

PROVIDER NAME: CCT College Dublin			
Policy Area: Standard 4: Approval, Design, Monitoring and Review of Programmes			
Procedure Title:	Validation Policy	Policy Number: CCTP401	Version: 1.0
<p>Purpose:</p> <p>CCT's commitment to academic standards, quality teaching, learning and assessment, and national and international good practice in programme design and delivery is ensured through a number of quality assurance procedures but commences with the programme development and validation process and continues through the programme monitoring processes implemented within the College.</p> <p>The mission of CCT is to provide learners with accessible and flexible education opportunities, and professional development programmes that reflect current and emerging knowledge and practices relevant to the learner and to employers. To fulfil this mission CCT draws upon the expertise of its staff to identify new opportunities and monitor sectoral and industry developments for the College to respond to with the development and enhancement of programmes. CCT specialises in provision of computing and business-related programmes of learning. The development of new programmes is vital to the growth and development of the College and its ability to fulfil its mission.</p> <p>New programme proposals are required to be evidence-based, including evidence of demand and details of similar provision available, including international comparators. The College considers proposals from a financial, resource, and risk basis as well as from an academic perspective. The Senior Management team and the Academic Council take joint responsibility for the approval and monitoring of programme development.</p> <p>The programme development and validation process is a multi-step process and it is a requirement that all developments progress through each of the steps specified as determined by the nature of the programme being developed. Programmes seeking validation from QQI require additional steps to professional programmes. In such cases, CCT will ensure will adhere to the QQI Core Validation Policy and Guidelines.</p> <p>This policy applies to the development of all programmes offered by CCT but includes a specific focus on programmes leading to awards of QQI. This includes major, minor, special purpose and supplemental awards. Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards may be incorporated into new programme validations and may be validated together with the major awards from which they are derived. Regardless of award type, the same development and validation process applies. Steps two to seven of this policy also apply to programmes leading to QQI awards which are subject to a revalidation process following a programme review. The requirements of the Programme Review Policy must have initially been satisfied.</p>			

Definitions:

The overall principles of programme validation are governed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. A number of QQI documents are critical to the design, institutional approval and QQI validation of programmes. Documents considered in the creation of any new programmes, and for guidance on monitoring and withdrawal are available at www.qqi.ie.

Major awards: Nationally and internationally recognised qualifications which satisfy the full requirements for a specific framework level on the National Framework of Qualifications NFQ. Major awards include Higher Certificate, Ordinary Degree, Honours Degree, Higher Diploma, Post Graduate Diploma, and Masters Degree.

Minor awards: Minor awards recognise attainment of part of a major award and which have relevance as an award in their own right. All Minor Awards must be linked to a specified approved major award.

Supplemental awards: Supplemental awards 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, with respect to an occupation or profession. Such supplemental awards are not at a higher level than the initial 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 may be a statutory obligation for certain workers to have certification of their competence in specific areas. Special-purpose awards need not be linked to a major award. Special purpose awards derive their currency from the particular context of their use, such as individual fields of employment. Special purpose awards may or may not be part of the learning outcomes for a major award.

Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards may be devised for any level in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The named award may include learning outcomes from lower Levels than the level of the named award itself, where required and reasonable.

Staff Involved: Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of School, Head of Faculty, QA Officer, Faculty Co-ordinator, Lecturers, SMT, Academic Council, QA Committee

Method(s) used to carry out this procedure	Responsibility	Evidence generated by this procedure
<p>Programme Development Procedure Step 1: Proposed Programme Approval Process The proposer of a new programme must document the proposal in full explaining the rationale for the development, the target market, the programme structure, duration, content and award type, and the delivery mode and locations. The proposal must also include relevant evidence sources to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance to the CCT mission • Demand for the programme from learners, employers and the economy • Potential resource implications • Consistency with CCT expertise, or investment requirements where this is not the case <p>Where the proposal is for a blended learning programme, details of the proposed blend should</p>	Proposer	Completed proposal

also be provided. It is understood that the detail of curriculum content will not be known at this stage but a broad indication of the subject matter that may be addressed within the programme should be documented.

In the instance of proposed collaborative provision, the proposal must be accompanied by a proposed collaboration approval request. Collaborative programme development approval will only be approved subject to approval of the collaboration.

English is the language of instruction and assessment for all programmes.

A completed programme proposal must, in the first instance be submitted to the College President, via the relevant Head of Faculty, for consideration by the Senior Management Team (SMT). The SMT will consider the proposal to determine its suitability and feasibility in the context of:

- The rationale for the development of the programme
- being consistent with CCT's Strategic Plan and contributing to achieving the College's mission
- Delivery mode and locations
- Offering a valuable and worthwhile educational experience to students
- Evidence of market demand
- Financial viability including any resource implications (human and physical)
- Programme development costs, expected programme fees and ability of target market to pay
- Potential partnerships/collaborations or involvement of third parties
- Facilities and support services required
- Awarding body or internal quality assurance requirements, including scope of provision
- Professional or statutory body requirements
- The proposed programme structure
- Curriculum content including proposed teaching, learning and assessment strategies
- Potential partnerships/collaborations or involvement of third parties
- Delivery mode and location including learner support and learner experience implications
- Lecturing expertise required/available

If the SMT approves the proposal, the Dean of Academic Affairs will submit it to Academic Council for noting and to advise on any academic or regulatory matter where SMT has requested such.

Academic Council may consider the proposal at a scheduled meeting, at a special meeting for the purpose of the proposal, or via document circulation and discussion which is then noted at the next meeting of the Council. The Dean of Academic Affairs will notify the President of any

Head of Faculty
President
SMT

President

Dean of Academic
Affairs
Academic Council

Minutes of SMT meetings

Minutes of Academic Council meetings

recommendations of the Academic Council.

Step 2: Commencement of Programme Development

Where the SMT approve a programme proposal a programme leader is assigned to lead the development and a development team is identified. Where the programme development is following the review of a current validated programme and the intention is to seek revalidation, the programme team that delivers the current programme, led by the existing programme leader, will undertake the development. Additional subject matter expertise may also be assigned to the team to reflect findings from the review.

Where the programme concerned is a new subject area for CCT, the College may opt to appoint a Programme Advisory Group comprised of subject and industry experts. The Programme Advisory Group will guide and advise the development team as appropriate.

The Programme Leader will meet with the Dean of Academic Affairs to agree a development timeframe. For programmes that will be seeking validation from QQI the timeframe will be developed based upon the intended start date of the programme and tracked back from the target Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) meeting.

In the case of full time programmes intended for direct entry post Leaving Certificate (or equivalent school leaving award), validation and approval is required before the programme is notified to the Central Applications Office (CAO). It is necessary to inform the CAO by 31st March in the year proceeding the calendar year of commencement of the programme.

The Programme Leader will work closely with the development team to devise a suitable curriculum giving consideration to:

- Award standards (where applicable)
- The intended teaching and learning strategy
- Assessment methods and regulations
- Programme structure and, where applicable, credit allocations

In the case of programmes seeking revalidation, consideration will also be given to the findings from the review of the current programme. In all cases comparisons with similar provision in Ireland and elsewhere must be undertaken. This includes the comparison of learning outcomes as well as broader comparisons. This is the responsibility of the development team. The Dean of Academic Affairs will provide assistance and contact providers directly where a development team is experiencing difficulty in securing information.

The Programme Leader will also liaise with Departmental Heads to agree appropriate arrangements for

- Protection for Enrolled learners (where applicable)
- Development of marketing material

SMT

Programme Leader
Dean of Academic
Affairs

Programme Leader
Development Team

Programme Leader
Departmental Heads

Advisory group minutes / reports

- Entry requirements and admissions
- Learner registration and induction
- Learner support
- Assessment scheduling

In the case of programmes leading to QQI awards, the Programme Leader takes responsibility for the completion of the programme validation manual and compilation of all supporting documentation. For programmes not requiring validation or accreditation, the programme leader will lead the completion of the required curriculum and programme documentation.

The completed programme documentation and any supporting documents must be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs who will make arrangements for review and, in respect of programmes being submitted for validation from QQI, independent evaluation against the core validation criteria.

Step 3: Internal Review and Evaluation of Proposed Programme Documentation

Upon receipt of proposed programme documentation, the Dean of Academic Affairs will undertake an initial desk review to determine the completeness of the submission. Any gaps or omissions will be referred back to the Programme Leader.

Once the Dean of Academic Affairs is satisfied the submission is complete arrangements will be made for review and, where applicable evaluation against QQI criteria.

For non-accredited programmes an internal panel will be established to review the programme documentation against the proposal. In some cases, industry expertise may be invited on to the review panel. This may be a desk review but can also include a meeting with the programme leader or programme team.

In respect of programmes being submitted for validation from QQI, the Dean of Academic Affairs will arrange for a review and evaluation against the core validation criteria. Normally this comprises a desk review by a QA expert and / or subject matter expert(s) and a mock validation event. The Dean of Academic Affairs and Dean of School may also act as reviewers. On completion of the review and evaluation the Independent Evaluation Template must be completed in full. This should identify how the criteria are met and where this is evidenced. Where criteria are not met or not evidenced this should also be recorded and the Programme Development Team will be required to act upon this and provide a response. Once a response has been issued, detailing the corrective action taken, the Chair of the review and evaluation will be required to confirm their support for the submission to QQI.

Step 4: Submission, Desk Review and Pre-Site Visit Arrangements

The Dean of Academic Affairs will submit the programme validation application, along with the

Dean of Academic Affairs

Records of review outcomes

Mock validation report

Dean of Academic Affairs

completed independent evaluation, a letter from the College President requesting validation, confirmation of arrangements for PEL, and the validation fee cover note to QQI. The submission will be made using the QQI QHelp system and 6 hard copies of the document will also be issued. Only at this stage will QQI commence arranging a panel.

QQI will undertake a preliminary desk review to determine the completeness of the submission. This review does not consider the suitability of the application against the validation criteria and as such, satisfaction of the review is not an indication of a positive outcome from the panel evaluation.

QQI will notify CCT, via the Dean of Academic Affairs, of a proposed panel and date. CCT will be required to confirm there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest and that the proposed date is suitable.

Once the panel is appointed the documentation will be issued to them, by QQI, for review in advance of the site visit. An agenda for the site visit will be issued by QQI to CCT. This is subject to change on the day following the review of documentation by the panel and based upon the initial meetings with the panel.

In the case of revalidation, the Dean of Academic Affairs may, with the agreement of QQI, submit the programme documentation to the panel members directly following initial discussion and agreement of arrangements and requirements with the Chair of the Panel. It should be noted that the Panel may be satisfied to consider the review of the current validated programme and the application for revalidation of the programme in the one sitting but two distinct processes will be undertaken.

Step 5: Site Visit and Expert Panel Evaluation

The site visit takes a different format depending on whether it is a programme review and revalidation or a new programme validation. For a programme review and revalidation, the panel will initially focus on the review of the current validated programme, considering the approach taken and the findings from the review. The Panel will also review the revised proposed programme against the validation criteria. The panel may wish to meet with a range of different stakeholders as part of this process, including students, graduates, employers, staff, lecturers, and College managers. Once the programme review aspect is complete, the panel will indicate whether or not they feel the review process was appropriate and sufficiently rigorous to provide valid outcomes to inform a revalidation application. They will also indicate if they are in broad agreement with the development team's own recommendations from the review for the revalidation and provide an evaluation against the core validation criteria. At this point the Panel may opt to consider the revalidation application or arrange for a later site visit for this. An initial intention in this regard may have been reached prior to the site visit but the panel may revise this

<p>following the review process.</p> <p>In considering a validation or revalidation application, as part of the site visit the panel will wish to meet representatives of the Senior Management Team, normally the Director and Deans, to determine the high-level support for the proposed programme and commitment to necessary investment as may be required. Where the proposal includes a change in scope of provision this will also be evaluated by the panel with a focus on specific QA policies and procedures, managerial support, and appropriate investment and development to ensure the change in scope is appropriate.</p> <p>Following meeting with the Senior Management, the panel will meet with the programme development team and members of CCT staff to evaluate the programme against the validation criteria. This normally takes the format of a discussion with staff about the aspects of the documentation that raised questions for the panel. A review of each module will also normally be undertaken. The panel may also request a tour of facilities as part of the site visit. For blended learning programmes, the development team should be prepared to demonstrate the VLE and online aspects of the programme and learner experience.</p> <p>For collaborative programmes, each collaborating partner should be represented at the site visit. On conclusion of the site visit the panel may offer an indication of their recommendation to QQI. This is preliminary and should not be taken as conclusive. A report of the panel's observations, recommendation to QQI and any associated recommendations or conditions will follow in due course.</p> <p>Step 6: Panel Report and Response</p> <p>The panel report will be issued to the Dean of Academic Affairs and the College will be given the opportunity to correct matters of factual inaccuracy. Once confirmed a final report will be issued. The programme development team is required to consider the final report and compose a written response to the panel.</p> <p>The proposed response should be circulated to the Dean of School and the Dean of Academic Affairs for review and subsequently to Academic Council to approve submission of the response. The Dean of Academic Affairs will arrange for the submission of the response, including evidence relating to any conditions or recommendations the team have addressed.</p> <p>QQI / the panel chair will notify the Dean of Academic Affairs of their acceptance or otherwise of action in respect of conditions and recommendations. Once the panel is satisfied, the formal recommendation for validation will go forward to the QQI PAEC.</p> <p>Step 7: Confirmation of Validation</p>	<p>QQI / Panel</p> <p>Development team</p> <p>Dean of School, Dean of Academic Affairs</p> <p>Head of Marketing Dean of Academic Affairs</p>	<p>Panel report</p> <p>Response to report Academic Council minutes</p>
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<p>A programme is not deemed to be validated until such a time as the QQI has confirmed this and a Certificate of Accreditation has been issued. Until such a time as this is received, all marketing materials should clearly state “subject to validation by QQI”.</p> <p>The Dean of Academic Affairs will review the Certificate of Accreditation and confirm its accuracy with QQI.</p> <p>Note: a panel may also recommend that a programme is not validated. In such cases this recommendation is also considered by the PAEC and confirmed in writing.</p> <p>Duration of Validation and Post Validation Monitoring</p> <p>Except where noted otherwise, validation is for a period of 5 years. Programme teams are required to monitor programme implementation and delivery over the lifecycle of the validation. It is particularly important to review to fitness for purpose of the programme and its delivery, including teaching, learning and assessment strategies, on completion of the first iteration of delivery. In addition to annual monitoring a programme should undergo an in-depth review with a view to seeking re-validation at the end of the 5-year validation cycle.</p>		
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Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Officer	Per proposal	Completion of proposal process and monitoring of recommendations from Academic Council
Dean of School / Head of Faculty	Mock validation panel event	Mock panel report
Dean of School	Panel Report	Review of recommendations and conditions, including any recurring matters from one validation to another

POLICY CONTROL SHEET

Policy Title	Validation Policy
Responsible Officer(s)	Heads of Faculty, Dean of Academic Affairs
Issuance Date	August 2018
Effective Date	August 2018
Last Review Date	April 2018
Supersedes	Version 1.0 Approval Design Monitoring Review of Programmes
Next Review Date	August 2019
Designated Reviewer(s)	Dean of School, Dean of Academic Affairs
Scope	Internal staff (full and part time); Learners;

Revision History

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
New Policy	April 2018	New policy to reflect revised policy of QQI and to detail internal requirements and validation process.	Senior Management Team	Academic Council

References upon which the Policy section is based

CCT Policy area	Approval Design Monitoring Review of Programmes
Statutory & System Wide Basis	The Irish Qualifications and Quality Act (Education and Training), 2012; European Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area, QQI Validation Policy and Criteria, QQI Validation template
Related CCT Policies / Forms	CCTP402 – Programme Review and Revalidation CCTP403 – Programme Management and Annual Monitoring