

PROVIDER NAME: CCT College Dublin			
Policy Area: Standard 4: Approval, Design, Monitoring and Review of Programmes			
Procedure Title:	CCTP401: Validation Policy with Procedures for Managing Devolution of Responsibility	Policy Number: CCTP401	Version: 1.1
<p>Purpose: 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.</p> <p>CCT specialises in provision of computing and business-related programmes. 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 ELT / Management team and the Academic Council take joint responsibility for the approval and monitoring of programme development.</p> <p>Programme development and validation is a multi-step process, and it is a requirement that all developments progress through the applicable steps specified within the procedures as documented, as applicable, determined by the nature of the programme being developed and whether devolution of responsibility applies. Programmes seeking validation from QQI require additional steps to professional programmes. In such cases, CCT will ensure it adheres to the QQI Core Validation Policy and Guidelines. Where this includes devolution of responsibility for arranging independent evaluation reports (panel reports) at QQI, this will be managed by the Academic Affairs and QA Office in accordance with approved procedures.</p> <p>This policy applies to the development of all programmes offered by CCT but includes a specific focus on programmes leading to QQI awards. 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.</p> <p>In the case of programmes leading to QQI awards, it is understood that unless QQI approve otherwise, a validation process will always involve a panel visit.</p>			
<p>Scope: This policy applies to all programme developments in CCT College Dublin.</p>			

Those programmes which may be considered under devolution of responsibility for arranging independent evaluation reports at QQI's request are limited to major, minor, supplemental, special purpose awards and micro-credentials, up to level 9 (taught Masters only), in business and computing, offered through face to face or blended learning mode, as full or part time programmes. Such programmes shall be delivered at the CCT campus or at a venue for which CCT has approved QA procedures for the approval of such a venue. This is in keeping with CCT's approved scope of provision.

Devolved responsibility will not apply to programmes outside CCT's current scope of provision, and excludes:

- Transnational provision
- Collaborative or joint awards
- Apprenticeship programmes
- Research Masters programmes

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, Postgraduate Diploma, and Master's 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.

Independent Evaluator (panel member): A member of the review panel, appointed / approved by QQI for the purpose of evaluating an application to QQI from CCT College Dublin. Independent evaluators are appointed on the basis of their expertise and the relevance of this to the application in question.

Independent Evaluation Report (panel report): This is authored by the panel and is the formal record of evaluation against QQI criteria.

Panel Visit: A panel visit is the term used to refer to the live interaction between the panel and representatives of CCT College Dublin. This may take the form of a site visit or a virtual visit.

Desk review evaluation: evaluation without site visit or virtual visit, typically reserved for programmes with small credit amounts, or differential validations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the proposed programme comes under the devolved responsibility procedures of CCT or whether it must be evaluated directly by QQI. <p>If the ELT 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 ELT has requested such.</p> <p>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 recommendations of the Academic Council.</p> <p>Step 2: Commencement of Programme Development</p> <p>Where the ELT approve a programme proposal, a development team is identified to work under the direction of the Dean of Faculty.</p> <p>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, along with the existing programme leader, will undertake the development, under the guidance of the Dean of Faculty. Additional subject matter expertise may also be assigned to the team to reflect findings from the review.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Dean of Faculty will meet with the Dean of Academic Affairs and Dean of Teaching and Learning 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. Once the timeline is agreed, the Dean of Academic Affairs will notify QQI of the expected application date. For applications under devolution of responsibility, notification to QQI must always be not less than one month prior to the anticipated application.</p> <p>In the case of full-time programmes intended for direct entry post Leaving Certificate (or equivalent school leaving award), validation 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.</p>	<p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p> <p>Academic Council</p> <p>ELT</p> <p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p>	<p>Minutes of Academic Council meetings</p> <p>Advisory group minutes / reports</p> <p>Notification records</p>
---	--	---

The Dean of Faculty together with the Dean of Teaching and Learning, and Dean of Academic Affairs, will devise a workshop schedule to support the development team to devise a suitable curriculum considering:

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

In the workshop process the ABC Learning Design model is used to design the programme and modules. This supports designing module Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) that is aligned with UDL principles. ABC Design is based on the pedagogic theory of Professor Diana Laurillard’s Conversational Framework (2002) and her concept of “learning types”. Her six learning types have proved to be a very effective method to help lecturers understand, describe and discuss the student learning process. The six learning types are acquisition (i.e.to read/watch/listen); investigation; practice; discussion; collaboration and production. UDL aims to improve the educational experience of all students by introducing more flexible methods of teaching, assessment and service provision to cater for the diversity of learners in our classrooms. The three principles are to provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. These principles are incorporated into programme design to ensure that the diversity of learners are engaged across the lifecycle of the programmes, and their needs are anticipated and accommodated where necessary. It is also important to include a broad and diverse suite of assessment methods so that all learners have an equal opportunity to showcase their learning.

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 aid and contact providers directly where a development team is having trouble in securing information.

The Dean of Faculty will also liaise with Departmental Heads to agree appropriate arrangements for

- Protection for Enrolled learners (where applicable)
- Development of marketing materials
- Entry requirements and admissions
- Learner registration and induction
- Learner support
- Assessment scheduling

In the case of programmes leading to QQI awards, the Dean of Faculty takes responsibility for the completion of the programme validation document and compilation of all supporting documentation. For

Dean of Faculty
 Dean of Teaching and Learning
 Dean of Academic Affairs
 Development Team

Dean of Faculty
 Departmental Heads

Dean of Faculty

Records of review outcomes

<p>programmes not requiring validation or accreditation, the programme leader will lead the completion of the required curriculum and programme documentation.</p> <p>The completed programme documentation and any supporting documents must be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs who will plan for review and, in respect of programmes being submitted for validation from QQI, independent evaluation against the core validation criteria.</p> <p>Step 3: Internal Approval and Preparation for External Process</p> <p>Upon receipt of proposed programme documentation, including supporting appendices, the Dean of Academic Affairs will undertake an initial desk screening to determine the completeness of the submission. Any gaps or omissions will see the application referred to the Dean of Faculty. Once the Dean of Academic Affairs is satisfied the submission is formally complete, arrangements will be made for review and, where applicable, evaluation against QQI criteria.</p> <p>For non-accredited programmes an internal panel will be established to review the programme documentation against the proposal. In some cases, external expertise may be invited on to the review panel. This may take the form of a desk review but can also include a meeting with members of the programme team.</p> <p>In respect of programmes being submitted for validation by QQI, the Dean of Academic Affairs will arrange for a review and evaluation against the core validation criteria. Normally this comprises a desk screening by a QA expert and / or subject matter expert(s). The Dean of Academic Affairs and QA Lead may also act as reviewers.</p> <p>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 independent reviewer will be required to confirm satisfaction of the validation criteria.</p> <p>The Dean of Academic Affairs will then arrange for the application to be reviewed by Academic Council with a view to receiving support for submission of the application. When Academic Council recommends the application proceeds, the College President is notified and the letter requesting validation is signed, authorising the Dean of Academic Affairs to arrange the submission to QQI.</p>	<p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p>	<p>Internal panel records</p> <p>QA / SME review records</p>
---	---------------------------------	--

Step 4: Proposing and Constituting a Panel

This step only applies to those programmes where CCT is seeking validation from QQI under devolution of responsibility for arranging independent evaluation reports at QQI's request.

The Academic Affairs and QA Office, in co-operation with the Dean of Faculty and Programme Development team, will prepare nominations for members of the independent evaluation panel (the panel). All nominations will be subject to internal approval by the ELT and the Academic Council. This will assist in reducing the possibility of any conflict of interest. Once approved internally, the Dean of Academic Affairs will put forward the nominations to QQI. This will take place not less than 6 weeks prior to the proposed panel visit. The proposal to QQI will include the name, occupation and, where applicable employer organisation, of each proposed panel member and the rationale for their nomination. The intended date of the visit will also be included as part of this proposal.

QQI approval must be secured not less than 3 weeks prior to a proposed panel visit.

Panels are established on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, a nominated panel is constituted in the context of the specific programme(s) being put forward for validation and the requirement to have the breadth of expertise required to make an evaluation against the core validation criteria and conduct itself in accordance with QQI's Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training 2017. A proposed panel typically comprises:

- Chair
- Secretary or report writer who has the capacity and capability of writing reports that meet QQI's requirements.
- Normally a minimum of two academics, including representation from the University sector and, ideally an international academic. For programmes at Level 9, an international academic is required.
- An industry representative
- A learner representative – normally secured through NStEP.

For programmes evaluated by Desk Review, a proposed panel typically comprises:

- A Chair, who may also have responsibility for writing the report.
- A minimum of two subject matter experts

Reviewer
Programme
Development Team

Academic Council

College President

Academic Affairs and
QA Office

Dean of Academic
Affairs

Independent Evaluation Template
Response / updated application
documents

Letter from President

Circulation of nominations

Nominations and validation timeline to
QQI

Proposed panel members will be notified of the fee applicable for participation in an evaluation panel. The CCT Board sets and reviews panel member fees, ensuring these are comparable with those that would be paid by QQI. Panel members will also be notified of the travel and subsistence expenses that will be covered by CCT, where these apply. Standard public-sector rates will apply to the calculation of travel and subsistence expenses.

Engagement with a panel must not commence until such a time as QQI has approved the proposed panel membership.

Step 5: Submission, Initial Screening and Pre Panel Evaluation Arrangements

An application to QQI will only proceed when the Dean of Academic Affairs is in receipt of the following:

- The programme validation document and appendices,
- The completed independent evaluation against the validation criteria,
- A letter from the College President requesting validation,
- Evidence of arrangements for PEL,
- The completed validation fee cover notes to QQI
- Any additional or specific QA arrangements, if applicable
- The proposed panel and validation timeline (for devolved responsibility applications only)

In all cases the application will be submitted to QQI using the process required by QQI.

Once an application has been made, the Dean of Faculty will make arrangements for an internal validation event as part of panel visit preparations.

Dean of Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs and QA Office

Dean of Academic Affairs

Dean of Faculty

Communications with QQI

Communication Records

Application submission

Internal validation record

- a copy of the QQI publication “Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Reviewers And Evaluators” with a request to review and familiarise themselves with requirements and expectations.
- arrangements and limitations for fees and expenses, and confirmation that QQI has no liability towards the panel members.
- the date of the panel evaluation (and whether this is desk review, virtual or site visit)
- the anticipated timeline for pre-evaluation and post evaluation activities
- the names and roles of fellow panel members

Communication with panel members in respect of the validation process is managed exclusively through the Academic Affairs and QA Office. In exceptional circumstances, the Dean of Academic Affairs or Chair of the Academic Council can approve an alternative point of contact.

The Academic Affairs and QA Office will:

- Agree the proposed agenda for the panel evaluation with the panel chair.
- Provide a briefing to panel members.
- Manage the distribution of the validation documents. This will normally be provided through secure online access and will comprise of:
 - QQI Policies for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training
 - QQI Assessment and Standards (latest edition)
 - The relevant awards standards document
 - The QQI validation report template
 - CCT QA Manual
 - The agreed agenda for the panel evaluation
 - The validation application, as submitted to QQI.

The distribution of validation documents will take place not less than two weeks prior to the panel evaluation date. Panel members may request supplementary information. In such cases, this will be directed to the Academic Affairs and QA Office who will arrange for the provision of this information.

In the case of a virtual visit, the Academic Affairs and QA Office will arrange for virtual meeting room invites to be issued to the panel and to all CCT participants. Private meeting rooms will be set up for panel deliberations before and during the panel evaluation.

Briefing arrangements
Document access

<p>panel will normally engage in discussion with CCT management, staff and stakeholders, as applicable to enable the panel to review the learning environment, investigate the application of quality assurance arrangements, and understand the proposed programme while assessing the suitability and fitness of purpose of resources and facilities.</p> <p>The typical format of the meetings will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting with representatives of the ELT / Management Team, normally the President and Deans, to determine the high-level support for the proposed programme and commitment to necessary investment as may be required. • Meetings with the programme development team to discuss the curriculum content, programme structure, PLOs, teaching, learning and assessment strategies and the rationale for these. A review of each module will also normally be undertaken. • Meetings with members of CCT administration and student support services to discuss access, transfer and progression, the wider student experience and the learning environment. <p>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>A tour of facilities, both physical and virtual, may also form part of a panel visit. This is normally requested in advance and factored into the agenda, but where discussion leads to a request from a panel, this will be accommodated.</p> <p>For non-devolved responsibility collaborative programmes, each collaborating partner should be represented at the site visit.</p> <p>On conclusion of the site visit the panel will normally offer a summary of their recommendation to CCT and the rationale for this including commendations, recommendations and or conditions, as applicable. This is preliminary and should not be taken as conclusive. A comprehensive report from the panel will be issued in due course.</p> <p>Step 7: Panel Report and Response Arrangements for non-devolved responsibility applications</p> <p>The draft panel report will be issued by QQI to the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the College will be given the opportunity to revision on matters of factual inaccuracy. If accepted by the panel, the report will be revised and an updated final report issued by QQI with an invitation for CCT to respond to the report.</p>	<p>QQI</p>	<p>Panel report</p>
--	------------	---------------------

<p>The programme development team is required to consider the final report and take the appropriate action to address any conditions, as applicable, and compose a written response to the panel. Actions and response to recommendations are at the discretion of the college but will always be addressed in the written response.</p> <p>The proposed response should be circulated to the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Academic Affairs for review and subsequently to Academic Council to support the submission of the response and revised documents, as applicable.</p> <p>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. This will include updating the programme details on QHub to reflect any revisions to the application arising from the panel evaluation. The response to the panel report is communicated through the Academic Affairs and QA Office, with the approval of Academic Council and the College President.</p> <p>QQI will liaise with the Panel with a view to securing confirmation of the panel’s recommendation for validation, including satisfaction of any conditions, where applicable. Where the panel feel further action is required this will again be referred to CCT for action and resubmission for panel sign-off.</p> <p>Once the panel chair confirms satisfaction of the validation criteria to support a recommendation to validate the programme(s), QQI will notify the Dean of Academic Affairs of this. QQI will then make arrangements for progressing the application through QQI’s processes with final consideration by the PAEC.</p> <p>The outcome of the PAEC meeting will be communicated to the Dean of Academic Affairs.</p> <p>Note: a panel may also recommend that a programme is refused validation. In such cases this recommendation is also considered by the PAEC and confirmed in writing.</p> <p>Arrangements for devolved responsibility applications</p> <p>The IER panel report will be provided using the QQI report template and in adherence with QQI’s validation policies and criteria. This should be issued to the Dean of Academic Affairs, normally within 2 weeks of the panel visit, to request a factual accuracy check. Factual accuracy protocols of QQI must be adhered to when the Chair is considered proposed revisions.</p>	<p>Programme development team</p> <p>Dean of Faculty, Dean of Academic Affairs, Academic Council</p> <p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p> <p>QQI</p> <p>Panel Chair and report writer</p>	<p>Revised documents and proposed response</p> <p>Application submission</p>
---	--	--

<p>The factual accuracy response should be returned to facilitate the panel chair accepting or rejecting the proposed revisions and issuing the final draft report to the Dean of Academic Affairs to facilitate submission to QQI, normally within 3 weeks of the panel visit.</p> <p>QQI will review the report to ensure it is drafted in accordance with policy and requirements of QQI and that all recommendations and conditions are consistent with the requirements of the validation criteria.</p> <p>Once QQI confirms satisfaction with the report in writing, QQI will return the final report to the Dean of Academic Affairs with a request for CCT to proceed with the validation process and arrange with the panel Chair for the report to be finalised. A specified timeframe will normally be provided for this and the process of finalising the report will include CCT responding to any conditions and recommendations to the satisfaction of the panel.</p> <p>The programme development team is required to consider the final report and take the appropriate action to address any conditions, as applicable, and compose a written response to the panel. Actions and response to recommendations are at the discretion of the college but will always be addressed in the written response.</p> <p>The proposed response should be circulated to the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Academic Affairs for review and subsequently to Academic Council to support the submission of the response and revised documents, as applicable.</p> <p>The response to the panel report is communicated through the Academic Affairs and QA Office, with the approval of Academic Council and the College President.</p> <p>The panel should be afforded not less than one week to review the revised application documents and the panel response. Once the panel is satisfied with the response to the report and any associated revisions to the validation application, the panel Chair will confirm approval in writing and issue this to the Dean of Academic Affairs.</p> <p>On receipt of the written approval, the Dean of Academic Affairs will arrange for the submission of the response to QQI, including evidence relating to any conditions or recommendations the team have addressed. This programme details will be updated on QHub to reflect any revisions to the application arising from the panel evaluation.</p>	<p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p> <p>QQI</p> <p>Programme Development Team</p> <p>Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Faculty</p> <p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p> <p>Dean of Academic Affairs</p>	<p>Revised application documents and proposed response.</p> <p>Application record</p>
--	---	---

Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Dean of Academic Affairs / QA Office	Per proposal	Completion of proposal process and monitoring of recommendations from Academic Council
Dean of Faculty	Per internal validation panel event	Internal panel report
Dean of Faculty	Per Panel Report	Review of recommendations and conditions, including any recurring matters from one validation to another
Dean of Academic Affairs	Per Panel	Review of effectiveness of, and adherence to, procedures for devolution

POLICY CONTROL SHEET

Policy Title	Validation Policy with Procedures for Managing Devolution of Responsibility for Arranging (Programme Validation Related) Independent Evaluation Reports at QQI's Request
Responsible Officer(s)	Dean of Academic Affairs, QA Lead
Issuance Date	09 March 2026
Effective Date	09 March 2026
Last Review Date	June 2025
Supersedes	Validation Policy Version 1.1
Next Review Date	July 2027
Designated Reviewer(s)	ELT
Scope	Academic Council, QE Committee, Academic Affairs and QA Office, Faculties.

Revision History

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
Version 1.0	April 2023	New policy replacing previous validation policy, to reflect addition of devolution of responsibility procedures, as approved by QQI.	Academic Affairs and QA Office	Academic Council and QQI
Version 1.1	June 2023	Minor updates for presentation purposes	Dean of Academic Affairs	Academic Council
Version 1.2	March 2026	Updates to include references to UDL and ABC model of Design	Dean of Academic Affairs	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 Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training; QQI Validation Toolkit; QQI's Devolution of Responsibility for arranging (Programme Validation Related) Independent Evaluation Reports at QQI's request: Operational Procedures
Related CCT Policies / Forms	CCTP402 – Programme Review and Revalidation CCTP403 – Programme Management and Annual Monitoring CCTP404 – Blended Learning Policy