Programmatic Review Policy

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Purpose	To explain the nature and purpose of Programmatic Review and its process
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Who needs to know about this document	Registrar, Heads of Faculty, Heads of Department, Programme Chairs, Faculty Administrators, all academic staff, all students
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1   Introduction

1.1   What is Programmatic Review

Programmatic Review is the quality review process through which IADT conducts a critical evaluation of its programmes, reviewing and assessing them under a defined set of criteria and allowing their further development in order to improve educational quality.

Programmatic Review takes into account all aspects of the programmes including educational objectives, programme concept and implementation, access and transfer issues, curriculum and module descriptors, staffing and physical resourcing, and evaluates each area under specified criteria.

1.2   What are the Aims of Programmatic Review

Programmatic Review aims to:

– Reflect on the objectives of ongoing monitoring activities

– Ensure that a course of study is being provided effectively

– Maintain academic standards

– Offers students a fair and reasonable opportunity to engage with the intended learning in a stimulating education environment

Furthermore, it works to assure that:

– The learning outcomes reflect up-to-date knowledge in the community of practice

– The curriculum design and structure is effective

– Contemporary best practice in student-centred learning is reflected in the teaching and assessment practices

– There remains a demand for the programme

– Graduates are able to secure employment in their field of qualification

– Physical resourcing for the programme is available

– The programme remains viable

In order to investigate a programme thoroughly and consider these dimensions, IADT employs a complementary model of self-study and an evaluation by independent peer evaluators. The programme review process is very similar to the process for the validation of new programmes.

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (Commencement) (No. 2) Order 2019 (S.I. No. 540 of 2019), made 5 November 2019, IADT may make awards up to Level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications, and became a designated awarding body, on 1 January 2020.

2   Objectives of Programmatic Review

The key objective in reviewing a programme is to enable the revalidation or cessation of a programme. In order to arrive at a view in respect of revalidation, the following steps are undertaken:

− Analyse the effectiveness and the efficiency of each of the programmes approved, through consideration of a range of data and stakeholder feedback

− Review the development of a programme or suite of programmes having regard to the views of education interests, employers, professional bodies, needs of Irish society and global development

− Evaluate the student feedback mechanisms and the process for acting upon student feedback, and communicating to students the Institute response to feedback

− Evaluate the appropriateness of the physical facilities and resources supporting the provision of the programmes

− Review the Institute's research activities and projections in the area of study under review and how research dimensions are incorporated into all undergraduate programmes

− Evaluate the Faculty/Department flexibility in responding to market requirements and educational developments

− Evaluate the formal links the Institute has established with industry/business and the wider community in order to maintain the relevance of its programmes

− Evaluate the Institute's projections for the succeeding five years in specific areas

3   Steps in the Review Process

− Agree timelines with the Office of the Registrar. A review may occur after three years, but no later than seven years, and typically every five years.

− Each Faculty establishes a programmatic review team which carries out a self-evaluation process, culminating in a report of its self-reflection, analysis and arising proposals. Typically, it may take a full academic year to conduct a thorough process of self-review.

− The self-evaluation report is submitted to the Registrar who reviews it to ensure it addresses the objectives and criteria for the review of programmes

- Self-evaluation report sent to PVC a sub committee of Academic Council for review for similar consideration

- An independent external expert panel is appointed

- The panel reviews the self-evaluation report, makes a site visit, meets with those providing the programme and prepares a peer evaluation report considering the reviewed programme(s) against the specific evaluation criteria and making recommendations to the Institute on future actions around the programme(s) including revalidation

- On receipt of the Panel report, the programme review team makes a response, usually within 6 weeks of receiving the report.

- The Registrar brings to Academic Council the self-evaluation report and the expert evaluation report and make recommendations to Academic Council on whether to revalidate the programmes or not

- Academic Council makes a decision on revalidation and any related programme improvements

4 Programmatic Review Criteria, including Programme Revalidation Criteria

The Programme Review Team and, separately, the independent expert panellists evaluate the reviewed programme to assess how it meets the following key revalidation criteria[1]:

4.1 Criterion 1

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.

4.2 Criterion 2

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

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[1] Drawn and adapted from QQI Programme Validation Manual (2017) for Progress of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET) Edition 3

(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 *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*

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.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to quality for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor award standards.

4.2   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)

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

4.4   Criterion 4

The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

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 (CEFRL) 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 *intended programme learning outcomes*, 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.

4.5   Criterion 5

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

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 *programme* 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[2]

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

4.6   Criterion 6

There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned

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))

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.

4.7   Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

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)).

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 eg 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 (eg 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

4.8   Criterion 8

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 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

4.9   Criterion 9

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

e) Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme

4.10 Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies

a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*

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

4.11 Criterion 11

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 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[3]

i) If the programme aims to enrol international students, it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[4] 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, (eg 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)

4.12   Criterion 12

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 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

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[3] 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).
[4] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

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.