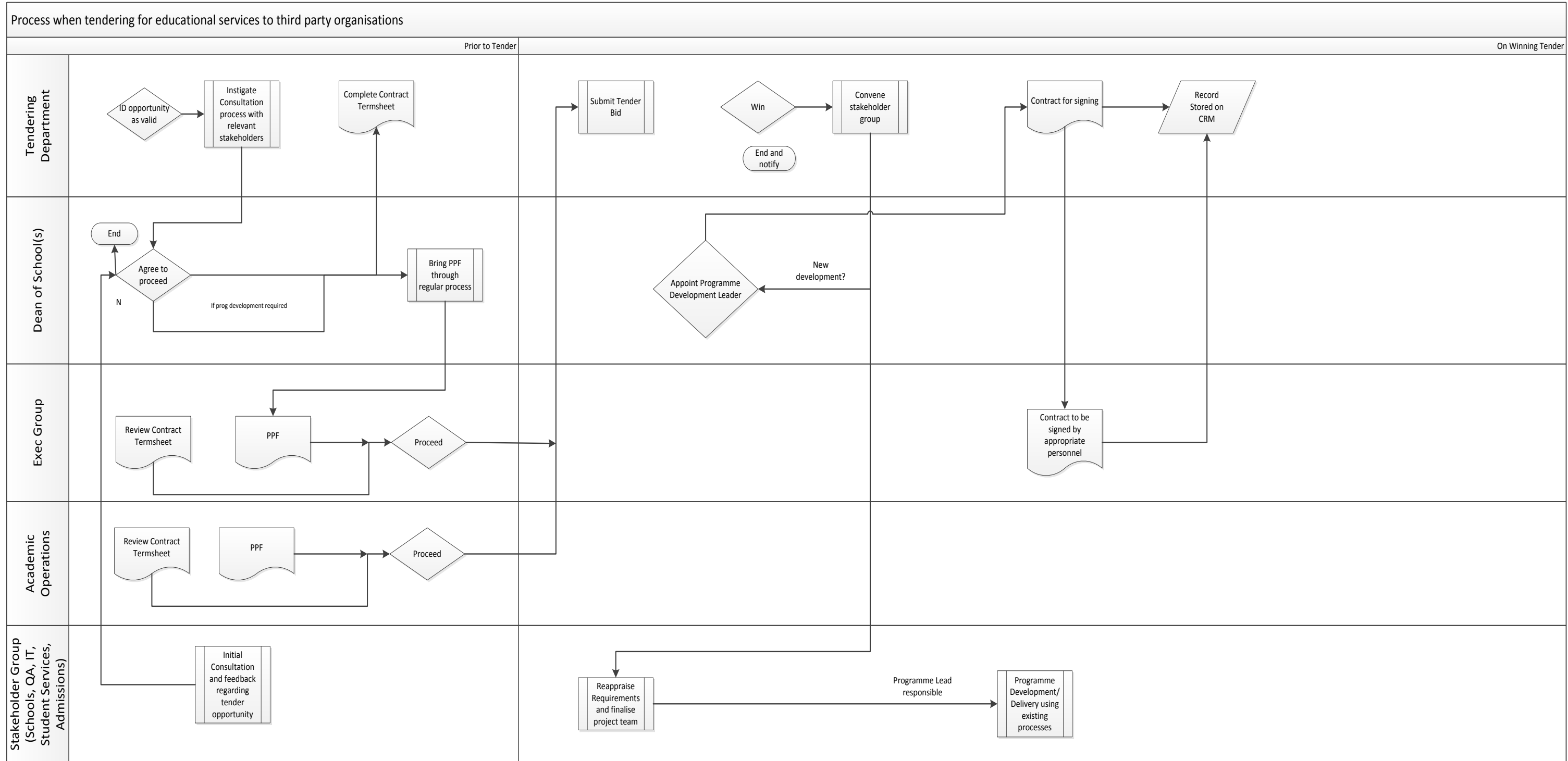


Figure 3- 3: Process for Tendering to Third Parties for Education Services

3.8 Programme Review & Revalidation²

Programme Review is a quality assurance process which affords an opportunity for Programme Committees to fundamentally and critically re-appraise programmes and to make major modifications where considered appropriate. It also allows the College and/or School to streamline provision and to inform the ongoing strategic development of the School and College. Programmatic Reviews should normally be undertaken in discipline areas, by programme level, by School or a combination thereof.

Each programme conducted within the College is subject to a periodic review, normally on a five-year cycle or as defined by the duration of validation, referred to as the enrolment interval, of the initial validation or last re-validation. A reviewed programme is then submitted to QQI for revalidation. A programme submitted for revalidation should be designed to meet **the validation criteria set out in QQI's *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training***.

A review process may result in a new programme being proposed rather than the modification of an existing one. Such a programme should be submitted to QQI as a new programme validation.

Preparation for programme review should be commenced in sufficient time to ensure that all of the processes required to take place can do so to ensure that the programme is validated in advance of the required intake date. Programme review processes should follow the guidance provided by QQI in its **QQI's Programme Review Manual**.

3.8.1 Terms of Reference for the Programmatic Review

The terms of reference for the programmatic review are agreed between the College and QQI in advance of the commencement of the review process. These terms allow for any special considerations for programmes, i.e. differentially validated programmes, programmes offered under collaborative provision, etc.

3.8.2 Nomination of Panel Members

Agreement of the Terms of Reference will include nomination of independent evaluation panel members to QQI. Normally, this panel will undertake both the programme review and revalidation evaluation and will be known as the Programme Review and Revalidation Panel (PRRP). Members will be sourced and nominated using procedures outlined in Section 3.4.8.3 above.

3.8.3 Implementation of Programmes Following Programmatic Review

In recommending changes to programmes, programme committees should consider the full implications of proposed changes ensuring that the progression of students who may be repeating is not compromised. Decisions should be made early in the process as to whether **new programmes will be implemented in a 'big bang' approach or 'phased in'**. An

² *This process reflects QQI's pilot process in use at the time of writing*

implementation plan for revised programmes outlining transition issues, should be included in the programme review documentation.

3.8.4 Critical Self-Evaluation of Programmes

The main process involved in the Programmatic Review is a critical self-evaluation of programmes and re-appraisal of all aspects of a programme by the Programme Committee responsible. This self-evaluation is designed to help the Programme Committee to improve the programme and presents an opportunity for those delivering the programme to improve its quality and delivery.

It should not be regarded merely as a new description of the programme but rather as a systemic root-and-branch evaluation. The review should also reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanisms affecting programmes. In preparing the self-evaluation, the Programme Committee will consult with current learners, graduates of the programme, industrialists and business people, and other external organisations, as appropriate.

3.8.5 Documentation Required for Programme Review

The documentation required for the Programme Review event comprises two elements:

1. The self-evaluation of programmes by Programme Committees. This will include the implementation plan and consideration of any transition issues and will be written using the Templates provided by QQI.
2. The Revised Programme Documents reflecting proposed changes arising from the review process and using the template provided by QQI.

3.8.6 Programme Review Meeting

The Programmatic Review Event is organised by the DQASS in consultation with the Dean of School. In order to make its judgement, the PRRP visits to review the Programme Review Documentation; to discuss the programmes with the Programme Committees, learners and graduates of the programmes; and to view the facilities available for conducting the programmes.

3.8.7 Preparation within the School for the Programmatic Review Event

The Vice Dean with responsibility for the programme(s) under review undertakes the following duties in preparation for the Programmatic Review Event:

- Ensures that copies of the Programmatic Review Documentation are distributed to all members of the Programme Committees in adequate time prior to the Programmatic Review Event;
- Organises meetings of the Programme Committees to discuss the documentation and to prepare to present the Programmatic Review documentation in the best way possible to the Programmatic Review Panel; and
- Invites graduates and learners to participate in and contribute to the Programmatic Review Event.

3.8.8 Issues Addressed by the Programmatic Review Panel

Using the terms of reference, the PRRP focuses on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by the Programme Committees and views the Revised Programme Documents, mainly to ensure that there is correlation between the conclusions and that any significant changes proposed are appropriate.

3.8.9 Programme Review Panel Report.

At the end of the Programme Review visit, the chairperson of the PRRP normally provides an oral presentation of the findings and conclusions of the panel to the Vice President, Dean and relevant Vice Dean of School, and the Programme Team. This presentation may indicate a recommendation for continuing approval or rejection of the programme(s), and make suggestions for modifying the programmes or outline special conditions for approval. The PRRP prepares a written report that is forwarded by the DQASS to the Dean of School.

3.8.10 Response of the Programme Team(s)

On consideration of the Programme Review & Revalidation Panel's report, the programme team shall prepare a response to the report and amend the documentation accordingly. That response, together with the revised documentation, is sent to the Programme Review & Revalidation Panel for final agreement.

3.8.11 Application to QQI

When the final agreement of the PRRP is obtained, the programme(s) may now be submitted to QQI for revalidation. This submission is undertaken by the DQASS or nominee using the **procedures outlined in QQI's Programme Review Manual.**

3.8.12 Revalidation

Processes outlined for new programme validation in relation to programme records, PEL, etc. apply as described in Section 3.2.4 above.

3.8.13 Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|--------------------|--|
| Programme Director | Co-ordinate the programme review process and re-development of the programme |
| | Managing the development of the programme according to the agreed timelines |
| | With the programme team, nominate potential panel members |
| | Provision of final documentation to QASS for submission to the programme review & revalidation panel |
| | Provision of final documentation to QASS for submission to QQI for revalidation. |

| Role | Responsibility |
|---------------------------|--|
| Vice Dean | Oversight of the progress of review and re-development for programmes under review |
| Dean of School | <p>Agreement that the programme should be reviewed and submitted for revalidation</p> <p>Sign off that the programme is ready for consideration by programme review & revalidation panel</p> <p>Sign off that the programme is ready for submission to QQI</p> |
| DQASS (or nominee) | <p>Oversee the project management of the review and revalidation processes within the overall programme portfolio</p> <p>Source programme review and revalidation panel nominees</p> <p>Liaise with QQI to agree terms of reference and panel membership</p> <p>Set up programme review and revalidation events</p> <p>Request continuance of PEL cover from HECA partners where appropriate</p> <p>Submit re validation documentation to QQI</p> <p>Liaison with QQI for re validation of the programme</p> <p>Advise the HECA executive of revalidation for PEL purposes</p> |
| Registrar's Office | <p>Cross reference QQI Certificate of Validation with programmes submitted for title and programme schedule accuracy</p> <p>Update the student information system to reflect the status of the programme</p> <p>Manage the programme record on the College's document management system</p> |
| Registrar | Verify that the approved programme is that being delivered. |

3.8.14 Related Documentation

| Policy & Procedure | Forms and Templates |
|---|---|
| Policy & Procedure on the Development & Validation of Higher Education programmes | Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships, 3 rd Edition, 2018 (see Appendix 7) |
| Policy on Devolved Responsibility for Arranging an Independent Evaluation Report | Programme Review Manual 2018 as supplements with internal guidance by QASS |

3.8.15 Contact

Any questions arising from the interpretation of this policy or application of the outlined procedures should be made directly to the DQASS.

3.8.16 Policy Review & Indicators of Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years or as QQI policy is amended. Effectiveness will be measured based on:

- the successful referral of programmes for validation
- the feedback of programme review & revalidation panels on the effectiveness of the review process
- the successful validation of programmes when submitted to QQI
- the convergence of findings of the internal review process with those of the programme review & revalidation panels

3.9 Policy on Annual Programme and Module Change

The purpose of this policy is to outline the basis on which programmes may be modified in the period between initial validation/revalidation and the next scheduled periodic programme review.

3.9.1 Scope

This policy relates to programmes leading to QQI awards.

3.9.2 Annual Monitoring

Programme Committees shall review their programmes on an annual basis in order to monitor parts of the programme that have been successful so that practice can be shared and to identify areas of the programme that are not working as expected. This process is particularly critical for programmes that are newly validated. Programme Committees shall evaluate the registration, progression and completion rates of cohorts. They should also consider feedback from learners and external examiners and make recommendations for programme modification or to the provision of resources as appropriate. The template for the Annual Monitoring Report (Appendix 3.7) should be used.

3.9.3 Programme Modification

As a result of annual review and reporting, modifications to a programme may be proposed by the Programme Committee before periodic programme review is due to take place. Annual review is required for all programmes and Programme Committees are encouraged to update and modify programmes to the benefit of the programme and of learners. There are two types of modification Material Modification and Minor Modification

3.9.4 Material Modifications to Existing Programmes

Material modifications are those which include but may not be limited to

- new delivery modes e.g. full-time to Online/Web delivery
- a reduction in the duration of a programme from say 1 calendar year to an academic year
- An increase or reduction in contact hours greater than 20%
- Change in the breakdown of assessment
- Addition of elective
- Replacement of a module
- Addition of a new location

Material modifications require to be formally referred to the Academic Standards & Policy Committee and thereafter to Academic Council and QQI for approval before they may be implemented. In instances where additional resources are required to implement the material change, the approval of the Executive Group is necessary.

All proposed modifications of any subject curriculum and/or Approved Programme Schedule, must be fully documented as set out below and submitted by the Dean of School to the DQASS in sufficient time for implementation for the next teaching cycle of that module within a programme. The DQASS will send the request to QQI.

Any material changes to a programme may not be implemented by NCI until approval of such changes has been received from QQI. On receipt of authorisation from QQI, the DQASS will formally confirm the decision to the Chair of the Academic Council, to the appropriate Dean of School and to the Programme Coordinator.

Documentation relating to the approved change and the record of approval will be stored on the College MIS system. The programme details, curriculum and assessment structures should be amended accordingly.

The Registrar will annually independently verify that the programmes delivered and the modules assessed correspond to those approved by QQI as recorded in the Approved Course Schedules. This will be completed no later than 31st October.

3.9.4.1 Documentation Required for a Material Modification

Change Request Documentation from the Programme Committee shall consist of:

- (a) List of changes requested
- (b) Rationale for the changes
- (c) Amended Programme Document (including Programme Schedules)
- (d) Additional set of Amended Programme Schedules.

If the programme modifications are substantial, QQI may request that a differential validation is necessary and the Dean of School will be required to initiate such a process.

Such major modifications outside of the periodic programme review process will occur in exceptional cases e.g. due to a professional body change or a significant and/or unexpected market/sectoral change.

3.9.5 Minor Changes to Existing Programmes

Changes of less than 20% to a module are deemed to be of a minor nature and, as such, do not require the approval of QQI to be brought into effect. Such changes would normally comprise:

- The introduction of new topics into a syllabus and the removal of outdated material or less important topics
- Change in assessment techniques e.g. the introduction of an essay or assignment instead of a time controlled class test
- The balance as between lectures, tutorials and practicals
- Increase or decrease in class contact hours for a subject or module not exceeding 20% of annual class contact hours

Changes such as those outlined above will be formally recorded in the Annual Programme Monitoring Report and would not normally require referral to the Academic Standards & Policy Committee of the **Academic Council**. **These reports will be acted on by the Registrar's Office** to ensure that the appropriate College systems are updated.

3.9.6 Decision to Terminate Programmes

An outcome of annual programme monitoring may be a decision by the Dean of School to recommend termination of a validated programme. This decision may arise for a number of reasons e.g. financial viability, academic viability, rationalisation of provision as a result of quinquennial programme review.

The recommendation to terminate a programme should be submitted to Academic Operations Committee using the final Annual Programme Monitoring Report with an accompanying rationale for closure.

If the recommendation is adopted, the decision to terminate a programme shall be notified to QQI.

The decision shall also be included in the programme review report for the period following this decision.

The impact of the decision to terminate a programme should be fully considered i.e.

- Impact on current learners and their ability to progress and complete their programme
- Impact on staffing and recruitment plans
- Impact on collaborative arrangements with partners
- Impact on physical resources
- Impact on public information, physical and digital

The procedure for suspending delivery of a programme for an academic year is described in Chapter 5, 5.3.4 Decision to Cease Delivery of a Programme.

3.10 Differential Validation

Programmes are validated in their entirety. Significant change to a programme results in a new programme that must be revalidated. However, the change may be such that the findings of the original validation can be re-used and the elements of difference become the subject of a '**differential validation**'.

An application to QQI for differential validation must outline the difference and rationale for difference from the validated programme. Differential validation frequently arises in the context of delivery of off-campus programmes, the addition of a new elective stream, the addition or replacement of modules, collaborative provision or blended learning.

If in any doubt as to the nature of the validation process to be used, QQI should be consulted, outlining the nature of the amendment to the programme. Applications for differential validation must be approved by Executive Group, Academic Operations Committee and Academic Council.

3.10.1 Quality Assurance

Modification of a programme may have implications for the quality assurance procedures of the College. Should any amendment be required to existing quality assurance procedures, details of this amendment **and the College's approval of those procedures should be included** in the validation application to the awarding body.

3.10.2 Differences from the Original Programme

The application for differential validation should describe all of the difference between the proposed programme and the original programme. The programme submission template should be used in order to ensure that all criteria are met and differences are described. The original programme validation document should be included in the application documentation.

3.10.3 Self-Evaluation

The implications of providing a modified programme should be addressed in the self-evaluation report against the validation criteria accompanying the validation application.

3.10.4 Differential Validation events

Due to the varying types of differential validation, there is no standard differential validation event. The event may be a desk review, a site visit to a new location or a full validation event.

3.11 Off-Campus Provision

Approval by the Awarding Body to run a programme in an off-campus location should be sought at the point of original validation. An off-campus location must be an appropriate learning environment with access to appropriately qualified faculty, appropriate technology and learning materials. Audits of locations will take place annually and may be subject to a spot-check during the academic year.

The awarding body must be consulted prior to delivering a programme in an off-campus location if that location has not been approved at validation. This will be approved via the differential validation process which is outlined in Section 3.10 above.

3.11.1 QA Procedures for Off-Campus Location Selection

Locations for delivery will be proposed and selected using NCI's process for the approval of off-campus locations. Locations may **be proposed by the Registrar's Office**, Student Recruitment & Marketing, International Office, or a School.

Locations are chosen based on their appropriateness for the programme being delivered. All locations must have access to:

- electronic presentation facilities,
- internet, and
- refreshments for students

Locations delivering programmes in the area of computing must have teaching spaces that can accommodate the minimum specified machine required for delivery of the programme. This is determined on a case by case basis.

The location must be visited by a member of NCI staff prior to the programme commencing to ensure that facilities are as expected and agreed. Locations should be visited at least annually. Outcomes of student feedback mechanisms should be made known to off-campus centre providers.

The Health & Safety statement of the centre should be examined and included in the centre profile. The Centre Profile should be maintained and hold all documentation relating to that centre including contact details, contracts, health & safety statements, outcomes of visits and student feedback mechanisms, audit forms.

3.12 Policy on Accreditation

This policy outlines the basis on which NCI will seek out accreditations for its programmes or the College as a whole.

3.12.1 Scope

This policy applies to professional body recognition of existing or new programmes and to any other accreditation which may be seen to add value to the College.

3.12.2 Policy

NCI will continue to seek to optimise the national and international recognition of its programmes of study. This will be achieved by seeking to have both the institution and its programmes accredited and recognised by international awarding and accrediting bodies. In doing so it will seek to achieve autonomy and flexibility in the development and delivery of its programmes whilst adhering to national, European and international academic standards and quality guidelines.

NCI recognises the positive impact that accreditation can have on its programmes, Schools or the Institution as a whole. Accreditation can come in many forms, such as:

- Professional Body recognition of a programme where graduates of that programme may apply for membership and/or exemption from professional body examinations
- Accreditation of a School or subject area by national or international agencies that demonstrate specific areas of expertise or quality.
- Accreditation of the Institution as a whole which can result in advancing its reputation nationally and internationally or signals that the College is sympathetic to a particular ideal.

The decision to seek such accreditation is not taken lightly. Programme-level accreditation shall be explored during programme development. Doing so will ensure that the programme outcomes and content are more likely to meet any requirements of the required academic

and/or professional accreditation. This is particularly critical where the employability of the graduate is dependent on such accreditation.

Applications for accreditation at School or Institutional level must be approved at Executive Group and at Academic Council. When considering accreditation, the full extent of the resources required to apply for and maintain accreditations should be considered. Such applications normally require a significant body of work and should be managed using the **College's Project Authorisation and Project Management Process**.

Applications for accreditation at programme level must be approved at Executive Group and Academic Operations Committee. Appropriate due diligence should be undertaken on the accrediting body as outlined in **Policy on Collaborative & Transnational Provision** (see Section 3.6 above)

3.12.3 Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Programme Director | Evaluate an existing programme or new programme for opportunities for professional accreditation of a programme Complete the application for professional recognition of a programme |
| Dean of School | Approve any application for professional recognition of a programme Propose a School or Institution wide accreditation to enhance the standing of the School or College |
| Vice President | Review proposals for programme and institution based and recommend approval or otherwise to Academic Council and Executive Group |
| DQASS (or nominee) | Review all applications for professional recognition of a programme Review all applications for School or College wide accreditations Be the point of contact for professional bodies with respect to accreditations and review processes |
| Executive Group | Approve all applications for accreditation |
| Academic Operations Committee | Approve all applications for professional body recognition of programmes |
| Academic Council | Approve all applications for School and/or College wide accreditations |

3.12.4 Related Documentation

| Policy & Procedures | Forms & Templates |
|---|-------------------|
| <p>Policy on Collaborative & Transnational Provision</p> <p>Project Authorisation and Project Management Process.</p> | |

3.12.5 Policy Review and Indicators of Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed in July 2020 and its effectiveness evaluated by:

- the success in achieving accreditations sought
- feedback from professional bodies during the various mechanisms used to grant these accreditations
- feedback from internal stakeholders on the use of the policy

3.13 Policy on the Delivery of Professional Programmes

The decision to offer professional programmes is made by the Dean of School in association with Executive Group. The selection of a professional body should use the principles outlined in Section 3.6.13 above, where the appropriate due diligence procedure is outlined.

3.13.1 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Applications for the delivery of Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) awards should be made using the required templates of the CIPD. All documentation should be prepared by the Programme team involved and approved by the Dean of School.

The DQASS will review documentation prior to submission to the CIPD, which will be sent from the QASS Office.

3.13.2 Institute of Commercial Management

Applications for Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) approval should be made using the required templates of ICM. All documentation should be prepared by the Programme or Subject team involved and approved by the Dean of School.

The DQASS will review documentation prior to submission to the ICM, which will be sent from the QASS Office.

3.13.3 Professional Body Exemption or Recognition Applications

Application for Professional Body Exemption or Recognition of programmes leading to QQI awards should be made using the required documentation of the professional body. All documentation should be prepared by the Programme or Subject group involved and approved by the Dean of School.

The DQASS will review documentation prior to submission, which will be sent from the QASS Office.

3.14 Policy on Non-Award Programmes

In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be proposed for which no credit or award is sought. These may be short programmes of training, seminars, etc. Before presenting the programme to the Executive Group for approval, the proposer must normally seek the approval of the Dean of School from which the proposal originates and should also seek the approval of the School Committee for the proposal.

The proposal is then brought to Academic Operations Committee (AOC) for approval to proceed. The originating School prepares the programme document. Issues for consideration by the AOC include:

- Market demand
- Entry Requirements
- Ability of the School to resource the programme
- Learning Outcomes
- Course Content
- Learning Modes
- Assessment Strategies, if any
- Duration


3.14.1 Programme Review

Short Courses are subject to the same annual review process outlined in Section 3.1.3.3 above as all other programmes. Tailored learner satisfaction surveys will be adopted.

3.14.2 Programme Evaluation

Short courses are subject to the same evaluation process outlined in Section 3.1.3.3 above as all other programmes.

Programme Proposal Form

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Document Name | Programme Proposal Form |  National College of Ireland |
| Related Procedure | Procedures for the Development and Validation of QQI awards | |
| Version Reference | 5.0 | |
| Owner | QASS | |
| Approved by | Academic Council | |
| Date | 1/6/18 | |
| Next review date | 1/6/20 | |
| Document Reference | QAH-PD-PPF | |

Guidance on the Completion of this form

This form is to be completed when proposing a new programme for development. The template is intended to guide programme proposers to consider the key information that is required in order to enable Executive Group and Academic Standards & Quality Committee approve the programme to proceed to development. This template also provides part of the validation document to be submitted to QQI.

This stage outlines the feasibility stage of the programme. The programme proposal form outlines to Executive Group and Academic Council, the strategic and academic rationale for the proposed programme. Whilst the programme being proposed may have been agreed during the strategic planning process, this form must be completed to ensure that the programme still has relevance to the strategic direction of the College and is viable.

The proposal template should be completed as completely as possible as completion of this stage allows programme development to commence. An outline project plan with target delivery dates based on the intended programme commencement date should be provided.

Stage 2: Programme Development – interim (Executive Group)

This stage is an interim checkpoint in the programme development process which will allow further review of the viability of the proposal. It is expected that this will be at a time where sufficient development will have taken place for the programme team to provide indicative costs associated with running the programme and enable support services to commence planning for delivery of the programme. As a result of the development process, it may result in the programme team recommending that development is ceased or postponed due to changing priorities, unforeseen costs or other issues affecting the academic and economic viability of the programme. This is an incremental and cumulative process and intended in further developing the QQI validation submission documentation.

The date of this checkpoint will depend on the nature of the programme being developed and therefore will be indicated by the programme development team in its outline project plan which will be developed in Stage 1. The paperwork to be submitted is Form : QASS-3.PD.PD1

Details of the principal programme must always be provided.

Embedded programmes are considered exceptional and must independently meet the validation criteria. Modules that lead to minor or special purpose awards must also meet the validation criteria—in higher education it is expected that most modules will NOT lead to QQI awards.

The term exit award is not used in the current validation policy. An exit award programme is a special case of an embedded programme where the exit award programme is never offered to learners independently and only accessed by learners who enrol on a principal programme and then exit early but have been assessed as having met the requirements for the lower NFQ level award.

1 AN OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAMME AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE QQI AWARD(S) TO WHICH IT DESIGNED TO LEAD

1.1 PRINCIPAL PROGRAMME

| Title | Award | ISCED ¹ code (detail: use four digits) | Duration ² <i>(years, months, weeks)</i> | If ³ an embedded programme is this an exit award |
|-------|-------|---|--|---|
| | | | | |

| Proposed enrolment | First intake (date) | Last intake (date) |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Maximum number of intakes per annum e.g. 2 Sept and Jan | |
| No cohorts per annum: e.g. 4: 2 in Sept; 2 in Jan | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Will the programme enrol international learners (yes/no) | |
| Will the programme accept Erasmus exchange students | |

| Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| | | | | | |

¹ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-f-detailed-field-descriptions-en.pdf>

² Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion

³ Ignore this for the principal programme.

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Minimum intake into first year | | | | | |
| Maximum intake into first year | | | | | |

The minimum and maximum numbers here may become conditions of validation.

| Detail any articulation arrangements involving advanced entry | Maximum number of learners involved | Stage of entry |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided | Maximum number of learners | Minimum number of learners |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Target learner groups | This should explain the prior knowledge (what learning is assumed) and the likely aspirations of targeted learners (why they are likely to be interested in the programme). |
| Proposed countries for provision (i.e. where enrolled learners will be based) | |
| Delivery mode: Full-time/part-time | |
| List the teaching and learning modes⁴ | |
| Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, | |

⁴ Defined later in this document.

| | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | | |
| Summary of staffing requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors) | WTE ⁵ | Qualifications and experience |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Outline the physical resource requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors) | | |
| Outline specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching staff | Staff to learner ratio | Learning activity type |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

⁵ WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a fulltime person fully dedicated to the programme.

| Work placements for which credit is allocated | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Title of the placement | Stage number | Credit (specify units ⁶) | Total hours in the workplace |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

If the programme involves work placements this should be noted here. Otherwise insert 'not applicable' in the box provided.

| Programme(s) being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation) | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|------------------------|
| Code | Title | Last Intake date | Estimated Closure date |
| | | | |
| | | | |

1.1.1 EMBEDDED PROGRAMME⁷

An embedded programme could lead to a major, special purpose, supplemental or professional award.

For each embedded programme use the same form as used for the principal programme.

An exit award is a special case of an embedded award. However, the corresponding embedded award programme must only be accessible by learners who are suited to completing the principal programme. Exit award embedded programmes cannot be offered independently or listed publicly as programmes.

⁶ 1 ECTS unit is at least 25 hours' learner effort. 1 FET Credit is at least 10 hours learning effort. The number of hours of work-based learning effort may only be a small fraction of the number of hours spent in the workplace as an intern or apprentice or trainee. The fraction varies depending on the nature of the work and the opportunities for learning it affords. Credit allocation must be carefully justified in the relevant module description.

⁷ This needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards.

1.1.2 STAND-ALONE MODULE⁸ LEADING TO A MINOR AWARD

Stand-alone modules are those that lead to a QQI award and can be offered independently of the programme. More information is required for a stand-alone module. Modules that are not standalone do not need to be addressed here as the principal programme information will suffice.

For each module leading to a QQI award (minor or special purpose) use the same table as used for the principal programme. Conventionally, the minimum credit for a HET award is **10 HET credits** (one sixth of the learner effort for a full academic year).

1.2 PROGRAMME AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In addition to the overall aims and objectives, state whether there are specific objectives to meet specific statutory, regulatory or professional body requirements.

For example, indicate where the programme aims to meet educational requirements for entry into a specified profession including regulated professions.

For apprenticeship programmes this **must** always include the outcomes achieved via the on-the-job process as well as via the off-the-job process

1.3 MINIMUM INTENDED PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

State the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) in terms of knowledge, skill and competence. The MIPLOs are for the programme as a whole.

If the programme has streams where different group's take different electives there will normally need to be separate MIPLOs for each stream.

Guidance Note: Section 2 should be completed with as much information as possible. This section will be further developed for the interim check point status which takes place when programme development has progressed further.

2 PROGRAMME CONCEPT, IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, AND ITS INTERPRETATION OF QQI AWARDS STANDARDS

2.1 RATIONALE FOR PROVIDING THE PROGRAMME

2.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS MET BY THE PROGRAMME

2.3 PROFILE OF LEARNERS THAT WOULD BE ENROLLED (TARGET LEARNERS)

This section should provide a broader perspective to help explain whom the programme is for.

⁸This only needs to be completed where modules may be offered independently. Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards.

2.4 ALIGNMENT OF THE PROGRAMME WITH THE PROFESSIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE IF THE PROGRAMME IS A

This applies to professional programmes at all levels including apprenticeship programmes.

2.5 INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN THE DESIGN OF A VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED PROGRAMME: PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

2.6 COMPARISON WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES (OF OTHER PROVIDERS)

2.7 EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAMME

2.8 EVIDENCE OF LEARNER DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAMME

2.9 EVIDENCE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES

2.10 FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

This must address criterion 17.7(d).

Outline what market analysis has been conducted to confirm the need for this programme and the outcomes/recommendations of such analysis/surveys. Identify the positioning of the new programme in relation to international academic developments, trends or best practice. Finally identify any unique selling points (USP's) versus existing programmes by completing below:

2.10.1 MARKET ANALYSIS FOR DEMAND AND COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

2.10.2 POSITIONING

2.10.3 USP

2.10.4 PROPOSED PRICE/PRICE BAND

2.10.5 PROPOSED LOCATION(S) OF DELIVERY

2.10.6 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COSTS

| Programme Development Cost | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Payroll | | | | | |
| • Cost of development Time | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| • Other payroll costs <i>(insert as required)</i> | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| Non Pay | | | | | |
| • <i>(insert as required)</i> | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| Total Development Cost | | | | | |

2.10.7 5 YEAR PROJECTED FINANCIALS

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| INCOME | | | | | |
| COSTS | | | | | |
| NET CONTRIBUTION | | | | | |

2.11 COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS (WHERE APPROPRIATE)⁹

Institution name

Institution address (including website)

Academic unit

Type of collaboration* (please refer to *Appendix 3.3. 1* and outline the specifics of this collaboration)

Programme(s) involved

⁹ If Collaborative arrangements are envisioned, this form must be accompanied by the partner profile and risk analysis forms 3.PD.PD2; 3.PD.PD3_

Forecast number of students (headcount)

Rationale for collaboration (Why should the College enter into this partnership? What are the potential benefits? How does it fit with the school's plans?)

Business case* (Is there evidence of demand for the programme? How will the development of the partnership be funded? Will it be a profit making activity? etc.)

Relationship to date* (What discussions have been held with the proposed partner? Has a formal visit been made?)

2.12 OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

| Task | Expected Date Due | Resource | Dependencies |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Exec Group Approval | | | |
| Academic Council Approval | | | |
| Interim Checkpoint* | | | |
| Final Draft to School | | | |
| Internal Review Panel | | | |
| Submission to QQI | | | |
| QQI Panel Date | | | |
| QQI PAEC date aimed for** | | | |
| Programme Commencement Date | | | |

- *Interim Checkpoint is when Stage 2 of this form is reviewed by Academic Council & Executive Board
- ** Dates of QQI PAEC meetings will be available in the College Calendar on the staff portal

Proposer:

Signed:

Date:

Development Team Leader

This form, when completed, is to be lodged with the QASS office by the Programme Director

Approved by School Committee

Signed

Date:

Chair

Approved at Executive Group::

Signed

Date

Chair

Approved at Academic Operations Committee::

Signed

Date

Chair

Date Noted by Academic Council

Signed

Date

Chair.....

Appendix 3.2: Interim Checkpoint Form

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Document Name | Programme Interim Checkpoint form |  National College of Ireland |
| Related Procedure | Procedures for the Development and Validation of QQI awards | |
| Version Reference | 5.0 | |
| Owner | QASS | |
| Approved by | Academic Council | |
| Date | 1/6/18 | |
| Next review date | 1/6/20 | |
| Document Reference | QAH-PD-1 | |
| Purpose | To provide sufficient information to Executive Group, Academic Operations Committee and support services in order to cost a programme and plan appropriately for services and marketing. To enable Executive Group, Academic Operations Committee and Academic Standards & Quality Committee evaluate whether the assumptions made at feasibility stage are still valid | |

Guidance on the Completion of this form

This form is to be completed when proposing a new programme for development. The template is intended to guide programme proposers to consider the key information that is required in order to enable Executive Group, Academic Operations Committee and Academic Standards & Quality Committee approve the programme to proceed to development. This template also provides information for the validation document to be submitted to QQI.

Stage 2: Programme Development – interim (Executive Group)

This stage is an interim checkpoint in the programme development process which will allow further review of the viability of the proposal. It is expected that this will be at a time where sufficient development will have taken place for the programme team to provide indicative costs associated with running the programme and enable support services to commence planning for delivery of the programme. As a result the development process, it may result in the programme team recommending that development is ceased or postponed due to changing priorities, unforeseen costs or other issues affecting the academic and economic viability of the programme.

The date of this checkpoint will depend on the nature of the programme being developed and therefore will be indicated by the programme development team in its outline project plan which will be developed in Stage 1. The paperwork to be submitted is Form : QAH-3.PD.PD1

The programme proposal form submitted should be updated based on the programme development process thus far. Text in red font is guidance text and should be removed prior to submitting the form for consideration.

Details of the principal programme must always be provided.

Embedded programmes are considered exceptional and must independently meet the validation criteria. Modules that lead to minor or special purpose awards must also meet the validation criteria—in higher education it is expected that most modules will NOT lead to QQI awards.

An exit award programme is a special case of an embedded programme where the exit award programme is never offered to learners independently and only accessed by learners who enrol on a principal programme and then exit early but have been assessed as having met the requirements for the lower NFQ level award.

1.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAMME AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE QQI AWARD(S) TO WHICH IT DESIGNED TO LEAD

Principal Programme

| Title | Award | ISCED ¹ code (detail: use four digits) | Duration ² <i>(years, months, weeks)</i> | If ³ an embedded programme is this an exit award |
|-------|-------|---|--|---|
| | | | | |

| Proposed enrolment | First intake (date) | Last intake (date) |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Maximum number of intakes per annum e.g. 2 Sept and Jan | |
| No cohorts per annum: e.g. 4: 2 in Sept; 2 in Jan | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Will the programme enrol international learners (yes/no) | |
| Will the programme accept Erasmus exchange students | |

| Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Minimum intake into first year | | | | | |

¹ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-f-detailed-field-descriptions-en.pdf>

² Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion

³ Ignore this for the principal programme.

| Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Maximum intake into first year | | | | | |

The minimum and maximum numbers will be conditions of validation and should be considered carefully, both to ensure academic and financial viability.

| Detail any articulation arrangements involving advanced entry | Maximum number of learners involved | Stage of entry |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided | Maximum number of learners | Minimum number of learners |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Each centre should be considered individually and named. Centres selected should normally be on the list of approved centres available on the programme development page on the information hub

| | |
|---|---|
| Target learner groups | This should explain the prior knowledge (what learning is assumed) and the likely aspirations of targeted learners (why they are likely to be interested in the programme). |
| Proposed countries for provision (i.e. where enrolled learners will be based) | |
| Delivery mode: Full-time/part-time | |
| List the teaching and learning modes ⁴ | |

⁴ Defined later in this document.

| | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <p>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</p> | | |
| <p>Summary of staffing requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors)</p> | WTE ⁵ | Qualifications and experience |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| <p>Outline the physical resource requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors)</p> | | |
| <p>Outline specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching staff</p> | Staff to learner ratio | Learning activity type |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

⁵ WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a fulltime person fully dedicated to the programme.

| Work placements for which credit is allocated | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Title of the placement | Stage number | Credit (specify units ⁶) | Total hours in the workplace |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

If the programme involves work placements this should be noted here. Otherwise insert 'not applicable' in the box provided.

| Programme(s) being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation) | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|------------------------|
| Code | Title | Last Intake date | Estimated Closure date |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Embedded programme

An embedded programme could lead to a major, special purpose, supplemental or professional award.

For each embedded programme use the same form as used for the principal programme.

An exit award is a special case of an embedded award. However, the corresponding embedded award programme must only be accessible by learners who are suited to completing the principal programme. Exit award embedded programmes cannot be offered independently or listed publically as programmes.

⁶ 1 ECTS unit is at least 25 hours' learner effort. 1 FET Credit is at least 10 hours learning effort. The number of hours of work-based learning effort may only be a small fraction of the number of hours spent in the workplace as an intern or apprentice or trainee. The fraction varies depending on the nature of the work and the opportunities for learning it affords. Credit allocation must be carefully justified in the relevant module description.

⁷ This needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards.

Stand-alone module⁸ leading to a minor award

Stand-alone modules are those that lead to a QQI award and can be offered independently of the programme. More information is required for a stand-alone module. Modules that are not standalone do not need to be addressed here as the principal programme information will suffice.

For each module leading to a QQI award (minor or special purpose) use the same table as used for the principal programme. Conventionally, the minimum credit for a HET award is **10 HET credits** (one sixth of the learner effort for a full academic year).

1.2 PROGRAMME AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In addition to the overall aims and objectives, state whether there are specific objectives to meet specific statutory, regulatory or professional body requirements.

For example, indicate where the programme aims to meet educational requirements for entry into a specified profession including regulated professions.

For apprenticeship programmes this **must** always include the outcomes achieved via the on-the-job process as well as via the off-the-job process

1.3 MINIMUM INTENDED PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

State the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) in terms of knowledge, skill and competence. The MIPLOs are for the programme as a whole.

If the programme has streams where different group's take different electives there will normally need to be separate MIPLOs for each stream.

Guidance Note: Section 2 should be completed with as much information as possible. This section will be further developed for the interim check point status which takes place when programme development has progressed further.

2 Programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards

2.1 RATIONALE FOR PROVIDING THE PROGRAMME

2.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS MET BY THE PROGRAMME

2.3 PROFILE OF LEARNERS THAT WOULD BE ENROLLED (TARGET LEARNERS)

This section should provide a broader perspective to help explain whom the programme is for.

⁸This only needs to be completed where modules may be offered independently. Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards.

2.4 ALIGNMENT OF THE PROGRAMME WITH THE PROFESSIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE IF THE PROGRAMME IS A

This applies to professional programmes at all levels including apprenticeship programmes.

2.5 INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN THE DESIGN OF A VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED PROGRAMME: PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

2.6 COMPARISON WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES (OF OTHER PROVIDERS)

2.7 EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAMME

2.8 EVIDENCE OF LEARNER DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAMME

2.9 EVIDENCE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES

2.10 FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

Outline what market analysis has been conducted to confirm the need for this programme and the outcomes/recommendations of such analysis/surveys. Identify the positioning of the new programme in relation to international academic developments, **trends or best practice. Finally identify any unique selling points (USP's)** versus existing programmes by completing below:

Market Analysis for demand and competitor analysis

Positioning

USP

Proposed Price/Price Band

Proposed Location(s) of delivery

2.10.1 5 year projected financials

Student Enrolment, Fee Arrangements, Impact Assessment and Financial Resourcing

Please complete the relevant sections below with information relating to the overall financial plan for the proposed new programme.

| INCOME | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Student Numbers | | | | | |
| • Fees | | | | | |
| ○ Fee per student | | | | | |
| ○ Total Fee income to NCI | | | | | |
| • Other Income <i>(insert as required)</i> | | | | | |
| ○ | | | | | |
| Total gross income to NCI | | | | | |
| Contribution to NCI overheads (x%) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Net Income to NCI | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | |
| • Teaching Costs | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| • Administration / Support Costs | | | | | |
| • Other Costs | | | | | |
| ○ Travel | | | | | |
| ○ Subsistence Costs | | | | | |
| ○ External Examiners | | | | | |
| ○ Quality Assurance | | | | | |
| ○ Staff Development | | | | | |
| ○ Classrooms/labs etc | | | | | |
| ○ NCI resources e.g. Library/IT | | | | | |
| ○ Publicity/Marketing | | | | | |
| ○ Other (please specify) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Total Expenditure | | | | | |
| Surplus (deficit) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| Programme Development Cost | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Payroll | | | | | |
| • Cost of development Time | | | | | |
| • Other payroll costs <i>(insert as required)</i> | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| Non Pay | | | | | |
| • <i>(insert as required)</i> | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| Total Development Cost | | | | | |

| Student Enrolment, Fee Arrangements, Impact Assessment and Financial Resourcing continued. | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <u>Capital Expenditure</u> | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Detail below All items of capital expenditure required in the development and delivery of the programme and the related cost: | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| • | | | | | |
| Total Capital Expenditure | | | | | |

2.11 COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS (WHERE APPROPRIATE) ⁹

| | |
|---|--|
| Institution name | |
| Institution address (including website) | |
| Academic unit | |
| Type of collaboration* (please refer to Appendix 3.3. 1 and outline the specifics of this collaboration) | |
| Programme(s) involved | |
| Forecast number of students (headcount) | |
| Rationale for collaboration = (Why should the College enter into this partnership? What are the potential benefits? How does it fit with the school's plans?) | |
| Business case* (Is there evidence of demand for the programme? How will the development of the partnership be funded? Will it be a profit making activity? etc.) | |
| Relationship to date* (What discussions have been held with the proposed partner? Has a formal visit been made?) | |

3 Curriculum & Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy

3.1.1 Stage level outline

| Stage label | Stage synopsis |
|-------------|----------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

3.1.2 Rules for electives and their rationale

3.1.3 Module-level outline

| Stage label | New/Existing | Module title |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

⁹ If Collaborative arrangements are envisioned, this form must be accompanied by the partner profile and risk analysis forms 3.PD.PD2; 3.PD.PD3_

3.2 PROGRAMME TEACHING AND LEARNING (INCLUDING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) STRATEGY

Indicate any specialist requirements for teaching, learning & assessment strategies – eg use of technology, optimal size of class or other impacts on support for learners, faculty or the financial viability of the programme..

3.3 INTEGRATION, ORGANISATION AND OVERSIGHT OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

The impact on support services, library & IT services in particular should be addressed here. It is expected that support staff, library staff and IT staff will have been involved in discussions at this point. If off-campus delivery is proposed, will this have any implications for teaching & learning support

3.5 PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS AND GUIDING, INFORMING AND CARING FOR LEARNERS

3.6 PROGRAMME SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

3.7 PROPOSED PROGRAMME AND STAGE SCHEDULES

4 Staffing Required

4.1 PROGRAMME DIRECTOR AND BOARD

4.2 COMPLEMENT OF STAFF (OR POTENTIAL STAFF)

4.3 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INTERFACE FOR WORK PLACEMENT OF EMPLOYER-BASED PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN APPRENTICESHIP OR

4.4 RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR STAFF NOT ALREADY IN POST

5 Physical and Technical Resources

The physical and technical requirements for the programme must be fully costed

5.1 SPECIFICATION OF THE PROGRAMME'S PHYSICAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

5.2 COMPLEMENT OF SUPPORTED PHYSICAL RESOURCES (OR POTENTIAL ONES)

5.2.1 Premises

5.2.2 Informational technology resources

5.2.3 Materials for teaching, learning and assessment (software and printed)

5.2.4 Specialised equipment

5.2.5 Technical and administrative support services

6 Outline Project Plan

If any changes to the plan have been made as a result of detailed programme development they should be outlined here.

| Task | Expected Date Due | Resource | Dependencies |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Exec Group Approval | | | |

| Task | Expected Date Due | Resource | Dependencies |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Academic Council Approval | | | |
| Interim Checkpoint* | | | |
| Final Draft to School | | | |
| Internal Review Panel | | | |
| Submission to QQI | | | |
| QQI Panel Date | | | |
| QQI PAEC date aimed for** | | | |
| Programme Commencement Date | | | |

- ** Dates of QQI PAEC meetings will be available in the College Calendar on the staff portal

Proposer:

Signed:

Date:

Programme Director

This form, when completed, is to be lodged with the QASS office by the Programme Director

Approved by School

Signed

Date:

Dean of School

Approved at Executive Group::

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair

Approved at Academic Operations Committee::

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair

Date Noted by Academic Council

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair.....

1 Internal Review Panel

Report of the Internal Review Panel

Internal Validation of **Insert programme**

title here Insert date here

Internal Review Panel Membership:

Insert names and job titles here

NCI Staff met by Internal

Review Panel: **Insert names and**

job titles here Evaluation

against the criteria:

The programme proposal has been evaluated by Internal Review Panel against the validation criteria outlined in Section 10 as follows:

| Criterion 1 – The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no or N/A) |
| a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. | | |
| b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed. | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | | |
|--|--|--|

Criterion 2 -

The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI

| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
|--|---------|---|
| a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. | | |
| b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. | | |
| i. Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme. | | |
| c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s). | | |
| d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i> . | | |
| e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | | |
| f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are | | |
| i. Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought. | | |
| ii. Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. | | |
| g) For each programme and embedded programme | | |
| i. The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified. | | |
| ii. The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards. | | |
| h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules. | | |
| i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable. | | |
| i. For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards. | | |
|--|--|--|

| Criterion 3 – | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives) | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives. | | |
| b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes. | | |
| i. There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme. | | |
| ii. The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find. | | |
| iii. There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies). | | |
| iv. There is evidence of learner demand for the programme. | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| v. There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant. | | |
| vi. The programme meets genuine education and training needs. | | |
| c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. | | |
| d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented. | | |
| e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications. | | |

| Criterion 4 – | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied. | | |
| b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats. | | |
| c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award. | | |
| d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants). | | |
| e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions. | | |
| f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):- | | |
| i. Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i> , and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). | | |
| ii. Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners. | | |
| iii. Has long-lasting significance. | | |
| g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | | |

| Criterion 5 – | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions. | | |
| b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs. | | |
| c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes. | | |
| d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff. | | |
| e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles. | | |
| f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented. | | |
| g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes. | | |
| h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes. | | |
| i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements. | | |
| j) The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation. | | |

Criterion 6 –

| There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also unit (12c). | | |
| b) The programme has an identified complement of staff (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments. | | |
| c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners' achievements as required. | | |
| d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development opportunities. | | |
| e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance. | | |
| f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post. | | |
|--|--|--|

| Criterion 7 – | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also 12d). | | |
| b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of: | | |
| i. suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme’s learning environments including the workplace learning environment) | | |
| ii. suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) | | |
| iii. printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment | | |
| iv. suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable | | |
| v. technical support | | |
| vi. administrative support | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| vii. company placements/internships – if applicable | | |
| c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment). | | |
| d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address | | |
| i. Planned intake (first five years) and | | |
| ii. The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. | | |
| e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required. | | |

| Criterion 8 – | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The programme’s physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes. | | |
| b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme’s learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors. | | |
| c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| regard to the different nature of the workplace. | | |
|--|--|--|

| Criterion 9 – | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| There are sound teaching and learning strategies | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes. | | |
| b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. | | |
| c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload). | | |
| d) Learning is monitored/supervised. | | |
| e) Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme. | | |

| Criterion 10 – | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| There are sound assessment strategies | | |
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i> | | |
| b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the | | |
|--|--|--|

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme. | | |
| d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning. | | |
| e) There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules. | | |
| f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable. | | |
| g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results. | | |
| h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award. | | |

| Criterion 11 – Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
| a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments. | | |
| b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme. | | |
| c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures. | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways. | | |
| e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities. | | |
| f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it. | | |
| g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs. | | |
| h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities. | | |
| i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i> and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme . | | |
| j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations). | | |
| Criterion 12 - | | |
| The programme is well managed | | |

| Sub criteria | Comment | Satisfactory (yes, partially, no, or N/A) |
|---|---------|---|
| a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures. | | |
| b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not. | | |
| c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff. | | |
| d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources. | | |
| e) Quality assurance is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. | | |
| f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved. | | |
| g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. | | |
| h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification. | | |

2. Outcome of the Internal Review Panel

2.1 Overall Finding

Amend the text which follows as necessary. The internal review panel is pleased to recommend to Academic Council that the **Insert programme title here** programme proposal be submitted to QQI for validation under QQI processes subject to the following conditions and/or recommendations.

2.2 Conditions of the Internal Review Panel

- 1.

2.3 Recommendations of the Internal Review Panel

- 1.

Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET) (Edition 3, 2018)

This document assumes familiarity with “[Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training](#)”. That is the definitive source.

Part 1: provides an overall template for presenting applications.

Part 2: provides supporting templates e.g. for the proposed programme schedule.

Part 3: provides further information for applicants and guidelines for completing and presenting an application

All applicants must use the templates provided and complete all sections—this is required for administrative purposes. The templates can be adapted to some degree, but must meet the validation criteria.

The purpose of this document is to help applicants (for validation) present their applications and programmes consistently and systematically. However, it is the applicant’s sole responsibility to ensure that all the criteria are addressed. The manual needs to be read in conjunction with [QQI’s Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training](#).

CHANGES IN VERSION 3

This version is for use by applicants, but it will be updated from time to time. Consult QQI for the latest version.

Version 3 aims to rationalise and streamline the application manual – all sections must be completed. However, where there are shared features or where similar information is requested in different sections this should be referenced rather than duplicated as a general principle there should be limited repetition

Part 1

Overall Template for Presenting an Application

1 Provider Details

| Relevant provider | |
|-------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Address | |

| Contact for validation | |
|------------------------|--|
| Name: | |
| Title: | |
| Address: | |
| E-mail: | |
| Phone: | |
| Mobile: | |

| Programme director | |
|--------------------|--|
| Name: | |
| Title: | |
| Address: | |
| E-mail: | |
| Phone: | |
| Mobile: | |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Provider type: | |
|----------------|--|

1. Contextual information about the provider and its other programmes

1.1 An outline of the programme and identification of the QQI award(s) to which it designed to lead

(when submitting an add-on programme for validation, please ensure that a copy of the programme document that is being added to is included in the submission)

1.1.1 Principal programme

| Title | Award | ISCED ¹ code (detail: use four digits) | Duration ² <i>(years, months, weeks)</i> | If ³ an embedded programme is this an exit award |
|-------|-------|---|--|---|
| | | | | |

| Proposed enrolment | First intake (date) | Last intake (date) |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Maximum number of intake groups/cohorts per annum | |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Will the programme enrol international learners (yes/no) | |
| Will the programme accept Erasmus exchange students | |

| Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Minimum total enrolment into first year | | | | | |
| Maximum total enrolment into first year | | | | | |

| Detail any articulation arrangements involving advanced entry | Maximum number of learners involved | Stage of entry |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| | | |

¹ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-isced>

² Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion

³ Ignore this for the principal programme.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |

| Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided | Maximum enrolment per annum | Minimum enrolment per annum |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Target learner groups | This should explain the prior knowledge (what learning is assumed) and the likely aspirations of targeted learners (why they are likely to be interested in the programme). | |
| Proposed countries for provision (i.e. where enrolled learners will be based) | | |
| Delivery mode: Full-time/part-time | | |
| List the teaching and learning modes⁴ | | |
| Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | | |
| Outline of staffing requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors)⁵ | WTE⁶ | Qualifications and experience⁷ |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

⁴ Defined later in this document.

⁵ Teaching staff and staff dedicated to the monitoring, development and administration of the programme should be included.

⁶ WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a fulltime person fully dedicated to the programme.

⁷ Qualifications and experience should be explicitly stated. For example, it is not sufficient to simply state a level 8 qualification. The award type and discipline area(s) should also be included.

| | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Outline the physical resource requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors) | | |
| Outline specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching staff | Staff to learner ratio | Learning activity type |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Overall WTE staff/learner ratio⁸ | | |

| Work placements for which credit is allocated | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Title of the placement | Stage number | Credit (specify units⁹) | Total hours in the workplace |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

If the programme involves work placements this should be noted here. Otherwise insert 'not applicable' in the box provided.

Programme(s) being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)

⁸Total WTE academic staff exclusively dedicated to the programme divided by maximum number of learners that can be enrolled.

⁹1 ECTS unit is at least 25 hours' learner effort. 1 FET Credit is at least 10 hours learning effort. The number of hours of work-based learning effort may only be a small fraction of the number of hours spent in the workplace as an intern or apprentice or trainee. The fraction varies depending on the nature of the work and the opportunities for learning it affords. Credit allocation must be carefully justified in the relevant module description.

| Code | Title | Last Intake date | Estimated Closure date |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

1.1.2 Embedded programme

1.1.3 Stand-alone module leading to a minor award

2 Educational and training objectives and minimum intended programme and module learning outcomes

2.1 Programme aims and objectives

2.2 Rationale for the choice of QQI named award stem sought and for the named award title

2.3 QQI awards standards used

2.4 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs)

2.5 Minimum intended module and (where applicable) stage learning outcomes (MIMLOs)

2.6 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency

2.7 Comparing the MIPLOs with those of comparable programmes

2.8 Mapping the MIMLOs against the QQI awards standards

2.9 Other matters

3 Programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards

3.1 Rationale for providing the programme

3.2 Profile of learners that would be enrolled (target learners)

3.3 Education and training needs met by the programme

3.4 Alignment of the programme with the professional/occupational profile if the programme is a professional one

3.5 How the programme and its intended programme learning outcomes were conceived, researched and developed

3.6 Interpretation of the awards standards and research supporting the programme's aims, objectives and the MIPLOs

3.7 Involvement of employers and practitioners in the design of a vocationally oriented programme: process and outcomes

3.8 Comparison with other programmes (of other providers)

3.9 Evidence of support for the introduction of the programme

3.10 Evidence of learner demand for the programme

3.11 Evidence of employment opportunities for graduates

3.12 Planned intake

3.13 Five-year plan for the proposed programme

3.14 Other matters

4 Access, transfer and progression procedures, criteria and arrangements for the programme

4.1 Information to be made available to learners about the programme

4.2 Entry procedures and criteria for the programme including procedures recognition of prior learning

4.2.1 Entry procedures

4.2.2 Minimum requirements for general learning

4.2.3 Minimum requirements for discipline-specific learning

4.2.4 Minimum experiential requirements (if applicable)

4.2.5 Minimum language proficiency requirements

4.2.6 Minimum mathematical proficiency requirements

4.2.7 Minimum criteria for passing the access interview (if applicable)

4.2.8 Detail any other criteria for selecting learners

4.2.9 Programme-specific RPL criteria, and arrangements for entry, exemptions from modules, advanced entry and direct access to the award

| Summary of RPL criteria for advanced entry or access to the award (cite supporting documentation) | |
|---|--|
| Stage 1 | |
| Stage 2 | |
| Stage 3 | |
| Stage 4 | |
| Award | |

| List of specific arrangements for transfer from other programme (inward) to the proposed programme | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------|
| | Programme name, Provider | Details |
| Stage 1 | | |
| | | |
| Stage 2 | | |
| | | |
| Stage 3 | | |
| | | |
| Stage 4 | | |
| | | |

| List of specific arrangements for progression (inward) to the proposed programme | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------|
| | Programme name, Provider | Details |
| Stage 1 | | |
| | | |
| Stage 2 | | |
| | | |
| Stage 3 | | |
| | | |
| Stage 4 | | |
| | | |

4.3 Programme-specific transfer (outward) procedures and criteria

4.4 Identified transfer and progression destinations

| Progression destinations | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Programme name, Provider | Details |
| | |
| | |

| Transfer destinations | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Programme name, Provider | Details |
| | |
| | |

4.5 Professional accreditation of the programme

4.6 Detail the credit system used for the programme

4.7 Other matters

5 Written curriculum

5.1 Outline of the curriculum

5.1.1 Stage level outline

| Stage label | Stage synopsis |
|-------------|----------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

5.1.2 Rules for electives and their rationale

5.1.3 Module-level outline

| Stage label | Module title | Module synopsis |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

5.2 Rationale for the curriculum structure

5.3 Rationale for the programme’s duration, credit allocation

5.4 Indicative timetable and its rationale

5.5 Integrated learning opportunities and assessment in light of the MIPLOs

5.6 Programme teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

5.7 Integration, organisation and oversight of work-based learning

5.8 Programme learning environment

5.9 Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners

5.10 Programme summative assessment strategy

5.11 Proposed programme and stage schedules

6 Module Documentation

6.1 Module 1

6.1.1 Headline information about the module

The following table MUST be used to provided headline information about each module.

| | |
|---|--|
| Module title | |
| Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated) | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Module number/reference | | | | | | | |
| Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated. | | | | | | | |
| Stage of parent programme | | | | | | | |
| Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable) | | | | | | | |
| Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS) | | | | | | | |
| Module credit number of units | | | | | | | |
| List the teaching and learning modes | | | | | | | |
| Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence) | | | | | | | |
| Pre-requisite module titles | | | | | | | |
| Co-requisite module titles | | | | | | | |
| Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No) | | | | | | | |
| Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements) | | | | | | | |
| Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module) | | | | | | | |
| Duration of the module | | | | | | | |
| Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see * below) | | | | | | | |
| Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module) | | | | | | | |
| Analysis of required learning effort (much of the remainder of this table must also be presented in the programme schedule—take care to ensure consistency) | | | | | | | |
| *Effort while in contact with staff | | | | | | | |
| Classroom and demonstrations | Mentoring and small-group tutoring | Other (specify) | Directed e-learning (hours) | Independent learning (hours) | Other hours (specify) | Work-based learning hours of learning effort | Total effort (hours) |

| Hours | Minimum ratio | Hours | Minimum ratio teacher/learner | Hours | Minimum ratio teacher/learner | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Allocation of marks (within the module) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Continuous assessment | Supervised project | Proctored practical examination | Proctored written examination | Total | | |
| Percentage contribution | | | | | | | | 100% | | |

6.1.2 Module aims and objectives

6.1.3 Minimum intended module learning outcomes

6.1.4 Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall IPLOs

6.1.5 Information provided to learners about the module

6.1.6 Module content, organisation and structure

6.1.7 Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

6.1.8 Work-based learning and practice-placement

6.1.9 E-learning

6.1.10 Module physical resource requirements

6.1.11 Reading lists and other information resources

6.1.12 Specifications for module staffing requirements

6.1.13 Module summative assessment strategy

6.1.14 Sample assessment materials

6.2 Module [2]

Use the same headings as above and repeat as necessary.

Programme Staff

6.1 Programme director and board

6.2 Complement of staff (or potential staff)

6.3 Arrangements for the interface for work placement of employer-based personnel involved in apprenticeship or traineeship programmes

6.4 Programme-specific staff performance management arrangements

6.5 Arrangements for approval of staff who will have a formal role in this programme

6.6 CVs for the programme's key staff (e.g. the programme leadership) and for the identified complement of staff

6.7 Recruitment plan for staff not already in post

7 Physical resources

7.1 Specification of the programme's physical resource requirements

7.2 Complement of supported physical resources (or potential ones)

7.2.1 Premises

7.2.2 Informational technology resources

7.2.3 Materials for teaching, learning and assessment (software and printed)

7.2.4 Specialised equipment

7.2.5 Technical and administrative support services

8.3 Company placement resources

8.4 Criteria for approving a new centre where the programme may be provided (only if applicable)

8.5 Entitlements to use the property required

9 Programme management

9.1 Documented procedures for the operation and management of the programme

9.2 Supplementary QA procedures for the programme

9.3 Mechanisms to keep the programme updated and how it will be updated in consultation with stakeholders

9.4 Compliance with special validation criteria or requirements attached to the applicable awards standards

9.5 Membership and terms of reference for the programme board

9.6 Collaborative provision

9.7 Apprenticeship coordinating provider role

9.8 Transnational provision

10. Proposed Programme Schedule

Template provided in Part 2

Detailed advice on preparing proposed programme schedule available in the Guidelines for completing and presenting an application (Part 3 of this document)

Part 2 Supporting Templates

10 Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

Note that minor and embedded award programmes each require separate schedules.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Name of Provider: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Programme Title | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Title | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stage Exit Award Title³ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Modes of Delivery (FT/PT): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching and learning modalities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Class⁴ | Award NFQ level | Award EQF Level | Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage): | Stage NFQ Level² | Stage EQF Level² | Stage Credit (ECTS) | Date Effective | ISCED Subject code | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces) | | Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2) | Module | | Credit Number⁵ | Total Student Effort Module (hours) | | | Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) | | | | | | |
| | | | Status¹⁰ | NFQ Level¹ | Credit Units | Total Hours | Class or | Directed- | Indep of | Hours based | Work- | C.A. % | Project % | Supervised | practical |

¹⁰ Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

¹¹ Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | where specified | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See Guidelines for completing and presenting an application (Part 4 appended) for Notes on completing the Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

11. Evaluation against the validation criteria

| Criterion 1 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
|---|-------------------------------|--|------------------|
| The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme | | | |
| a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. | | | |
| b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed. | | | |
| c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. ¹² | | | |

| Criterion 2 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought | | | |
| a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. | | | |
| b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. | | | |
| (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme. | | | |
| c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s). | | | |

¹² This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i> . | | | |
| e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | | | |
| f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are | | | |
| (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought. | | | |
| (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. | | | |
| g) For each programme and embedded programme | | | |
| (i) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified. ¹³ | | | |
| (ii) The minimum intended programme learning | | | |

¹³ Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards. | | | |
| h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules. | | | |
| i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable. | | | |
| (i) For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards. ¹⁴ | | | |

| Criterion 3 | Initial Evaluation | Changes based on feedback | Final Evaluation |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based | | | |

¹⁴ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives) | | | |
| a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives. ¹⁵ | | | |
| b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes. | | | |

¹⁵ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme. | | | |
| (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find. | | | |
| (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies). | | | |
| (iv) There is evidence ¹⁶ of learner demand for the programme. | | | |
| (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant ¹⁷ . | | | |

¹⁶This might be predictive or indirect.

¹⁷It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs. ¹⁸ | | | |
| c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. | | | |
| d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented. | | | |
| e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications. | | | |

| Criterion 4 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory | | | |
| a) The information about the programme as well as its | | | |

¹⁸ There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied¹⁹.</p> | | | |
| <p>b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.</p> | | | |
| <p>c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language</p> | | | |

¹⁹ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR²⁰) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> | | | |
| <p>d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).</p> | | | |
| <p>e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.</p> | | | |
| <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> | | | |
| <p>(i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, and</p> | | | |

²⁰ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). | | | |
| (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; | | | |
| (iii) Has long-lasting significance. | | | |
| g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | | | |

| Criterion 5 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose | | | |
| a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions. | | | |

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| b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs. | | | |
| c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes. | | | |
| d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff. | | | |
| e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles ²¹ . | | | |
| f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented. | | | |
| g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry | | | |

²¹ This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

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| standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes. | | | |
| h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes. | | | |
| i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements. | | | |
| j) The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation. ²² | | | |

| Criterion 6 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
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| There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned | | | |

²² If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified.

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| <p>a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion (12(c)).</p> | | | |
| <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff²³ (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> | | | |
| <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess</p> | | | |

²³ Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

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| learners' achievements as required. | | | |
| d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development ²⁴ opportunities ²⁵ . | | | |
| e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance. | | | |
| f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post. | | | |

| Criterion 7 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
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²⁴ Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

²⁵ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

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| <p>There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned</p> | | | |
| <p>a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also (criterion 12(d)).</p> | | | |
| <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:</p> | | | |
| <p>(i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)</p> | | | |

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| (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) | | | |
| (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment | | | |
| (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable | | | |
| (v) technical support | | | |
| (vi) administrative support | | | |
| (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable | | | |
| c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment). | | | |
| d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address | | | |
| (i) Planned intake (first five years) and | | | |

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| (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. | | | |
| e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required. | | | |
| Criterion 8 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
| The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners | | | |
| a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes. | | | |
| b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors. | | | |
| c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the | | | |

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| parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace. | | | |
| Criterion 9 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
| There are sound teaching and learning strategies | | | |
| a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes. | | | |
| b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. | | | |
| c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload). | | | |
| d) Learning is monitored/supervised. | | | |

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| e) Individualised guidance, support ²⁶ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme. | | | |
| Criterion 10 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
| There are sound assessment strategies | | | |
| a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i> ²⁷ | | | |
| b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. | | | |
| c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who | | | |

²⁶ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

²⁷ See the section on transitional arrangements.

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| successfully complete the programme. ²⁸ | | | |
| d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning. | | | |
| e) There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules. ²⁹ | | | |
| f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable. | | | |
| g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results. | | | |
| h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have | | | |

²⁸ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

²⁹ The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

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| been specifically assessed against the standard for that award. ³⁰ | | | |
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| Criterion 11 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for | | | |
| a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments. | | | |
| b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme. | | | |
| c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures. | | | |
| d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the | | | |

³⁰ If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

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| selection of appropriate learning pathways. | | | |
| e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities. | | | |
| f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it. | | | |
| g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs. | | | |
| h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities ³¹ . | | | |
| i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i> ³² and there are appropriate in-service | | | |

³¹ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

³² See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

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| supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme . | | | |
| j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations). | | | |

| Criterion 12 | Initial Evaluation (optional) | Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional) | Final Evaluation |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| The programme is well managed | | | |
| a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's | | | |

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| <p>general or institutional procedures.</p> | | | |
| <p>b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for- the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> | | | |
| <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.</p> | | | |
| <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical</p> | | | |

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| resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources. | | | |
| e) Quality assurance ³³ is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. | | | |
| f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved. | | | |
| g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. | | | |
| h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification. | | | |

³³ See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

12. Mapping MIPLOs against QQI awards standards

12.1 Professional award-type descriptor (currently this is only for apprenticeship programmes)

The descriptors are available here: http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf

Explanatory Text should be removed when completing template

| Analysis of Purpose | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N-1 (one below the proposed level) (For information on QQI's current awards standards see http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) | Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N (the proposed level) (For information on QQI's current awards standards see http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) | Statement of programme's purpose | Evidence Outline how the purpose is realised Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything. Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application. | Analysis Demonstrate how the programme purpose statement is consistent with that from the award standard for the proposed award at NFQ level (N). Focus on the Level N indicators from the award standard <u>and</u> on the differences between the Level N and Level N-1 indicators. | Commentary Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the purpose of the QQI award standard for the award sought. |
| Purpose | | | | | | |

| Overview Analysis of the MIPLOs against QQI Standards (PATD) and Outline of the support for the MIPLOs | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Each thread must be addressed for all awards, where there is no outcome for a thread this should be justified | | | | | | | |
| | Thread | Level N-1 (one below the proposed level) Professional Award expected learning outcomes | Level N (the proposed level) Professional Award expected learning outcomes | Minimum intended programme learning outcomes <u>for each thread</u> | Evidence Outline how the MIPLOs are achieved and assessed. Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything. Provide the main evidence in this table. Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application. Don't include outcomes that are aspirational and are not validly and reliably assessed. Evidence and examples given must be representative and not outliers. | Analysis Demonstrate how the MIPLOs are consistent with the descriptor for the proposed level (N). Focus on the Level N descriptor <u>and</u> on the differences between the Level N and level N-1 indicators. | Commentary Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the PADT at the level of the award sought. |
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| | | | | | Note that some of the descriptor's requirements will typically be met by required prior learning. The minimum entry requirements are relevant in this regard (but <u>not</u> the typical entry requirements!) | | |
| Knowledge: breadth and kind | Knowledge scope and coherence | | | | | | |
| | Knowledge Structure | | | | | | |
| | Knowledge of issues | | | | | | |
| Know-how and skill: range and selectivity | Use cognitive and practical skills (analytical and synthetic) to solve problems | | | | | | |
| | Draw insightful conclusions | | | | | | |
| | Communicate and influence | | | | | | |
| Competence— Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight | Exercising autonomy and judgement | | | | | | |
| | Exercising responsibility | | | | | | |
| | Working with others | | | | | | |
| | Learning and teaching | | | | | | |
| | Attitudes | | | | | | |
| Articulation and Progression | | | | | | | |
| Assessment | | | | | | | |

12.2 QQI awards standards for programmes of higher education and training

Note: Providers are expected to either map MIPLO's to all strands of the award descriptor/standards or give a rationale as to why the strand is not relevant.

| Analysis of Purpose | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at <u>Level N-1</u> (one below the proposed level). If there is no purpose indicator in the relevant award standard, use the purpose indicator from the relevant award type descriptor (For information on QQI's current awards standards see http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) | Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at <u>Level N</u> (the proposed level). If there is no purpose indicator in the relevant award standard, use the purpose indicator from the relevant award type descriptor (For information on QQI's current awards standards see http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) | Statement of programme's purpose | Evidence | Analysis | Commentary |
| Purpose | | | | Outline how the purpose is realised Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything. Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application. | Demonstrate how the programme purpose statement is consistent with that from the award standard for the proposed award at NFQ level (N). Focus on the Level N indicators from the award standard <u>and</u> on the differences between the Level N and Level N-1 indicators. | Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the purpose of the QQI award standard for the award sought. |

| Overview Analysis of the MIPLOs against QQI Standards and Outline of the support for the MIPLOs | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Substrand/row | Thread | Copy the indicators from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at <u>Level N-1</u> (one below the proposed level) (For information on QQI's current awards standards see http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) | Copy the indicators from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at <u>Level N</u> (the proposed level) (For information on QQI's current awards standards see http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) | Minimum intended programme learning outcomes for each thread | Evidence | Analysis | Commentary |
| | | | | | Outline how the MIPLOs are achieved and assessed. Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything. Provide the main evidence in this table. Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application. Don't include outcomes that are aspirational and are not validly and reliably assessed. Evidence and examples given must be representative and not outliers. Note that some of the standards' requirements will typically be met by required prior learning. The minimum entry requirements are relevant in this | Demonstrate how the MIPLOs are consistent with the award standard for the proposed award at NFQ level (N). Focus on the Level N indicators from the award standard <u>and</u> on the differences between the Level N and level N-1 indicators. | Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the QQI award standard for the award sought. |

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| Knowledge: breadth and kind | | | | |
| Know-how and skill: range and selectivity | | | | |
| Competence— Context | | | | |
| Competence— Role | | | | |
| Competence— Learning-to-learn | | | | |
| Competence— Insight | | | | |
| Articulation and Progression | | | | |
| Assessment | | | | |

12.3 Other QQI awards standards

The template in unit 2 may be used changing what needs to be changed.

Programme Validation Manual (2017) for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET) Pilot Version (Edition 3)

Part 3

Information for applicants and guidelines for completing and presenting an application

Information for applicants

The validation process is outlined in *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training*.

Providers should consult the following documents when preparing for validation (the underlined text is hyperlinked to the relevant document or webpage):

QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines

- **QQI Policy Restatement—Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training**
- **Policy and Criteria for Making Awards**
- **Policy for Determining Awards Standards**
 - **Awards Standards** (HET non-apprenticeship)
 - Awards standards for apprenticeship programmes
 - **Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training**
 - **Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards** provides special validation policy and criteria and quality assurance guidelines for programmes with a collaborative and/or transnational dimension. This document is due to be revised. Parts of it have been superseded by more recent validation policies and criteria and quality assurance guidelines.
- **Research Degree Programme Policy and Criteria** provides detailed information for prospective providers of research degree programmes including professional doctorate programmes.
- **Assessment and Standards** (HET) is about the assessment of learners. Among these are *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* and *programme and module assessment strategies*.
- **Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers** (FET) This should be used as a guide but it must be noted that the common awards system references don't apply to the terminal awards made in respect of apprenticeship programmes.

- [ECTS User's Guide](#) (*European Communities 2015*)
- [Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training \(NQAI 2005\)](#) sets out the principles and operational guidelines for the recognition of prior learning in further and higher education and training established by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland following consultation with stakeholders.
- [Principles and operational guidelines for the implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training \(NQAI 2006\)](#) sets out the national approach to credit in higher education and training. It is intended to complement the National Framework of Qualifications. The Framework is an outcomes-based awards system, and that the national approach to credit is compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation system (ECTS).

These documents are available on the [validation section of our website](#) via the “What We Do” drop-down menu.

The Validation Process

The process is governed by [Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training \(2017\)](#).

Unit 5 of *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training* outlines how to present an application for validation. That is the definitive source. This manual provides some supporting material and guidance.

Quotations from the policies and criteria document in this document are set in bold blue typeface (except for the for the validation criteria in the self-evaluation report template).

Interpretations

Assessment strategy A programme assessment strategy is a document aimed at those teachers, learners and assessors who are involved with the programme. It should be prepared for every programme during the programme's development and maintained thereafter. The programme assessment strategy should have a number of features.

It should:

- Link a programme's assessment instruments (summative and formative, including continuous assessment and repeat assessment) to the minimum (and any other) intended programme learning outcomes as well as intended module and stage learning outcomes.
- Describe and provide a rationale for the choice of assessment tasks, criteria and procedures. It should also address their fairness and consistency, specifically their validity, reliability and authenticity.

- Describe any special regulations (e.g. learners may be required to pass some key modules outright and not rely on pass by compensation).
- Regulate, build upon and integrate the module assessment strategies and (where used) stage assessment strategies.
- Provide contingent strategy for cases where learners claim exemption from modules, including for recognition of prior learning.
- Match the programme's assessment instruments to the requirements of the institutional grading system, particularly concerning the recording and combination of module grades/marks (i.e. provide clear criteria for grading/marking).
- Ensure that the programme's continuous assessment workload is appropriately balanced.
 - Relate to the programme's teaching and learning strategy.

Assessment strategies should be plainly written and communicated at the start of a programme to learners and all those involved with teaching and assessment. A clear assessment strategy can complement a statement of intended learning outcomes and aid its interpretation.

Most programmes are modular to some degree — i.e. they are divisible into parts. When designing programme assessment strategies, it is therefore important to remember that knowledge, skill and competence acquired in particular contexts may not necessarily transfer to a different context without additional learning.

A major award programme will normally require a specific process which, working to the programme assessment strategy, integrates constituent modules so that the intended programme learning outcomes are supported. This should promote overall coherence; consistency between module and programme intended learning outcomes; and establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme.

It should also coordinate alignment of activities (i.e. the learning opportunities including formative assessment and summative assessment) with the intended programme of learning outcomes and induct learners into the broader community practice in their discipline.

When developing programme assessment strategies, developers should consider the practicalities of offering repeat continuous assessment opportunities. For example, it may not be feasible for some continuous

assessment tasks to be repeated in the same time-frame as written examinations.

Contradictory assessment findings can emerge when the same learning outcomes are assessed by continuous assessment and written examinations. This can create dilemmas unless the potential for such contradictions is foreseen and provided for in the programme and module assessment strategies.

The guidelines for programme assessment strategies apply, with obvious changes made, to module assessment strategies.

Capstone

A capstone module is one that provides an opportunity for a learner to integrate accumulated learning and make the necessary connections in the context of a particular discipline.

An example of an award-stage capstone module is a dissertation or project.

Capstone assessment aims to measure cumulative learning at a particular stage, including at the award stage. It is particularly important for award-stage capstone assessment tasks to be authentic.

Module

A programme of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of being integrated with other modules into larger programmes. A module can be shared by different programmes. See Assessment and Standards for a more elaborate definition.

Stage

Programmes are normally divided into stages and modules.

Stages and modules are sub-programmes within programmes.

Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. It may comprise a set of modules at a similar level. Typically, the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level of the

intended learning outcomes of constituent modules increases as a learner progresses through successive stages of a programme.

Even where modules are not taken in parallel, the stage concept is important for grouping modules with the same level (NFQ) of learning and requiring a similar level of maturity in the relevant discipline. Full-time learners study all the modules in a stage in parallel, while part-time learners may study as little as one

module at a time.

Staged programmes are frequently organised in semesters. A semester is a period of time equal to half an academic year. Often, it corresponds to a 30-credit stage that extends to at least half an academic year. (Assessment & Standards 2009)

Target learners

Target learners are persons with specified prerequisite learning and other legitimate prescribed characteristics (e.g. a programme might be designed for students who wish to study through a particular language).

Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLO)

The minimum achievement (in terms of knowledge, skill and competence) that the learner is certified to have attained if he/she successfully completes a particular programme (i.e. passes all the required assessments).

The minimum intended programme learning outcomes define the minimum learning outcomes for a particular programme at the programme level. These must always be specified by the provider. If the programme allows substantial choice, there may need to be variant forms of the minimum intended programme outcomes — e.g. a programme might allow a person to choose from a number of specialisations.

A learner who completes a validated programme is eligible for the relevant award if he or she has demonstrated, through assessment (including by recognition of prior learning), attainment of the relevant minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

In addition to minimum intended programme learning outcomes, the programme provider may aspire to describing other 'intended programme learning outcomes' beyond the minimum. In this document, 'intended learning outcomes' refers to all or any of the intended outcomes, including the minimum ones. 'Minimum intended learning outcomes' refers exclusively to the minimum ones. The minimum intended programme learning outcomes identify the principal educational goal of the programme — effective assessment helps learners to attain that goal. Minimum intended programme learning outcomes are developed and maintained by providers. Programmes are designed to enable learners to achieve minimum intended programme learning outcomes. Minimum intended learning outcomes are specified for each of a programme's constituent modules.

The number of learning outcomes in a statement of intended learning outcomes is variable (depending, for example, on the semantics and the level of explicitness used). This is not a proxy for credit.

Teachers and learners may strive for additional learning outcomes that are beyond the minimum. In addition to 'minimum intended

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| | programme learning outcomes', providers may describe other levels of intended programme learning outcomes beyond the minimum. |
| Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLO) | The definition for MIPLOs applies changing what needs to be changed. |
| Module | <p>A programme (not necessarily self-standing as a programme) of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of being integrated with other modules into larger programmes. A module can be shared by different programmes.</p> <p>In describing the educational formation provided by an independent module, it is necessary to specify (among other things): (i) the learning outcome; and (ii) the assumed (i.e. minimum) prior learning (prerequisite learning). Assumed prior learning is sometimes specified by listing prerequisite modules.</p> <p>Certain parameters are often used in the description of a module. These include an indication of the level (e.g. of the outcome on the NFQ of the module) and of the average (entry qualified) learner effort required to complete the module successfully (normally represented using ECTS compatible credit).</p> <p>To validate a programme, all of its modules must be considered together. Piecemeal validation (in isolation) of constituent modules within a larger programme cannot validate the larger programme. This is because the piecemeal process is blind to the joint effect of the modules, as well as to the 'integration of learning and teaching' that may be required.</p> <p>Note also that learning acquired through a sequence of modules may depend on the order of the sequence.</p> |
| Stage | Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. Many programmes are organised in either semester-based or year based stages. However, it should be stressed that other kinds of stages may be established. Even in cases where there is no temporal structure to the programme (i.e. a learner is only required to pass modules to progress), the stage concept may be used by the programme assessment strategy to group modules, taking the NFQ level and the pre- and co-requisites into account. Typically, the NFQ level of a module increases as a learner progresses through successive stages of a programme. |
| Programme | A process by which a learner acquires knowledge, skill or competence and includes a course of study, a course of instruction and an apprenticeship. |

Guidelines for completing and presenting an application

1 Provider Details

All sections must be completed, this is a requirement for a valid application.

1.1 Contextual information about the provider and its other programmes

Providers making frequent applications may wish to document general contextual information separately and cite that document here along with more detail on programme specific aspects, in which case it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that this document is up-to-date and applies to the specific application.

Section 5.3 of "[Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training](#)" indicates the programme and supporting documentation that is required as part of an application for validation of a programme. The following extract from the policy summarises.

The programme-related documentation must include sufficient information to address the applicable validation criteria for example:

- An outline of the programme and identification of the QQI award(s) to which it is designed to lead;
- The documented programme (including for example what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and in which modes it is taught, by whom it is taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, how it is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom) should incorporate or be supported by, for example (note - this is indicative and not a check list):
 - o The programme's assessment strategies and procedures;
 - o The programme's teaching and learning strategies (this covers education and training);
 - o Precise specifications of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) and an identified complement of staff (or potential staff);
 - o CVs for the programme's key staff (e.g. the programme leadership);
 - o Precise specifications of the programme's physical resource requirements (required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) and an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources);
 - o Comprehensive listing of the programme's key physical resources;
 - o Documented procedures for the operation and management of the programme;
 - o Five-year plan for the programme;
- Samples of the material to be provided to prospective learners;
- Samples of the material to be provided to enrolled learners;
- Samples of assessment tasks, model answers³⁴ and marking schemes for each award stage.

Additional documentation may be required to address the applicable validation criteria. For example, any incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures should be documented and provided with the application.

³⁴ These are required for the purpose of illustration.

The programme is expected to be developed to the point that it is ready to be offered to learners. Detailed information is required, not just an outline. The validation criteria must be addressed.

Additional or alternative requirements may be set out in the relevant specialised validation policy and criteria documents.

1.2 An outline of the programme and identification of the QQI award(s) to which it designed to lead

The programme outline provides synoptic information about the programme. The template should be used to provide this outline information. Details of the principal programme must always be provided.

Embedded programmes are considered exceptional and must independently meet the validation criteria. Modules that lead to minor or special purpose awards must also meet the validation criteria—in higher education it is expected that most modules will NOT lead to QQI awards.

The term exit award is not used in the current validation policy. An exit award programme is a special case of an embedded programme where the exit award programme is never offered to learners independently and only accessed by learners who enrol on a principal programme and then exit early but have been assessed as having met the requirements for the lower NFQ level award.

1.2.1 Principal programme

The minimum and maximum numbers requested may become conditions of validation.

If the programme involves work placements this should be noted. Otherwise insert 'not applicable' in the box provided.

1.2.2 Embedded programme³⁵

An embedded programme could lead to a major, special purpose, supplemental or professional award.

For each embedded programme use the same form as used for the principal programme. **Shared features should be identified for the principal programme and referenced for each embedded programme.**

An exit award is a special case of an embedded award. However, the corresponding embedded award programme must only be accessible by learners who are suited to completing the principal programme. Exit award embedded programmes cannot be offered independently or listed publically as programmes.

1.2.3 Stand-alone module³⁶ leading to a minor award

Stand-alone modules are those that lead to a QQI award and can be offered independently of the programme. More information is required for a stand-alone module **however a separate document is not required.** Modules that are not standalone do not need to be addressed here as the principal programme information will suffice.

³⁵ This needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards.

³⁶ This only needs to be completed where modules may be offered independently. Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards.

For each module leading to a QQI award (minor or special purpose) use the same table as used for the principal programme. Conventionally, the minimum credit for a HET award is **10 HET credits** (one sixth of the learner effort for a full academic year).

Using the templates for embedded programmes and stand-alone modules

The remaining parts are presented assuming a principal programme with no embedded programmes or stand-alone modules. **If there is an embedded programme it must without any exception be addressed explicitly and distinctly under every heading—ideally using a completely separate document.** An embedded programme must satisfy all of the validation criteria.

On using the remaining sections to document the programme

The remainder is intended to guide the topics to be covered when documenting the programme. For example, what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and in which modes it is taught, by whom it is taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, how it is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom.

For apprenticeship programmes the on-the-job processes must always be addressed as well as the off-the-job process.

The **MIPLOs** (minimum intended programme learning outcomes) and **MIMLOs** (minimum intended module learning outcomes) while important and intrinsic to the programme do not define it. Recall that a programme is defined a process by which a learner acquires knowledge, skill or competence. A metaphor for a programme is a journey with points of departure and destination. MIPLOs are the destination. MIMLOs are intermediate destinations. The entry standard for learners is the point of departure. The target learners must meet the entry standard but may have other characteristics to which the programme attunes. The programme documentation must describe the plan for the journey and **it is never sufficient** just to set out the minimum intended learning outcomes however detailed these are specified.

The information provided about the programme must be sufficient to address the validation policies and criteria comprehensively.

2. Educational and training objectives and minimum intended programme and module learning outcomes

Address 17.2 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i)

2.1 Programme aims and objectives

In addition to the overall aims and objectives, state whether there are specific objectives to meet specific statutory, regulatory or professional body requirements.

For example, indicate where the programme aims to meet educational requirements for entry into a specified profession including regulated professions.

For apprenticeship programmes this **must** always include the outcomes achieved via the on-the-job process as well as via the off-the-job process.

2.2 Rationale for the choice of QQI named award stem sought and for the named award title

Providers should ensure the award title is legitimate in all respects. If there are applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements it must be consistent with these.

Providers should consult and its *Policy for Determining Awards Standards* as well as the suite of QQI awards standards.

Address criterion 17.4(f, g).

2.3 QQI awards standards used

The list of HET awards standards is here <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx>

The apprenticeship awards standards are here (these are generic)
http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf

In some cases, more than one QQI standard applies e.g. a Bachelor of Science Honours in Business must satisfy both the science and business standards. The standards applied should be indicated.

2.4 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes

State the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) in terms of knowledge, skill and competence. The MIPLOs are for the programme as a whole. It is not sufficient to list the minimum intended module learning outcomes for the constituent modules.

If the programme has streams where different group's take different electives there will normally need to be separate MIPLOs for each stream.

2.5 Minimum intended module and (where applicable) stage learning outcomes

State the minimum intended module learning outcomes for each of the programmes modules and stages. This must be done whether or not the modules or stages lead to QQI awards.

Modules and stages for this purpose are discrete parts of the programme.

If the programme involves work-based learning the learning outcomes associated with this learning must be stated explicitly.

If this information is presented with module descriptors, then cross-reference here.

If the programme has streams where different group's take different electives there will normally need to be separate MISLOs for each stream.

2.6 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency

A programme's volume, purpose, minimum intended learning outcomes, minimum prior learning at entry, articulation and progression arrangements and assessment procedures must **align** with the corresponding QQI standard for the award sought.

This should be demonstrated by mapping the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) (i.e. the minimum knowledge, skill and competence a person must achieve and demonstrate in order to be recommended for the award) against the applicable award standard.

The MIPLOs should meet or exceed the award standard's expected learning outcomes statements.

The presentation of the case for an award at NFQ level N should pay particular attention to the difference between levels N and N-1, for example, the difference between Level 7 and Level 8.

In addition to this mapping of the MIPLOs to the relevant standard, there must be evidence that minimum intended programme learning outcomes (and subsidiary outcomes associated with strands, phases, modules, stages and such like) are assessed validly and reliably and that learners who enter with the minimum entry requirements are enabled to achieve the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and will achieve them should they complete the programme (successfully). In programmes that involve work-based learning there must be explicit intended outcomes associated with the work-based learning and these must be assessed and integrated into the programme and this alignment exercise.

The tabled provided in Unit 1 should also be completed to help present the mapping and the main supporting evidence for consistency of the MIPLOs with the relevant awards standards. When using this a focus should be placed on the most powerful evidence for a programme's MIPLOs meeting or exceeding the expected learning outcomes of the applicable award standard, rather than trying to exhaustively link all of the evidence. Nevertheless, there must be sufficient evidence.

Note: Providers are expected to either map MIPLO's to all strands of the award descriptor/standards or give a rationale as to why the strand is not relevant.

Here as in all other parts of the application, the application must present the evidence that the applicant wishes QQI (specifically the validation panel) to consider. Evidence that is not included with the application cannot be considered. The onus is on the provider to make a complete application.

All assertions made in the alignment exercise must be supported by evidence. For example, representative sample examination materials (e.g. papers, marking schemes and such like) should be included. The applicant should use the evidence in presenting its case. It is not sufficient to just present it. The provider must not expect the panel to have to trawl the supporting material to assemble the evidence and make the case for itself.

There are two points here (i) information needs to be made available upfront rather than the panel having to seek additional material during the process (ii) evidence needs to be systematically presented in support of the case rather than delivered in bulk assuming the panel will delve into supporting material to find evidence that supports the application.

It is important to link the expected learning outcomes statements from the QQI standards elements to the MIPLOs and to the curriculum and assessment. There should be a clear trail in evidence between these.

Note that in a multi-year programme not all of the expected learning outcomes will be at the level of the final award. **If a major award is sought, then at least 120 FET credits or 60 ETCS (that is 1500-1800 hours of learner effort³⁷) must result in outcomes at the NFQ level of the major award.** This must be demonstrated.

Note that a QQI validation panel will not recommend validation at a lower NFQ level if it cannot recommend recognition at the level sought. It is important therefore for the applicant to be satisfied that sufficient evidence has been provided in support of the award sought in respect of the programme.

³⁷ Learner effort for ETCS should be calculated in accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide (2015) http://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf

2.7 Comparing the MIPLOs with those of comparable programmes

Compare the proposed programme's MIPLOs with those of existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find. **Where it proves difficult to obtain this information in Ireland because details are not published and where there may be competition between providers, it is sufficient to make international comparisons.**

2.8 Mapping the MIMLOs against the QQI awards standards

This must be done for any module for which a QQI minor award is to be made OR an NFQ level is to be assigned.

If this mapping is presented with module descriptors, then cross-reference here.

2.9 Other matters

3. Programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards

Address 17.3(a, b, c, d)

3.1 Rationale for providing the programme

3.2 Profile of learners that would be enrolled (target learners)

Section 4 will deal with formal access requirements and such like. This section should provide a broader perspective to help explain whom the programme is for.

3.3 Education and training needs met by the programme

3.4 Alignment of the programme with the professional/occupational profile if the programme is a professional one

This applies to professional programmes at all levels including apprenticeship programmes.

3.5 How the programme and its intended programme learning outcomes were conceived, researched and developed

Address 17.3(a) in particular here.

3.6 Interpretation of the awards standards and research supporting the programme's aims, objectives and the MIPLOs

QQI awards standards for apprenticeship programmes are generic (the Professional Award-type Descriptors (PATDs)) and require interpretation in the context of particular occupations. The MIPLOs are the result of that interpretation. These along with the programme aims and objectives must be adequately researched. This should be addressed here.

Awards standards for HET programmes while not always generic are broad and also require interpretation. They should be similarly addressed.

There must be evidence of well-informed interpretation of the QQI awards standards

Note that QQI awards standards even when they are very detailed are not written to function as MIPLOs! It is never appropriate to just copy the QQI award standard and call it the MIPLO.

3.7 Involvement of employers and practitioners in the design of a vocationally oriented programme: process and outcomes

3.8 Comparison with other programmes (of other providers)

The purpose of this comparison is to place the programme in the context of other programmes indicating what it has in common with them and whether it has any distinguishing features. Providing this information will help demonstrate that the development of the programme has been well researched.

The comparisons should cover teaching, learning and assessment strategy as well as outcomes (addressed in section 2), the profile of target learners, and if the programme is professional the professional context.

Compare the proposed programme (not just MIPOs as above) with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.

3.9 Evidence of support for the introduction of the programme

3.10 Evidence of learner demand for the programme

3.11 Evidence of employment opportunities for graduates

3.12 Planned intake

This should include numbers to be recruited per intake over five years.

3.13 Five-year plan for the proposed programme

This **outline plan** must address criterion 17.7(d) **including costs and income based on the planned intake.**

3.14 Other matters

4 Access, transfer and progression procedures, criteria and arrangements for the programme

Address 17.3(a, b, c, d, e, f, g).

4.1 Information to be made available to learners about the programme

This information should explain what the programme expects of learners and what they can expect of it and the awards to which it leads. Cite and make available documents and promotional material that will be provided to learners including material that will be used in prospectuses and a (draft) programme (student) handbook.

4.2 Entry procedures and criteria for the programme including procedures recognition of prior learning

This should provide programme-specific procedures for entry and how they interface with the institutional procedures (the institutional procedures should be made available e.g. online).

Provide details of the procedures and criteria for determining whether or not any of the applicant's qualifications help them to meet the entry requirements or to qualify them for entry to an advanced stage or other exemptions from parts of the programme.

Among other things, details should also be provided about the processes in place for the assessment of learners entering the programme on the basis of being mature learners, or through recognition of prior learning or assessment of prior experiential learning (see Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training NQAI 2005).

4.2.1 Entry procedures

Under each heading provided provide details of the minimum prerequisite learning (knowledge, skill and competence) required to access the programme. Explain how this is assessed in each case.

Similar details should also be provided about prerequisite learning for access (or transfer) to higher stages of the programme.

State the minimum English language competence required for participation in the programme.

Indicate the kinds of qualifications which would demonstrate the achievement of the access requirements above.

If the programme is designed for learners who have completed the leaving certificate (or equivalent) indicate the minimum access requirements in terms of leaving certificate performance (or equivalent) including any subject requirements.

If candidates are interviewed before being granted access state and explain the criteria used to determine whether a person passes the interview stage and explain how the interview is conducted.

4.2.2 Minimum requirements for general learning

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

4.2.3 Minimum requirements for discipline-specific learning

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

4.2.4 Minimum experiential requirements (if applicable)

4.2.5 Minimum language proficiency requirements

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

4.2.6 Minimum mathematical proficiency requirements

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

4.2.7 Minimum criteria for passing the access interview (if applicable)

State the knowledge, skill and competence.

4.2.8 Detail any other criteria for selecting learners

Include anything that is likely to be relevant to the implementation of the programme. For example, whether the programme caters for international learners, whether it caters for children, whether it caters for mature learners, whether learners are required to be working in a particular role and context...

4.2.9 Programme-specific RPL criteria, and arrangements for entry, exemptions from modules, advanced entry and direct access to the award

Module specific exemption criteria may be provided within the module descriptors if not here.

4.3 Programme-specific transfer (outward) procedures and criteria

Details of the processes for the transfer of learners from the programme at other than the commencement stage should also be provided.

4.4 Identified transfer and progression destinations

Indicate at least two programmes of education and training that graduates of the proposed programme will be entitled to progress to, following successful completion of the programme.

Indicate any specific transfer destinations that are already known.

4.5 Professional accreditation of the programme

Indicate whether the programme has been professionally accredited (recognised by a professional body as meeting its educational requirements).

Indicate whether or not it is planned that the programme would be professionally accredited.

Give details.

4.6 Detail the credit system used for the programme

Note that ECTS credit requires 25 to 30 hours of learner effort per credit. 25 hours is a minimum for one credit.

60 hours is 2 ECTS.

26 hours is 1 ECTS.

Carefully, explain how credits are calculated.

4.7 Other matters

General guidance for sections 5-8.

The following is general guidance that applies to all of the sub headings in units 5, 6, 7 and 8. Additional guidance is provided under some of the sub-headings.

Each descriptor must

- Specify the aims and objectives for each module and explain how it is included in the programme and how it relates to the minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
- Specify the MIPLOs and MISLOs and MIMLOs
- Detail the indicative content for each module. A module is a process by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence. This process should be described in detail here. A teaching plan listing lectures, tutorials, practical work and continuous assessment tasks should be included giving sufficient detail to enable the evaluators to satisfy themselves that the curriculum is appropriate to the intended module learning outcomes.
- Identify reading lists and other prescribed learning materials: a list of core textbooks, lecture notes, e-learning resources and other teaching and learning materials should be included. Copies of these should be available for examination by the expert panel at the site visit. Any supplementary learning materials should be listed.
- Specify minimum staff-learner ratios.
- Specify the staffing requirements (including the particular requirements for each module).
- Describe and explain the assessment strategies: Programme assessment strategies should be produced for each programme, and module assessment strategies for each of its constituent modules. The programme assessment strategy should make particular reference to the role of the capstone modules. Stage assessment strategies should be integrated into the programme assessment strategy.
- Provide sample assessment tasks (e.g. examination papers) with rubrics. Representative samples of examination paper questions and continuous assessment tasks should be provided for each module whose grade contributes to the overall grade/classification for the major award. These should be accompanied by criterion referenced grading schemes (see

Assessment and Standards HET) illustrating how learner's responses to assessment tasks will be graded.

- Describe and explain the teaching and learning strategies. Full details should be provided on the intended teaching and learning strategies for each module. These should address the opportunities for learning in the context of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the module's prerequisite learning. Cross-reference this with the module assessment strategy particularly regarding the role of assessment in the promotion of learning. In the case of capstone modules explain how learning acquired in other modules is integrated. If the module involves the use of e-learning tools or laboratory facilities or such like this should be noted and the quantity and availability of the relevant resources should be addressed under physical resources.
 - Characterise the intended learning environments and explain how they are created (note the relevant validation criteria)
 - Precisely specify the physical resource **requirements** (required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) for the **programme** and where applicable **for each module**. Please don't drop in unspecific information such as the entire library holdings. These include educational and training and other resources e.g.
 - Library holdings for this programme

- Information and communication technology resources (dedicated to this programme e.g. if there is a software package that is provided how many licences and how many workstations are available for the programme and how are they timetabled for this programme).
- Laboratories, workshops and studios (quantifying availability for this programme)
- E-learning resources (quantifying availability)
- Study facilities (quantifying availability for this programme)
- Lecture theatres (quantifying availability for this programme)
- Facilities for learners with special education and training needs (quantifying availability for this programme)
- Common Room (how much room is available,
- Health and Welfare Facilities
- Facilities for International Students
- Identify the supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) **that are currently available** to this programme.
- Specify minimum resource-learner ratios.
- Describe and explain the arrangements for learners with special education and training needs (detailing any distinct arrangements for modules).
- Identify the required prior learning for the programme and for modules and co-requisite modules (where applicable).

5. Written curriculum

This will be a substantial part of the programme documentation. It must address the overall programme and each of its modules in turn. It must include indicative content for each module (it is never sufficient just to include the intended module learning outcomes).

It must provide sufficient information about the programme for it to be evaluated against the QQI validation criteria.

It must detail what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and in which modes it is taught, by whom is it taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, what are the minimum intended learning outcomes, how learning is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom.

It should also address the intellectual advancement of the learner and the evolution of the learning experience intended with particular reference to the progression journey (beginning–middle–end)

Note that where a programme involves work-based learning this must be treated as rigorously as other parts i.e. all the foregoing need to be addressed.

In all of this it must be explained how the programme, stages and modules enables a learner meeting the prior learning requirements to achieve and demonstrate the minimum intended learning outcomes for the respective programme, modules and stages.

The provider is free to format the written curriculum as it chooses provided that it can be evaluated against QQI's validation criteria. The forms provided in this guideline (including the proposed programme schedule) must always be completed as they provided important headline information about the programme that might, for example, be included on the certificate of validation.

If the work-placement is integrated into one or more modules cite the modules here and provide the details in the relevant module descriptors.

Honours bachelor's degree and master's degree programmes will always include a major (capstone) dissertation or project at the award stage and possibly at other stages. Other programmes may also include such elements. This section should cite the relevant modules.

The structure of the programme must be summarised in a **proposed programme schedule**. A template for the programme schedule is provided in unit 10.

5.1 Outline of the curriculum

5.1.1 Stage level outline

The synopses should address the purpose of the stage in the context of the overall programme.

If the programme has multiple streams, then the stage synopses will normally need to be differentiated for each stream.

5.1.2 Rules for electives and their rationale

Electives allow intended programme learning outcomes to be tailored to the needs of learners.

5.1.3 Module-level outline

5.2 Rationale for the curriculum structure

5.3 Rationale for the programme's duration, credit allocation

In justifying the learner effort and credit allocation, it is necessary to address the effort required by a learner to progress from the minimum entry standard for the programme (prior learning) to at least the MIPLOs.

If the programme duration is atypical the rationale for the atypical duration should be carefully set out.

5.4 Indicative timetable and its rationale

Explain how the learner's time is employed in the programme's activities, this must include, for example, lectures (exact number of hours of learning effort so 45 minutes is 0.75 hours), laboratory demonstrations, time in work placement, time in work (if apprenticeship or traineeship), and such like.

In all cases the distribution of activity over the weeks, months, semesters and years should also be set out clearly. So, for example, if there are 9 hours of laboratory demonstrations per week, indicate how this is distributed over the days of the week. **There should be clear evidence to justify how achievable the programme is.**

5.5 Integrated learning opportunities and assessment in light of the MIPLOs

Explain what opportunities are provided for integration of learning. For example, an assigned project through which the learner draws on a wide range of their knowledge and skills to demonstrate competence.

5.6 Programme teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

Here formative assessment means assessment for learning. Formative and summative assessment may overlap.

Teaching should be understood in its most general sense; to include, for example, workplace training in the context of apprenticeships.

When presenting strategy, set out the objectives, approach and explain how they are achieved.

Ensure that the strategy for interacting with learners is carefully explained not just in terms of inputs (e.g. lectures and tutorials) but also how individual learner progress is continually inferred and how timely interventions are made to support learning (e.g. feedback).

For longer programmes it is important to explain how learners build up to the programme learning outcomes. The strategy should address the academic, professional, intellectual and broader personal development of learners (as appropriate) as they progress through the programme. It is expected that in such programmes, the stage-strategies will evolve with learners' increasing competence.

For apprenticeship programmes take care to address the work-based formation and learning strategy systematically in detail.

Explain the teaching and learning strategy for the programme as a whole. Pay particular attention to the integration of learning within the modules to enable learners to achieve the **intended programme learning outcomes**. The formative assessment strategy should be addressed here—i.e. how assessment is used to guide and support learning.

Teaching should be understood to include all kinds of formational interventions involved in the education or training of learners.

Much information about the teaching and learning strategies will be provided in the module descriptors. This need not be repeated here.

Note that all accredited teaching and learning effort should be addressed with equal rigour including on-the-job learning in traineeship or apprenticeship programmes.

5.7 Integration, organisation and oversight of work-based learning

For apprenticeship programmes, for example, it is particularly important to explain how the formation apprentices receive in the workplace is integrated with the formation they receive in college to form a coherent whole.

5.8 Programme learning environment

The scope includes:

- Physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment
- The learner experience
- The work-based learning environments

For apprenticeship programmes note in particular section 5 of the - Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

5.9 Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners

Note criteria 17.11 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j).

For apprenticeship programmes note in particular section 5 of the - Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

5.10 Programme summative assessment strategy

Explain the assessment strategy for the programme as a whole. Pay particular attention to explaining how the achievement of MIPLOs is assessed reliably and validly.

Outline the arrangements for the oversight and coordination of learner assessment.

For apprenticeship programmes note in particular section 4.3 of the - Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

QQI will be developing new guidelines for assessment in the context of FET programmes. Parts of the current guidelines that are contingent on CAS only apply to programmes leading to CAS awards (i.e. not to apprenticeship programmes). QQI should be consulted if there are any questions about this.

5.11 Proposed programme and stage schedules

A per-stage template for this and guidelines are provided in Part 2.

6. Module Documentation

A module is an element of a programme that is a programme but is not necessarily validated on a stand-alone basis. Modules in higher education programmes are not normally validated on a stand-alone basis.

In an apprenticeship and traineeship programmes the work-based learning phases should be reported as modules.

6.1 Module 1

6.1.1 Headline information about the module

The table MUST be used to provided headline information about each module.

Some repetition of material presented earlier is called for in the following sections here to aid presentation.

6.1.2 Module aims and objectives

6.1.3 Minimum intended module learning outcomes

6.1.4 Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall IPLOs

6.1.5 Information provided to learners about the module

Explain how the module is presented to learners e.g. in promotional material and in learner handbooks.

This must, among other things, be consistent with information to be included on the Europass Certificate or Diploma Supplement.

6.1.6 Module content, organisation and structure

This will be a substantial part of the module description.

The presentation should be sufficiently detailed for evaluation of the suitability of the content in light of the MIMLOs and the entry requirements.

It must systematically describe how learners are formed. All applicable modes of teaching and learning should be addressed (including any on-the-job training e.g. in apprenticeship programmes).

It must also be sufficiently detailed to ensure that any two suitably qualified staff who are assigned to teach the module will deliver it reasonably consistently.

6.1.7 Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

Modules are programmes within programmes and should be approached strategically. This section should set out the strategy.

The strategy should, among other things, justify the staff/learner ratios and modes of teaching and learning.

6.1.8 Work-based learning and practice-placement

6.1.9 E-learning

If applicable describe the e-learning approach and ensure to provide access to the e-learning content and resources.

6.1.10 Module physical resource requirements

Supported physical resource requirements expressed as a ratio of learners participating (meaning the module will only be offered when these are in place. Refer to criterion 17.7.

Address resource-learner ratio.

6.1.11 Reading lists and other information resources

6.1.12 Specifications for module staffing requirements

Having regard to the information already provided in 6.1.1, specify any further details on qualifications (professional, pedagogical³⁸ and academic) and experience requirements refer to criterion 17.6.

This also applies to employer-based personnel who have a formal role in the formation of apprentices or trainees.

Address staff-learner ratio.

³⁸ Etymology notwithstanding this is taken to apply to the theory and practice of education and training.

6.1.13 Module summative assessment strategy

Note the definition of assessment strategy. Explain the strategy.

In setting out the strategy include an explanation of how assessment tasks that form part of the strategy are classified using the following standard categories as used in the programme schedule and module summary.

- Continuous assessment
- Supervised project
- Proctored practical examination
- Proctored written examination

6.1.14 Sample assessment materials

6.2 Module [2]

Use the same headings as above and repeat as necessary.

7 Programme Staff

Much information about the specifications for programme staff will be provided in the module descriptors. This need not be repeated here.

7.1 Programme director and board

Each programme should have a programme director and board. These people are expected to meet the independent evaluation group during a validation site visit.

Note that for apprenticeship programmes the make-up of the programme board is addressed by the Statutory QA Guidelines.

Provide the terms of reference for the Programme Board for the particular programme.

7.2 Complement of staff (or potential staff)

Refer to 17.6(b, c) in particular.

Identify staff (or potential staff if not in post already) meeting the requirements. Provide curricula vitae for these:

- Name
- Qualifications (with date and awarding body)
- Employment history
- Educational and training qualifications, experience and history
- Current teaching load without the proposed programme
- Specialisation
- Publications
- Professional memberships
- Affiliations

7.3 Arrangements for the interface for work placement of employer-based personnel involved in apprenticeship or traineeship programmes

If the provider is doing the assessment this is not required

7.4 Programme-specific staff performance management arrangements

Outline the programme-specific performance management and development arrangements.

7.5 Arrangements for approval of staff who will have a formal role in this programme

Can reference section 1.1

7.6 CVs for the programme's key staff (e.g. the programme leadership) and for the identified complement of staff

There must always be an identified complement of staff to run an instance of the programme.

7.7 Recruitment plan for staff not already in post

8. Physical resources

Much information about the programme's physical resources will be provided in the module descriptors. This need not be repeated here.

See 17.7 (a, b, c, d, e).

8.1 Specification of the programme's physical resource requirements

8.2 Complement of supported physical resources (or potential ones)

8.2.1 Premises

Describe the main premises where the programme is to be provided.

Include a signed declaration by the chief executive or equivalent that the premises would meet all applicable legal requirements if the programme were to be provided considering the number of learners planned to be enrolled on this programme in addition to all other persons using the premises.

If the programme is to be provided at multiple unspecified centres and the provider has approved QA procedures that govern this, then set out the minimum requirements that must be met by such a centre.

8.2.2 Informational technology resources

8.2.3 Materials for teaching, learning and assessment (software and printed)

8.2.4 Specialised equipment

8.2.5 Technical and administrative support services

8.3 Company placement resources

Note 17.7(b)(vii).

8.4 Criteria for approving a new centre where the programme may be provided (only if applicable)

Note 17.7(c).

8.5 Entitlements to use the property required

Note 17.7(e).

9. Programme management

Note criteria 17.12 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).

9.1 Documented procedures for the operation and management of the programme

Cite the document which should accompany the application. Explain how the procedures meet the criteria. Note criteria 17.12 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).

9.2 Supplementary QA procedures for the programme

Cite the document which should accompany the application. Explain how the procedures meet the criteria. Note criteria 17.12 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).

Supplementary QA procedures for the programme must be consistent with the applicants QQI approved QA procedures. A link should be provided to the approved QA procedures and the date when these were approved by QQI should be stated.

Reference section 1.1 - additional supplementary QA procedures can include for example a reference to handbooks on website, and a short summary to indicate what procedures are in place

9.3 Mechanisms to keep the programme updated and how it will be updated in consultation with stakeholders

9.4 Compliance with special validation criteria or requirements attached to the applicable awards standards

9.5 Membership and terms of reference for the programme board

9.6 Collaborative provision

If the programme involves collaborative provision see QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards for special requirements. The partner providers should be identified and consulted and involved in the application for validation. They should also be consulted and be involved in the application for validation. The relevant consortium agreement must be established and should also be provided with the application. It should be made clear which partner provider is responsible for what. Collaborative provision should also be addressed under the section on quality assurance.

9.7 Apprenticeship coordinating provider role

Memoranda of understanding/agreement with employers and collaborating providers must be included (see apprenticeship QA guidelines) see also Section 7. If they are not finalised include draft versions and explain what must be done to finalise and identify any critical issues.

9.8 Transnational provision

If the programme involves transnational provision see QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards for special requirements. Transnational provision should also be addressed under the section on quality assurance

Reference QA, show Terms of Reference, outline who is on the Programme Board

10. Proposed Programme Schedule

Template provided in Part 2.

10.1 Introduction

This is a guideline on preparing a *proposed programme schedule*.

A programme schedule is a summary of the information about the programme.

Following a decision to validate or revalidate a programme, QQI issues a certificate of validation. The proposed programme schedule following any modifications required for validation becomes the *approved programme schedule*. It is integrated into the certificate of validation.

The provider, upon receipt of the certificate of validation, is required to check that it is

accurate in all respects. If there are any discrepancies or inconsistencies the provider should notify QQI immediately in writing.

10.2 Programme-level information

Programmes are normally divided into *stages* and *modules*. *Stages* and modules are sub-programmes within programmes.

The programme's *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* together with its *minimum prerequisite learning requirements* and its total *credit* (FET or HET Credit³⁹) influence the determination of the:

- Programme Title
- Award Title (including Award Type)
- Award Class (Major, Minor, Special purpose, Supplemental and Professional)

HET The *Principles and operational guidelines for the national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training* (NQAI 2006) requires that

there be at least 40 credits (ECTS) of new learning at the NEQ level of a major award

HET Sectoral Convention 5 (*Assessment and Standards* 2013) on the *Achievement required for an additional HET major award at the*

³⁹ HET Credit is based on the concept that the average workload of a fulltime student in a typical programme of higher education and training is 60 HET Credits per academic year. Note that ECTS stands for the European Credit Transfer System. It is described in detail by the *ECTS User's Guide* (see references). Credit is related to learner effort not of any particular learner but rather in an average sense. 1 ECTS credit is 25-30 hours learner effort.

FET Credit is also based on learner effort in acquiring knowledge, skill and competence. 1 fulltime FET programme involves 120 FET credits.

10.2.1 Award title

Award titles must be consistent with the *QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*. (pay particular attention to 3.1.b). Standards determinations are addressed by QQI’s [Policy for Determining Awards Standards](#).

In practical terms the specification of a named award consists of a stem and a specialisation.

| Named Award Stem | Specialisation |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Honours Bachelor of Science | in Nursing in General Nursing |
| Advanced Certificate | ... |

Note: The approach to the consistent titling of the specialisation part of apprenticeship award titles is still under consultation with stakeholders—working titles should be proposed in the meantime.

10.2.2 Programme title

The *programme title* consists at least of the award title including the *specialisation*. In many cases, additional information will be required e.g. “Part-time programme leading to [Named Award Title]”.

When choosing the proposed programme title, or changing the title of an existing programme, it is important to ensure that it accurately and concisely reflects the programme and its intended learning outcomes. Programme titles should be formal and complete. Abbreviations should be avoided.

10.2.3 Award class

There are five classes of award types available (award class), namely, Major, Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental and Professional. The following material is from that document which should be consulted for a more complete distinction of the classes of award-types.

Award-types which fulfil a broader range of purposes are labelled major award- types. Other, more limited or specialised needs are met by minor, supplemental and special-purpose award-types.

Major awards: Major award-types are the principal class of awards made at each level. At most levels, such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the level. They include outcomes from many of the sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence appropriate to the level. An example of this at level 8 is the honours bachelor’s degree. All major awards are listed on the *QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.

Minor awards: Minor award-types provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, without achieving the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. The range of learning outcomes will have relevance in their own right. The minor award will also be a means of identifying the knowledge, skill or competence previously acquired by the learner. All minor awards must be linked to a specified approved major award.

Special-purpose awards: Special-purpose award-types are made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes. They may comprise learning outcomes that also form part of major awards. However, where there is a need for separate certification of a set of outcomes, there should be a separate award. For example, there is a statutory

obligation for construction workers to have certification of their competence in health and safety (Safe Pass). Special-purpose awards need not be linked to a major award.

Supplemental awards: Supplemental award-types are for learning which is additional to a previous award. Programmes leading to such awards may be described as refresher, updating or continuing education and training. In some cases, there may be regulatory requirements for such awards in order for learners to retain a licence to practice granted in respect of the initial award. Such supplemental awards are not at a higher level than the initial award.

An award of a *professional class* may also have another class (e.g. major or supplemental). The expected learning outcomes for awards of professional class (independent of any other class that applies) are governed by the Professional Award-type Descriptor.

10.2.4 Award NFQ Level

The NFQ Levels for major award types are indicated in the [Policy and Criteria for Making Awards](#) (Appendix 1, page7). For example, Level 6 for a Higher Certificate, Level 9 for a Master's Degree.

10.2.5 Main Modes of Delivery (full-time and part-time)

For the purpose of the Approved Programme Schedule, two modes of delivery can be recorded. These are: full-time (FT) and part-time (PT).

10.2.6 Work-based learning

Work-based learning takes many forms. Here the focus is on goal-oriented, quality assured assessed learning in the work place. This learning must be intrinsic to the programme. Unfocussed work experience is not relevant.

Some examples are:

- Apprenticeship (statutory)
- Traineeship
- Practice-placement
- Work-based case-study
- Training in the workplace

10.2.7 Teaching and learning modalities

Programmes may involve more than one teaching and learning modality.

Some examples are:

- Direct contact via lectures and demonstrations
- Blended e-learning
- E-learning
- Problem-based learning

10.3 Stage information

Programmes are organised in *stages* (see *Assessment and Standards 2013* for HET programmes).

Typically, a stage is an academic year (60 HET credits for HET). In smaller programmes a stage may be a *semester* (30 HET credits) or some other appropriate division. However, it is quite common for a small programme to consist of just one stage.

All programmes must include an *award stage*. This is the final stage of a programme. Successful completion of the award stage entitles a learner to the award assuming he or she has achieved the prerequisite learning and met any other requirements.

Stages other than the award stage should be labelled on the proposed programme schedule by numbers in the sequence 1,2,3, etc., the final stage being labelled as the 'Award Stage'. The semester should be indicated if appropriate: Semester 1 or Semester 2. Many programmes are not divided into semesters.

10.3.1 Stage Credit

The total credit for each stage should be displayed clearly in the programme schedule.

10.3.2 Calculation of the Award Classification (HET) or Grade (FET)

Explain how the award classification/grade is calculated. For HET programmes refer to Assessment and Standards 2013.

10.4 Module Information

All modules in a programme should have a unique and meaningful *module title*. The following should be borne in mind when choosing module titles:

- Module titles (individually and collectively) are most effective when they are clear, concise, coherent and consistent.
- The title should clearly and unambiguously reflect the module content.
- Module titles should be as future-proofed as possible.
- Normally, the module title should not exceed 70 characters (including spaces).
- In each stage the mandatory modules should appear first followed by elective modules.
- Where a subject spreads over two semesters or stages, the module titles should be differentiated. If, for example 'Chemistry' spreads over two semesters the module titles 'Chemistry 1' and 'Chemistry 2' should be used.
- The information in the Approved Programme Schedule must correspond exactly with the HET *broadsheet of results* (see *Assessment and Standards 2013*) which must be submitted to QQI before any HET awards will be made. Similar arrangements must be made for FET apprenticeship programmes (QQI should be consulted about this).

10.4.1 Semesters number and module reference/number

In the case of semesterised programmes, the approved programme schedule should also indicate the semester number (1 or 2).

The proposed programme schedule does not require a module reference number but nevertheless modules should be appropriately labelled.

10.4.2 Module status

The status of each subject should be indicated in accordance with the following:

- **Mandatory (M):** each learner must present and pass in all mandatory modules.
- **Elective (E):** in addition to the above a candidate must present and pass in the number of Elective Examination Modules to achieve the quota of credits for the stage.

10.4.3 Hours of HET learning effort

The ECTS User’s Guide should be used to inform the calculation of learning effort for programmes of HET.

The learner effort (measured in hours) required to complete a module should be estimated in terms of the total contact hours and the total independent effort hours. The examples in the following table explains the difference between contact hours and independent effort.

Examples

| Contact hours (instructor/tutor/trainer-led) | Independent learning effort |
|---|---|
| Lecture | Assignments |
| Practical demonstration | Self-directed independent work (including e-learning) |
| Seminars | Assigned reading |
| Small-group tutoring | Project work |
| Project supervision meeting | |
| Mentoring | |
| Directed e-learning | Work-based learning |
| | Supervised practice placements |
| | On-the-job training in an apprenticeship or traineeship |

10.4.4 Allocation of marks within modules

The *grade* for a particular module will normally be made up of contributions from more than one of the following elements:

- Proctored Written Examination (Final)
- Supervised Project Work (Proj.)
- Proctored Practical Demonstration (Prac.)
- Continuous Assessment (CA)

The four percentage values listed above indicate the *weighting* to be given in the overall grade/mark to the various assessment elements. These weightings are applied to the percentage point values achieved for each of the elements in the percentage grading system or the grade point values if the alphabetic grading system is used. In this way an overall percentage-point or grade point result may be obtained for the module.

The weightings reported must be taken from the module assessment strategy.

10.4.5 Number of credits for the module

Each module is allocated a certain number of credits (whole numbers only). Credits, in general, should be assigned in multiples of 5. The total number of credits for each stage of a programme which equates with one academic year's full time learning should equal 60 and 120 for HET and FET respectively.

Credits are allocated to each module. The 'quantum' for each module is defined as the amount of total effort a student must devote to achieving the intended learning outcomes of that module. This effort might include attendance at lectures, practical work, participating in tutorials, completing projects, and independent study, including time spent researching etc.

Under ECTS convention, each credit represents 25-30 hours of student effort derived from the notion that 60 credits represent the workload of an average full-time student during one academic year. It is worth noting that in this context, workload refers to the notional time/effort within which the average learner may expect to complete the required learning outcomes for a given module. Credit is not directly related to time put in by a student, for example, the learning effort for work placement may only be a fraction of the hours spent working.

10.4.6 Other information

Other information that should be recorded for each module includes:

- The NFQ-Level of the module's *minimum intended learning outcomes* this is not mandatory and must be confirmed at validation.
- Prerequisites for the module (this does not appear on the programme schedule) can be expressed as knowledge, skill and competence, or where appropriate by listing other modules that must be passed prior to starting a module).

10.5 Progression

The programme schedules assume that a learner successfully completed all prior stages before being entitled to start a new stage (the prior stages are the prerequisites). Any deviation from this should be recorded under Special Regulations in the schedule.

10.6 Special regulations

Special regulations provide for the inclusion of special rules which pertain to the programme. They are included on an approved programme schedule in exceptional circumstances. They require the same level of approval as all other entries on the approved programme schedule. These rules are exceptional. An example of a special regulation is the exclusion of a particular module from pass-by-compensation.

The text of a special regulation must be concise (not exceeding a maximum of 280 characters).

The special regulations should indicate the modules which contribute to the award classification if these come from a stage other than the Award Stage. This material must be taken from the *Programme Assessment Strategy*.

11. Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

Note that minor and embedded award programmes each require separate schedules.

Please see the accompanying notes (next page) on the use of the *Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage*.

Further notes on completing the Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

- 1 *This level may only be defined if the intended module learning outcomes have been independently assessed (at validation) as being at a particular NFQ framework level.*
- 2 *This level may only be defined if the intended stage learning outcomes have been specified explicitly and independently assessed (at validation) as being at a particular NFQ framework level.*
- 3 *A stage exit award may only be established if the intended programme learning outcomes have been specified explicitly for an **embedded programme** leading to that award and culminating with that stage and that programme has been validated using the relevant awards standards.*
- 4 *Award class is either Major or Minor or Special-purpose or Supplemental and it may be Professional (because a professional class award may be in two classes)*
- 5 *Student learning effort is represented by HET or FET Credit for HET and FET programmes respectively. If ECTS is used learner effort must be at least 25 hours of learner effort per credit.*

12. Evaluation against the validation criteria

Prior to making an application for validation of a programme, a provider is required to conduct, and prepare a report on, an evaluation of the relevant programme against the applicable validation policies and criteria. This process is expected to be conducted in accordance with the applicant's QQI approved quality assurance procedures and not to be confused with the independent evaluation defined in unit (6).

QQI's validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey panels. The evaluation by the applicant against these criteria is a particularly important part of the application.

The programme documentation and provider's evaluation report must address the applicable validation criteria. QQI may refuse validation on the grounds that the application does not address the applicable validation criteria. The onus is on the applicant to present a complete case.

Applicants should note that validation may be refused if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

The evaluation of the programme against the criteria must explain how the application meets the criteria. **A mere assertion that a programme meets the criterion is not sufficient. This is not just a check-list!**

In explaining how the proposed programme meets a particular validation criterion the evaluation report should outline the pain points of the argument and where necessary provide more detailed analysis in supporting documentation to be provided with the application.

Evaluation against some criteria may require significantly more effort than others.

13 Mapping MIPLOs against QQI awards standards

This page is A3 to accommodate the large table. Please note that each thread must be addressed for all awards, where there is no outcome for a thread this should be justified

13.1 Professional award-type descriptor (currently this is only for apprenticeship programmes)

The descriptors are available here:

http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf

13.2 QQI awards standards for programmes of higher education and training

<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx>

13.3 Other QQI awards standards

The template in unit 2 may be used changing what needs to be changed.

1 QAH - COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

To be completed before entering into agreements with third party

organisations Please refer to: Policy on Collaborative & Transnational Provision

Related policy: Policy on contracting educational services with third parties

1.1 PARTNER PROFILE AND RISK ASSESSMENT¹

| | |
|---|--|
| Institution name | |
| Institution address (including website) | |
| Academic unit | |
| | |
| | |
| Type of collaboration* (articulation, delivery of existing programme, development and delivery of a new programme; research project, other) | |
| | |
| Programme(s) involved | |
| | |
| Forecast number of students (headcount) | |
| Rationale for collaboration (Why should the College enter into this partnership? What are the potential benefits? How does it fit with the school's plans?) | |
| Business case* (Is there evidence of demand for the programme? How will the development of the partnership be funded? Will it be a profit making activity? etc.) | |
| Relationship to date* (What discussions have been held with the proposed partner? Has a formal visit been made?) | |

1.2 RISK ASSESSMENT OF NEW COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

This document is intended to be a tool to help facilitate a quick and straightforward assessment of the potential risk involved in pursuing a proposal for the establishment of collaborative provision. It has been designed to cover areas of potential risk which are common to many forms of collaborative provision. The assessment results in an overall score, and rating:

☒ 12 - 24 = Low

☒ 25 - 34 = Medium

☒

35 - 44 = High

Highlight the value that the proposed partnership scores.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Name of partner | | |
| Collaboration Type: Articulation/Programme Delivery/New Programme Development/Research/Other | | |
| Proposed programme : | | |
| Student language | Irish/UK or international; English as first language | 0 |
| | UK based; English as second language | 1 |
| | International; English as second language | 3 |
| Cultural and educational context | ROI/UK | 0 |
| | European | 2 |
| | USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc. | 2 |
| | Other | 3 |
| Partner's status | College (Taught & Research degrees) | 1 |
| | Polytechnic etc. (Taught degrees only) | 2 |
| | Publicly funded FE college | 2 |
| | Private college/organisation | 3 |
| Partner's strength | Large, generally well-resourced | 1 |
| | Small, generally well-resourced* | 2 |
| | Any size, with generally limited resources* | 3 |

⌈ Resources in this context include financial, estate, staff and learning related.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Role of partner | Administrative support centre only | 1 |
| | Learner support centre (i.e. distance learning) | 2 |
| | Teaching centre (partial delivery) | 2 |
| | Teaching centre (100% delivery) | 3 |
| Partner's expertise in this subject area | Has programmes at this level | 1 |
| | Has programmes at a lower level | 2 |
| | Has no experience in this field | 3 |
| Partners previous collaboration with ROI/UK HEIs | At this qualification level | 1 |
| | At a lower qualification level | 2 |
| | None | 3 |
| Host unit's experience | Experience of same type of collaboration | 1 |
| | None | 3 |
| Sending school/dept's experience | Experience of same type of collaboration | 1 |
| | None | 3 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Programme | Established collaborative programme | 1 |
| | Established on campus only | 2 |
| | New programme | 3 |
| Qualification level | No formal recognition | 1 |
| | Undergraduate | 3 |
| | Masters or Phd | 2 |
| Professional body recognition | Not applicable | 0 |
| | Programme leading to a recognised award | 2 |
| Host country political climate | Very stable | 1 |
| | Stable | 2 |
| | Unstable | 3 |

| | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Host country social climate (equal opportunities, human rights etc.) | Equivalent to ROI | 1 |
| | Satisfactory | 2 |
| | Unsatisfactory | 3 |
| Locality health and safety | Very safe | 1 |
| | Safe | 2 |
| | Unsafe | 3 |
| Total | | |

Approved at Executive Group Date:

Approved at Academic Operations Committee Date:

Approved at Academic Council Date:

Put on Risk Register and Noted to Governing Body Date:

Appendix 3.6 Contract/Tender Term Sheet

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Process | Contracts/Tender Responses |
| Document Title | Contract or Tender Term Sheet |
| Ref | 3.PD.PD5 |
| Purpose | This form must be completed and agreed by Executive Group before any tender is submitted or any contract for the provision of NCI services is agreed on behalf of NCI. If this proposal also involves new programme development the Programme Proposal Form (<i>3.PD.PPF1</i>) must also be completed and approved prior to tender. |

1 Summary Contract/Tender Details

| | |
|--|--|
| Contract/Tender Title: | |
| Proposing NCI Department: | |
| Contracting/Tendering Party: Full name address and website | |
| Is contracting/tendering party an existing NCI client | |
| Summary of Contract/Tender: | |
| | |

2 Contract/Tender Details

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Tender issue date: | |
|--------------------|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Tender submission date: | |
| Outline Format of tender process: Is it a public tender At what stage is the tender at (pre-tender consultation etc.) Has NCI been invited to tender? | |

3 Programme Details

(New programme development must go through NCI programme validation process)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Existing or new Programme: | |
| Programme Title: | |
| Proposed delivery locations: | |
| Other relevant programme details: | |

4 Financial Details of Contract/Tender

| | |
|---|--|
| Financial Value of tender/contract: Please provide yearly breakdown if applicable. Include any revenue shares with other parties. | |
| Estimated Costs to NCI of fulfilling contract: Please provide yearly breakdown if applicable. | |
| Costs associated with the tendering process for NCI: | |
| Length of contract: | |

5 Partners in Contract/Tender

| | |
|---|--|
| Partners or other organisations involved in completing contract/tender: | |
| Nature of any arrangement with partners: | |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| Any other relevant information: | |

Any supplementary information should also be included with this form. This form, when completed, is to be lodged in the CRM and added to EG minutes.

Approved at Executive Group:

Signed

Date

President

VP Academic & Administration

Finance Director.....

Registrar.....

Dean of Relevant School.....

Annual Programme Monitoring Report

Guidance Notes for Programme Teams

Purpose:

The APMR is the report of the quality assurance processes surrounding programme management. It is an evaluation of the performance of the programme with respect to programme organisation and student performance. This report also informs the Deans annual academic report of the School.

Publication Date:

The APMR should be published by 31st October of the academic year following the year being evaluated. For programmes not following the traditional cycle the report should be published within 2 calendar months of the programme's **second sitting assessment results and receipt of external examiner/authenticators' reports.**

Publication

The report should be published on the College portal in the area designated and should also be made available to learners on the course pages on the student portal.

Programmes with multiple modes/instances

There should be one report only per programme. Reports for different cohorts run over multiple delivery modes e.g. full and part-time or locations e.g. Certificate in First Line Management should be presented as one report with commentary on any issues that show variance etc.

Action plans outlined in reports should be followed up through two major checkpoints:

- Late Jan/Early February Programme Committee meeting
- End of year Programme Committee meeting

Responsibility for an action should be assigned to a named individual on the programme team rather than a role.

If the action requires follow up at a named Committee of College, e.g. Academic Operations, Academic Council, Learning, Teaching & Assessment, the School Committee etc., the name of the person who agrees to take responsibility for this action should be minuted and they should ensure that the Secretary of the Committee is made aware of the action to be put on the Committee agenda.

These APMR reports will contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the next programmatic review of the programme.

Available Data

Data should be used to help evaluation of the programme. Whilst it is appropriate e.g. to present registration statistics, there is no requirement to replicate all the data available in the report itself. The data can be made available as appendices as required or cross referenced to their existing location as evidence. However, it is essential that the data is evaluated.

a. Registration, Retention Performance Data

Data relating to registration, class profile, retention, student performance are provided by the QASS office. This is accessible from

<http://quercusliveapp/discoverer/viewer>

Login using your QuercusPlus credentials as per the example below

Connect Directly

Enter your connection details below to connect directly to Oracle BI Discoverer.

* Indicates required field.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Connect To | <input type="text" value="Oracle BI Discoverer"/> |
| * User Name | <input type="text" value="sosullivan"/> |
| * Password | <input type="password" value="•••••"/> |
| * Database | <input type="text" value="live"/> |
| End User Layer | <input type="text"/> |
| Locale | <input type="text" value="Locale retrieved from browser"/> |
| <input type="button" value="Go"/> | |

The data is contained one workbook named Consolidated Annual Monitoring Report Data. See Appendix 1 for the list of reports available and detailed instructions on logging in.

Assistance in interpreting this data is available from the QASS office if required.

b. Learner Feedback

Learner feedback for the previous academic year has been issued to all Schools.

Minutes from class representative meetings are available on the School page on the staff portal/

c. External Examiners Reports

External Examiner reports are available in the Examinations Office area on the Staff portal:
<https://myncistaff.ncirl.ie/departments/sservices/Exams/default.aspx>

d. Graduate Feedback

This will be available from the Careers Office. Information available from Social Media can be used, but should be used with caution.

e. Employer /Professional Body Feedback

This will be available from Academic Supervisors in terms of any formal work-placements. Other feedback may be available from the Careers Office. It may also be provided to the School directly through Professional Body liaison contacts.

f. Programme Organisation

Programme Committee minutes are published on the relevant School pages of the staff portal.

g. List of faculty

The faculty teaching on the programme in all modes is available from the Consolidated Annual Monitoring Report

h. Programme Completion

The percentage of students who complete the programme within the intended duration + 1 year.

Annual Programme Monitoring Report

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Programme Name | |
| Programme Director(s) | |
| Modes of Study | |
| Instances /Locations of Delivery | |
| Academic Year/Period of Report | |
| Date of Report | |
| External Examiner(s) | |
| 1 st Checkpoint date | (date of Programme Committee meeting that action items will be followed up on) |
| 2 nd Checkpoint date | (date of Programme Committee meeting that that outstanding action items will be followed up on) |

Overview of the Programme

- Provide a brief overview of programme objectives, modes of delivery etc.
- Features of good practice/highlights of the programme in terms of teaching and learning in the past year
- Presentation of registration statistics and commentary on any trends
- Commentary on and evaluation of withdrawal/retention issues etc., class profile, its influence , if any, on teaching and learning

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

Student Performance

- Presentation of award classifications, pass/fail rates for non-award year.
- Evaluation of these results, issues raised at examination boards etc.
- Review of specific module results and how results on this programme related to the module as a whole.
- Are there any disparities between specific cohorts – FT/PT etc?

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

Stakeholder Feedback

a. Student Feedback

- What issues were raised by students, how were /will they be dealt with?
- Commentary and evaluation of class rep meetings/meetings with course groups where a class rep is not elected.

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

b. External Examiner Feedback

- Comment and respond to any external examiner feedback

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

c. Graduate Feedback

- This may be available from previous years or any specific work done e.g. prior to programmatic review. This will not be relevant in all cases or every year but should be considered

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

d. Professional Body/Employer Feedback

- It is essential that any Professional Body or employer feedback is considered by the programme team as a whole. This may come from reviews by the professional body, unsolicited feedback from employers, work-placement /service learning experiences etc.

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

Support Services

- Evaluate any impacts of the programme on support services in terms of its continuing operation, projected numbers. Potential threats/risks to service should be noted here for action. E.g. sufficient space, library stock, IT resources, learning support etc.

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

New Developments

- Evaluation of any new developments on the programme e.g. results of any changes made to curriculum, assessment structure, introduction of blended delivery etc.

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

Proposed Curriculum/Assessment Changes

- Outline here any proposed replacement of modules or changes to curriculum that may arise from this review. This is in addition to any proposals made in the previous year through the programme modification process arising from programme committees. This should be a plan for what needs to be put forward for modification for delivery in the next academic year.
- Minor modifications (curriculum coverage, reading lists etc.) should be managed through programme committee and updated on Coursebuilder once approved by the Committee.

| Stage | Module | Type of Change Repl/Assessment/Learning Outcome | Detail |
|-------|--------|---|--------|
| | | | |

Effectiveness of Programme Organisation & Quality Assurance

Description of how the quality assurance procedures for the programme are managed, summary of programme meetings held etc., Comment on the management of peer review of papers, second marking. Has feedback been provided to students within a reasonable timeframe (2-3 weeks of assessment) Effectiveness of meetings etc. – attendance, etc.

Detail Actions

| Action | Responsibility | Due | Dependency |
|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | |

Outline any risks to the programme and its quality and how they are been mitigated.

| Risk | Priority | Action | Responsibility |
|------|----------|--------|----------------|
| | | | |

Appendices:

List Programme Team members (all faculty teaching on programme in all modes)

- Programme modification forms from previous academic year
- External examiner report
- Examples/reports etc. referenced in the body of results.