

## 4.1 Existing Programme Review & New Programme Development

### 4.1.1 Policy for Reviewing Existing Programmes

This policy defines the principles, participants, and criteria for reviewing, evaluating, and enhancing existing programmes at ICD. The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure annual review and evaluation of existing programmes and modules at ICD with the goal of continuously enhancing programmes, and their constituent modules, so that programmes of education (courses) continue:
  - I. To be viable financially
  - II. To be viable and fit for purpose pedagogically
  - III. To achieve optimum consistency with the ICD mission statement and current strategic plan
  - IV. To maintain consistency with the conditions of validation set by validation bodies (e.g. QQI)
  - V. To maintain consistency with validation or exemption criteria set by professional bodies (e.g. ACCA)
  - VI. To be updated and enhanced in line with regulatory and validation body (e.g. QQI) developments
  - VII. To be updated and enhanced in line with professional body (e.g. ACCA) validation or exemption criteria and their development(s)
  - VIII. To maintain consistency with evolving best practice across the higher educational sector
  - IX. To maintain consistency with the defined NFQ level and award standards of the programme
  - X. To provide a high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment experience for all enrolled learners
  - XI. To maintain consistency with the evolving ICD Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategy
  - XII. To provide all learners on a programme with the knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant to succeeding in completing the programme
  - XIII. To provide all learners on a programme with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to optimise their career and academic progression and success after completing the programme
  - XIV. To provide a continuously enhancing curriculum

2. Ensure that programmes are delivered in a manner consistent with the programme as it is designed
  
3. Ensure that evidence is continuously gathered about programme delivery with the aim of providing information to decision makers to be used in:
  - I. Continuously enhancing existing programme designs or descriptors
  - II. Continuously enhancing existing module designs or descriptors
  - III. Continuously enhancing programme delivery
  - IV. New programme development
  - V. Assessing and deciding on which programmes to be discontinued
  - VI. Evaluating the effectiveness of learner supports to ensure continuous enhancement of same
  - VII. Evaluating the resources (human, physical, technological) available and used to deliver a programme to ensure continuous enhancement of the effectiveness of resource allocations on a programme
  
4. Ensure that access, transfer, and progression criteria of the programme are:
  - I. Continuously enhanced to maintain consistency with national and international policies
  - II. Transparently and effectively communicated to all existing and prospective learners
  - III. Continuously reviewed to ensure optimum completion rates for learners; a process which must incorporate analysis of statistics on learner enrolment, progression, and completion rates on each programme to locate areas for improvement
  - IV. Consistent with any professional body or regulated profession requirements (e.g. ACCA)

**Key responsibilities in programme reviewing:**

Key actors in the programme review process are:

1. **Academic Council (including Learner Voice & External Academic Council Member):**  
Academic Council, as the most senior academic committee at ICD, holds overall responsibility for ensuring:
  - i. Annual review of all programmes takes place at ICD, through delegation to the Programme Development Subcommittee
  - ii. All programme manuals/descriptors and their module descriptors are continuously enhanced, a process that must incorporate benchmarking of the programme and module descriptor(s) against comparable programmes at the same NFQ level in the same or similar fields of learning in Ireland and beyond
  - iii. Delivery of all programmes maintains consistency with the NFQ level of the programme
  - iv. Continuous maintenance and enhancement of the number of exemptions offered by external bodies (e.g. ACCA) to ensure optimum value of the graduate qualification to the learner
  - v. Delivery of all programmes maintains consistency with programme manuals/descriptors and module descriptors as they have been approved or validated, including minor amendments since validation/revalidation
  - vi. The programme teaching, learning, and assessment strategy remains consistent with the institution-level teaching, learning, and assessment strategy
  - vii. Delivery of all programmes is continuously enhanced using a benchmarking approach to ensure consistency with best practice across the higher educational sector
  - viii. All requests or proposals for programme amendments are considered, deliberated upon, and decided upon
  - ix. All requests or proposals for major amendments to programmes or modules are decided upon in conjunction with the Programme Development Subcommittee
  - x. All decisions relating to programmes that require substantial resource allocation adjustment will be referred to the Management Team, for advice

- (e.g. business case analysis), and Governing Body, for advice (e.g. strategic fit and business case analysis) and approval, as appropriate
- xi. All programme review processes at ICD are rigorously evidence based
  - xii. All programme review processes at ICD are inclusive of all stakeholders, including learners and programme teams/boards
  - xiii. All programme review processes procure, and act meaningfully on, external feedback and guidance (e.g. external examiners, employers, guidance counsellors, alumni, peer-evaluation by external disciplinary experts, professional bodies, QQI)
  - xiv. All learners, prospective and enrolled, are fully and transparently informed about programmes of study at ICD, the NFQ level, the learner workload expectations and associated ECTS credit weighting(s), the learning outcomes, the teaching, learning, and assessment strategy and environment
  - xv. All quality assurance procedures and policies are implemented thoroughly and effectively across programmes (e.g. internal verification of assessment instruments and assessment grades)
  - xvi. All QQI programme revalidation processes, every five years, are effectively and efficiently coordinated and managed in conjunction with internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, and the validating body
  - xvii. Continuous enhancement of learner supports to ensure optimum learner experience and success
  - xviii. Ongoing analysis of learner workloads and workload management procedures and practices to ensure sufficient, but not excessive, learner workload, in keeping with the NFQ level and ECTS credit rating of the programme and the module, and to ensure assessment sequencing is being practiced effectively by programme boards

2. **Programme Development Subcommittee:**

Programmatic review (of existing programmes) at ICD is a function of the Programme Development Subcommittee, which has delegated authority from Academic Council to:

- i. Consider proposals for major modifications to the college's undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes through rigorous evidence based analysis with the outcome recommendation to be reported to Academic

Council, who hold responsibility for ratification of all decisions made by the Programme Development Subcommittee, pending final approval by Governing Body in cases where resource allocation will be altered

- ii. Carry out an annual, rigorously evidence-based review of each, and every, programme delivered by ICD, to make recommendations to Academic Council for enhancement of programme design and delivery
- iii. Review implementation of all quality assurance procedures and policies to ensure all policies are implemented thoroughly and effectively across programmes

**3. Governing Body (including Learner Voice & External Governing Body Members):**

Governing Body ensures:

- i. All recommendations or requests made by Academic Council regarding programmes that require alterations to resource allocations are considered for approval or rejection following a rigorous evaluation of the business case and pedagogical case for same
- ii. Academic Council is fulfilling its functions to ensure annual programme review effectively
- iii. All programmes continue to be viable through analysis of enrolment statistics, programme resourcing, expenditure, and income, and consistency of a programme with the college mission, strategic plan, and objectives, with recommendations for adjustment made as required
- iv. Arrangements for the protection of learners are in place should the programme cease
- v. All potential risks to programme resourcing, sustainability, or delivery are considered thoroughly and mitigation plans are implemented
- vi. Continuous enhancement of learner supports to ensure optimum learner experience and success

**4. Programme Boards (including Learner Representation):**

The Programme Board, under the leadership of its Programme Director ensures:

- i. Programmes and constituent modules are delivered according to their programme and module descriptors/designs, as approved/validated
- ii. Programme and module delivery maintain consistency with the programme teaching, learning, and assessment strategy
- iii. Programme and module delivery implement any and all changes made to programmes by Academic Council
- iv. Programme and module delivery, including teaching, learning, and assessment strategies, and their implementation, are continuously monitored with areas for improvement reported to Academic Council via the respective Programme Director
- v. Delivery of the programme and modules within each semester and academic year are effectively planned and coordinated at the programme level under the supervision of the Programme Director
- vi. Teaching, learning, and assessment strategies are effectively and efficiently coordinated and managed by the Programme Director to ensure learner workload is sufficient, not excessive, and is appropriately and effectively sequenced, or spread, across the semester to provide learners with optimum opportunity to achieve learning outcomes effectively
- vii. Programme delivery and design incorporate learner viewpoints through inclusion of learner representation at programme board meetings
- viii. Programme teams meet at least once per semester to ensure efficient and effective programme, and module, delivery planning and coordination at the programme level
- ix. Module and programme learner workloads are planned and managed in accordance with the ECTS credit weighting of the programme, stage, and module(s)
- x. Programme and module content, including reading lists, lecture notes, and use of the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment, are consistent with the programme teaching, learning, and assessment strategy, and effectively support learners in achievement of, and demonstration of, module and programme learning outcomes
- xi. Programmes and modules ensure adequate learner supports and reasonable accommodations are effectively provided to all learners consistently

- xii. All assessment elements are consistent with the programme and module descriptor assessment strategy and specification
- xiii. All assessment elements are efficiently and effectively internally verified
- xiv. A sample of graded material from all assessment elements on all modules on all programmes is effectively internally verified (second marked) and externally reviewed by the External Examiner
- xv. All examinations are reviewed by the External Examiner and enhanced in line with External Examiner feedback
- xvi. All quality assurance procedures and policies are implemented thoroughly and effectively during programme planning, coordination, monitoring, and delivery

**5. Management Team:**

The Management Team ensures that:

- i. All programme resourcing (human, physical, financial, technological) is continuously reviewed to ensure continuous enhancement of programme resource allocation
- ii. Business case analysis is carried out annually on all programmes to ensure sustainable delivery of each programme and to mitigate any potential risks
- iii. Learner recruitment initiatives are effective to ensure continued viability of programmes both pedagogically and financially
- iv. Arrangements for the protection of learners are in place should the programme cease

**Principles for reviewing existing programmes:**

**1. Continuous improvement of programme design and delivery:**

- I. Annual review of programmes is carried out with the objective to identify areas for change to ensure incremental enhancement of the programme

- II. Programme and module descriptors must be annually reviewed, including course materials, reading lists, assessment strategies, and intended learning outcomes, to ensure continuous enhancement of the programme
- III. Programme and module delivery must be annually reviewed, using evidence and feedback from internal and external stakeholders, to ensure programme delivery is continuously enhanced
- IV. Programme and module descriptors must be annually reviewed to ensure they evolve in line with the institution's teaching, learning, and assessment strategy
- V. Programme and module delivery must be annually reviewed, using evidence and feedback from internal and external stakeholders, to ensure programme teaching, learning, and assessment practices are continuously enhanced
- VI. Programme and module descriptors must be annually reviewed through benchmarking against comparable programmes at other providers to ensure continuous enhancement in line with best practice
- VII. Programme and module descriptors must be annually reviewed and enhanced through comparison with evolving regulatory guidelines to ensure compliance

**2. Inclusive and evidence based**

- I. Internal and external stakeholder feedback must be procured, analysed, and evaluated to ensure evidence based continuous enhancement of programmes and modules, both in their design and delivery
- II. Learner feedback surveys must be carried out on every module, every delivery, every semester and this evidence must be reviewed by the module lecturer, Programme Director, Registrar, and Programme Development subcommittee, with findings reported to Academic Council to ensure programme reviewing and enhancement places learners at the centre of considerations
- III. Lecturer feedback surveys (see Appendix 4.1.1) must be carried out on every module, every delivery, every semester (the Programme Director or Head of Academic Development send the survey to each individual lecturer) and this evidence must be reviewed by the Programme Director and Programme Development Subcommittee, with findings reported to, and acted upon by, Academic Council, to ensure continuous enhancement of programmes takes account of faculty experiences and viewpoints



**3. Enhancement consistent with sectoral best-practice (benchmarking):**

- I. Any consideration for module/programme amendment or enhancement must include comparison of ICD's offering with the offerings of other providers
- II. Ongoing sustainability of programmes must be considered from the perspective of enrolment rates internally and externally (benchmarking)
- III. Teaching, learning, and assessment strategies must be improved in line with ongoing evolution of same across the higher educational sector
- IV. Innovations in teaching, learning, and assessment approaches across the higher educational sector must be adopted where beneficial to ensure continuous enhancement of ICD's educational offering
- V. Use of technology to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment must be continuously enhanced in-line with ongoing evolution of same across the higher educational sector
- VI. Quality assurance policies, procedures, and how they are practiced in delivering and monitoring programmes, must be continuously enhanced to ensure consistency with best practice across the higher educational sector
- VII. Pedagogical best practice across the higher educational sector continuously evolves, is not static, and this must be continuously reflected on and learned from in continuously enhancing teaching, learning and assessment policies and practices at ICD

**Information Sources for Programmatic Review:**

1. **Module/Programme Amendment Form:** Any member of ICD staff can bring a proposal to amend a programme or a module to the Academic Council via the Module/Programme amendment form (see section 3.8.5 of the ICD QA policy), to be submitted to the Academic Council Chair or Secretary
2. **Learner Feedback Surveys:** During every module, during every delivery, learners are invited to complete a module survey, which is analysed by the module lecturer, Programme Director, and Programme Development Committee, with findings sent to the Academic Council for consideration

3. **Lecturer Feedback Surveys:** At the end of every module delivery, each module lecturer is invited to provide feedback on the module and how it may be improved in its design, resourcing, or delivery. These surveys are analysed by the Programme Director and the Programme Development Committee with findings sent to the Academic Council for consideration
4. **Student Representative Committee (SRC):** Every year, the SRC provides feedback on how all programmes may be improved in their design and/or delivery. SRC members sit on Programme Boards, at every meeting, to ensure they actively participate in planning and reviewing programme delivery and programme design enhancements
5. **External Examiner Report:** The External Examiner(s) on each programme provide an annual report on how any aspect of teaching, learning, or assessment on a programme may be enhanced. These reports are collected by the Registrar who reports findings to the Academic Council.
6. **Registrar's Report:** Annually, the Registrar compiles a report of learner statistics (enrolment, progression, and completion rates) across all programmes and programme stages, which is presented to Academic Council for consideration in programme reviewing. The Registrar also reports to Academic Council any findings relating to ongoing monitoring of access, transfer, and progression policies, student use of, and feedback on, student support infrastructure, student appeals/complaints or disciplinary hearings
7. **Annual Programme Review Report (incorporating evidence from internal and external stakeholders):** The Programme Development Subcommittee uses evidence gathered from learner feedback surveys, SRC reports, Programme Director reports, Registrar's Report, lecturer feedback surveys, External Examiner Reports, Module/Programme Amendment Forms, and evidence gathered from external stakeholders (e.g. ACCA, employers, alumni, QQI, professional bodies, peer higher education experts, ICOS) to make recommendations to Academic Council regarding how programmes and modules may be enhanced in their description/design and/or delivery
8. **Marketing and student recruitment information** is provided by the Management Team to the Academic Council (and Governing Body) to be considered when assessing the viability of all programmes and to ensure programmes are enhanced based on prospective learner feedback, trends, and engagement
9. **Annual Reports of Academic Council and Governing Body:** which are used as guidelines documents to inform all programmatic review

**Outcomes of Annual Programmatic Review:**

- **Enhancement of quality assurance policy, procedures, infrastructure, and their implementation in programme reviewing and delivery:** Continuous internal monitoring and reviewing of existing programmes should give rise to beneficial, evidence-based, enhancement of quality assurance policy, recognising the goal of continuously enhancing quality assurance policy, and enhancement of policy implementation/practices, where policy is not being implemented effectively
- **Improving/changing programme and module design/descriptors**
- **Improving day-to-day operations/delivery of programmes** as deemed necessary by Academic Council, to be directed and coordinated by the Programme Director and delivered by the relevant Programme Board
- **Improving access, transfer, and progression policies and practices**, as deemed necessary by Academic Council
- **Improving the teaching, learning, and assessment strategy (and its implementation) at the programme and/or module level**
- **Improving the teaching, learning, and assessment strategy at the institution level (and its implementation)**
- **Changes to programme/module resourcing** to enhance programme/module delivery
- **Enhancement of student support infrastructure** under the oversight of Academic Council and Governing Body. This entails ongoing improvement of learner supports, resourcing, and facilities
- **Improving programme resourcing** under the oversight of Academic Council and Governing Body. This entails ongoing improvement of programme resourcing (human, physical, financial and technological), and the overall learning environment strategy and implementation
- **Improving student recruitment initiatives** to ensure continuous enhancement of the sustainability of programmes both financially and pedagogically, and to ensure transparent information about programmes is provided to enrolled and prospective learners: This is primarily the responsibility of the Management Team (under direction of the Governing Body) who engage in marketing and prospective student recruitment in conjunction with the Admissions Office and Registrar, which requires both building awareness of programme(s) and also, importantly, informing prospective students of programme learning outcomes, learner

workload type and level expectations, awards, access requirements, and progression possibilities

- **Discontinuing programmes** where they no longer serve learner (or external) educational/graduate needs

#### **4.1.2 Policy for the Development of New Programmes**

This policy defines the principles, processes, and criteria for designing and developing new programmes at ICD. This policy applies to all staff who are involved in designing new programmes where the programme is intended to lead to:

1. An award by QQI or other validating body
2. An award/exemption by a professional body

#### **The purpose of this policy is to ensure:**

- i. There is a clearly defined and standardised approach to developing new programmes
- ii. New programme development follows internal and external best practice
- iii. All new programmes meet the expected standards of quality
- iv. Minimisation of the possibility for new programmes to be submitted for validation externally and receive a rejection/refusal
- v. All new programmes are rigorously and intensively reviewed and evaluated by internal and external stakeholders before being submitted for validation/exemptions by any external body
- vi. All new programmes are developed based on a strong evidence-based rationale that is clearly and comprehensively articulated within all programme documentation
- vii. Institutional resourcing and capacity are clearly considered and analysed in all new programme development processes

#### **Principles of New Programme Development:**

- 1. Alignment with the ICD Strategic Plan**
- 2. Alignment with the ICD Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategy**
- 3. Consistency with regulatory requirements**
- 4. Learning Outcomes Focused**
- 5. Evidence-Based Development**
- 6. Benchmarking with other HEIs**
- 7. Alignment with NFQ & QQI standards**
- 8. Rigorous Internal & External Reviewing**
- 9. Developing Clear Access, Transfer, & Progression Guidelines**

10. **Programmes must be well managed**
11. **Business case (including cost/benefit) analysis for developing and delivering new programmes must be rigorously evidence-based**
12. **Emphasis on accreditation and exemption from professional bodies**
13. **Learner supports focused**

**New Programme Development Process (NPDP) Stages:**

All stages of new programme development at ICD should follow the principles of new programme development.

**NPDP Stage 1: Idea Generation**

Responsibility for screening all new programme ideas rests with Academic Council. Ideas for new programmes may originate from a number of **key sources of information**:

- i. **Any member of staff** who may:
  - a. Inform their respective Programme Board (who via the Programme Director reports to Academic Council)
  - b. Inform their respective Programme Director (who reports directly to Academic Council)
  - c. Inform the Head of Academic Development (who reports directly to Academic Council)
  - d. Submit a Module/Programme Amendment Form (see section 3.8.5 of the ICD QA policy) to the Academic Council Chair or Secretary
  - e. Inform the Programme Development Subcommittee at a meeting (which reports directly to Academic Council)
  - f. Submit their idea as part of their lecturer feedback survey (which are assessed by the Programme Development Committee with findings reported to Academic Council)
- ii. **Any student** who may:
  - a. Inform a Student Representative Committee member (who can report the idea to the Programme Board via the SRC member of a Programme Board, which reports to Academic Council via the Programme Director)
  - b. Inform a lecturer (who can report the idea to Academic Council via a Module/Programme Amendment Form)
  - c. Inform the Programme Director (who reports directly to Academic Council)

- d. Include their idea in a Learner Feedback Survey response (which are reviewed by the Programme Development Committee with findings reported to the Academic Council)
- iii. **The Student Representative Committee** who may
  - a. Inform a Programme Director (who reports directly to Academic Council)
  - b. Inform a Programme Board via their learner representative member of that Programme Board (which reports to Academic Council via its Programme Director)
- iv. **Programme Boards** who may inform Academic Council via their Programme Director
- v. **The Programme Development Committee** who report regularly to Academic Council on findings of its ongoing programme reviewing work, which may discover new programme development opportunities
- vi. **External consultations** are carried out annually (e.g. with employers, alumni, career guidance counsellors, professional bodies), principally by the Programme Development Committee, and these may lead to ideas for new programme development which are reported to Academic Council
- vii. **The Management Team** (e.g. as a result of market analysis and student recruitment feedback) who can submit a Module/Programme Amendment Form to Academic Council
- viii. **Governing Body** who can request that Academic Council consider a new programme idea
- ix. **Any member of the Academic Council** who can request that Academic Council members consider a new programme idea, which, if approved for further consideration, will be delegated to the Programme Development Committee
- x. **Alumni** feedback, which is gathered by the Programme Development Committee, and can be included in any reports made to the Academic Council for consideration

### **NPDP Stage 2: New Programme Proposal**

A request to develop a new programme must be formally submitted to Academic Council via the official **Module/Programme Amendment Form**: Any member of ICD staff can bring a proposal to develop a programme using this form (see section 3.8.5 of the ICD QA policy), to be submitted to the Academic Council Chair or Secretary. When requesting that Academic Council consider a request to develop a new programme, the proposal form submission must include:

- a. A clear rationale for the proposed programme (educational case or business case): this must incorporate evidence of need for the programme
- b. Specific NFQ level for the proposed programme
- c. Specific ECTS credit weighting for the programme

- d. General overview of its thematic content
- e. Broadly defined structure for the proposed programme
- f. General overview of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy and if, or how, it differs from the ICD Teaching, Learning, & Assessment Strategy, and if so why
- g. Outline module list for the programme
- h. Programme duration (e.g. number of years)
- i. Mode of delivery (full-time or part-time)
- j. General indication on whether staffing requirements to deliver the programme are within existing resources or whether additional resources are required

### **NPDP Stage 3: Initial Screening by Academic Council**

At an Academic Council meeting, all proposals to develop new programmes are considered according to the following criteria:

- a. Is there a clear rationale for the proposed programme?
- b. Is the specified NFQ level for the proposed programme appropriate?
- c. Is the specified ECTS credit weighting for the programme appropriate?
- d. Does the thematic content of the programme, as outlined, fit with the programme rationale?
- e. Is the broadly defined structure for the proposed programme appropriate and logical?
- f. Is the teaching, learning, and assessment strategy for the proposed programme appropriate and effective?
- g. Is the outline module list for the programme consistent with the programme rationale?
- h. Is the proposed programme duration appropriate?
- i. Is the mode of delivery (full-time or part-time) appropriate?
- j. Are the proposed resource requirements available, and if not, are the proposed additional resources feasible? [Academic Council will likely consult with the Management Team to answer this question]
- k. Is the proposed programme consistent with the college's strategic plan? [Academic Council may consult with the Management Team to answer this question]

If the outcome decision of initial screening by Academic Council is that the proposed programme is not satisfactory, the individual who submitted the proposal for the new programme will receive a



letter/email from Academic Council specifying why the proposal was not successful. They may alter their proposal and resubmit.

If the outcome of initial screening by Academic Council is satisfactory, the proposal will be further developed by the Programme Development Subcommittee, by delegation from Academic Council.

#### **NPDP Stage 4: Basic Programme Outline Development**

The Programme Development Subcommittee will be assigned the task of developing a 'Basic Programme Outline' as a result of all Academic Council initial screening approvals. This will require the Programme Development Committee to use the initial programme proposal (approved by Academic Council) as the foundation to develop a more comprehensive document that will provide:

- a. A clear rationale for the proposed programme and comprehensive evidence of need (educational case **and** business case). The initial proposal rationale must be rigorously analysed and built upon with strong evidence of need for the new programme. Outline costing analysis and an indicative programme fee learners would pay, along with target enrolment numbers, must be provided. The Management Team will likely be consulted by the Programme Development Committee to ensure business case analysis is accurate. Financial, physical, human, and technological requirements of the proposed programme must be comprehensively specified.
- b. Specific NFQ level for the proposed programme and comprehensive rationale for same
- c. Specific ECTS credit weighting for the programme and comprehensive rationale (and breakdown across stages and modules) for same
- d. Clear and detailed overview of its thematic content
- e. A clearly defined and logical structure for the proposed programme
- f. A clear teaching, learning, and assessment strategy for the programme
- g. Detailed list of modules for the programme and associated ECTS credit weightings and NFQ levels
- h. Clear rationale for the programme duration
- i. Clear rationale for and justification of mode of delivery (full-time or part-time)

- j. Clear and comprehensive comparison between the resource requirements of the programme and the resources already available at the college (including physical, technological, financial, and human resources)
- k. Detailed analysis between the proposed programme and the strategic plan of the college
- l. Specific learner profile
- m. Specific programme objectives

The outcome of this process, the Basic Programme Outline, is submitted to the Academic Council.

### **NPDP Stage 5: Approval or Refusal to Begin New Programme Development**

At the end of stage 4, the Programme Development Subcommittee submits a Basic Programme Outline document to Academic Council for consideration as to whether to begin developing the programme fully.

The Basic Programme Outline document is first assessed by Academic Council. If Academic Council approve, they will forward the document to the Governing Body for final approval to begin developing the programme fully.

Responsibility for approval of new programme development initiatives/proposals is held by Academic Council (academic decisions) and Governing Body (corporate decisions, including academic decision approval):

1. **Academic Decisions - Academic Council:** Before any new programme development work can be carried out at ICD, officially, the Academic Council must provide approval. Criteria to be used by Academic Council when assessing a Basic Programme Outline:
  - i. Is there a clear and evidence-based rationale for the proposed programme and comprehensive evidence of need (educational case **and** business case [demand compared with resource requirements])? The Management Team will likely be consulted by the Academic Council to answer this question.
  - ii. Is there a clear rationale for the specific NFQ level for the proposed programme?
  - iii. Is there a clear rationale for the specific ECTS credit weighting for the programme and comprehensive rationale for the ECTS credits breakdown across stages and modules?

- iv. Is the thematic content of the programme worthy of development into a full programme of learning?
- v. Is there a clearly defined and logical structure for the proposed programme?
- vi. Is there a clear teaching, learning, and assessment strategy for the programme and is it consistent with the ICD Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy?
- vii. Is the list of modules for the programme and associated ECTS credit weightings and NFQ levels logical and worthy of development into a full programme of learning?
- viii. Is there a clear rationale for the programme duration?
- ix. Is there a clear rationale for and justification of mode of delivery (full-time or part-time)?
- x. Is there a clear and comprehensive comparison between the resource requirements of the programme and the resources already available at the college, and is it feasible to both develop and deliver this programme?
- xi. Is the proposed programme consistent with the strategic plan of the college?
- xii. Is the specific learner profile comprehensive and does it present a realistic level of demand for the programme?
- xiii. Are the specific programme objectives consistent with the NFQ level of the programme and consistent with learner/employer needs?

If Academic Council approves the Basic Programme Outline (using the above criteria), it will be sent for review by Governing Body.

- 2. **Corporate Decisions - Governing Body** will, in conjunction with the Management Team, assess:
  - i. The provisional business case for any new programme ideas
  - ii. The fit between the proposed new programme and the strategic plan of the college
  - iii. The resource requirements of the programme and the feasibility of investing said resources to both develop the new programme and deliver it

The outcomes of this process are:

- a. Rejection by Academic Council, who may recommend that:
  - i. The development of this programme should be abandoned
  - ii. The development of this programme should be continued by the Programme Development Subcommittee, with an improved Basic Programme Outline to be resubmitted to the Academic Council for analysis
- b. Approval by Academic Council but rejection by Governing Body who may recommend that:
  - i. The development of this programme should be abandoned
  - ii. The development of this programme should be continued by the Programme Development Subcommittee, with an improved Basic Programme Outline to be resubmitted to Academic Council and Governing Body for analysis
- c. Approval by Academic Council and Governing Body. If the Basic Programme Outline is approved, then the Academic Council will delegate responsibility to the Programme Development Subcommittee to undertake Full New Programme Development

### **NPDP Stage 6: Full New Programme Development**

By delegated authority from the Academic Council, the Programme Development Subcommittee shall, at NPDP Stage 6, continue the development of a new programme from the Basic Programme Outline (which will have been approved by Academic Council and Governing Body at NPDP Stage 5) to a Full New Programme Manual, with the objective of submitting the programme for validation (e.g. by QQI) *only* when the programme has been fully, rigorously, and satisfactorily reviewed internally and externally. Full New Programme Development will require application of the Principles of New Programme Development:

- 1. Alignment with the ICD Strategic Plan:** the full programme manual will clearly and comprehensively specify how the programme is consistent with the ICD Strategic Plan, including the ICD Mission, Vision, Values, and Objectives
- 2. Alignment with the ICD Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategy:** the full programme manual will comprehensively detail the teaching, learning, and assessment strategy at the programme level and for all component modules on the

programme, with specific reference to the ICD Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategy. The programme teaching, learning, and assessment strategy must be clearly articulated and directly supporting a “written curriculum [that] is well structured and fit-for-purpose” (QQI 2017a section 17.5). This requires that:

- i.** “The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) [must be] integrated in all its dimensions” (ibid)
- ii.** “The programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs” (ibid)
- iii.** “The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented” (ibid)
- iv.** Any programme containing practice placement or work-based learning must be “provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements” (ibid)
- v.** Detailed specification of the learning environment of the programme which must be clearly consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners (physical, social, cultural, and intellectual environment), including the virtual and physical learning environment. This include resources and support systems that are consistent with the needs of the learners and the intended programme learning outcomes. This must include specification of how “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” (QQI 2017a section 17.8)
- vi.** “The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes” (QQI 2017a section 17.9)
- vii.** “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)” (ibid)

- viii. “Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme” (ibid)
  - ix. The programme documentation clearly and comprehensively articulates how programme delivery will ensure all assessment is undertaken consistently with QQI assessment guidelines (e.g. QQI 2013b) and with ICD QA policy on assessment (including internal verification of assessment instruments and second marking procedures [including external moderation of assessment results]), as approved by QQI
  - x. The programme documentation clearly and comprehensively specifies the programme assessment strategy and module assessment strategies for constituent modules (QQI 2017a section 17.10). This must include sample assessment instruments and marking schemes/rubrics for each award stage to provide evidence for review by external stakeholders (e.g. QQI validation panel) and to provide specific guidelines for programme staff if/when the programme is delivered
- 3. Consistency with regulatory requirements:** the full programme manual will comprehensively detail and demonstrate that the new programme complies with all regulatory requirements including, but not limited to:
- i. QQI (2017a) Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes
  - ii. Given the diversity of the ICD student population, all new programmes will clearly specify initiatives to enhance new learner (first year) experiences and educational opportunities aimed towards optimising progression rates (QQI 2017b: Quality within Higher Education 2017: A Summary Report)
  - iii. The award title chosen will be clearly and comprehensively demonstrated and rationalised to be consistent with the guidelines for same from QQI (2017c unit 3.1) Policy and Criteria for Making Awards and QQI (2017a) Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes

- iv. The programme title will accurately and clearly inform prospective learners and other stakeholders of the content of the programme and will be consistent with the title of the QQI award sought (QQI 2017a).  
The programme title must:
  - a) Reflect the core intended programme learning outcomes and ensure consistency “with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es)” (QQI 2017a section 17.4)
  - b) Be “learner focused and meaningful to the learners” (ibid)
  - c) Have “long-lasting significance” (ibid)
- v. All quality assurance procedures comply with ICD QA Policy and the evolving policies on quality assurance in higher education as specified by QQI

**4. Learning Outcomes Focused:** Ensuring that all programmes are written using minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) and minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) and that these outcomes (knowledge, skills and competencies) are expressed clearly within the programme documentation and that these learning outcomes/expectations are clearly articulated to learners before enrolling on the programme (QQI 2017a). Learning outcomes must be consistent with the relevant QQI award sought

**5. Evidence-Based Development:** Following QQI (2017a section 17.3), “the programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards [must be] well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional, and employment objectives).” This requires ensuring that all programmes are developed based on strong and clear evidence of need, which is gathered through ongoing research on education and skills needs, consultations and feedback from “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” (ibid). The

interpretation of the awards standards for the programme must be comprehensively informed and researched including the programme and module learning outcomes to ensure compliance with QQI (2017a section 17.3) criteria that:

- i. There is a satisfactory, evidence based, and comprehensively articulated rationale for providing the programme
  - ii. There is satisfactory, evidence based, and comprehensively articulated support for the introduction of the programme from external stakeholders
  - iii. There is satisfactory and comprehensively articulated evidence of learner demand for the programme
  - iv. There is satisfactory and comprehensively articulated evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant
  - v. There is satisfactory and comprehensively articulated evidence that the programme meets genuine education and training needs
  
6. **Benchmarking with other HEIs:** All new programme development must carry out rigorous analysis of existing programmes at other HEIs and detailed comparison against the proposed programme to ensure there is clear evidence of need for the programme and also to identify and craft uniqueness in the proposed new programme. This is to ensure compliance with the QQI (2017a section 17.3) criterion that the comparison between the proposed programme and comparable programmes (in Ireland and beyond) must be comprehensively articulated.
  
7. **Alignment with NFQ & QQI standards:** Ensuring all programmes align with the relevant QQI awards standards and intended level of the NFQ. This requires that:
  - i. The level of effort required to achieve the programme learning outcomes is expressed in terms of ECTS Credits with clearly articulated learner effort defined in terms of hours. The credit allocated “to the programme [must be] consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes” (QQI 2017a section 17.5)
  - ii. The level of effort required to achieve the module learning outcomes is expressed in terms of ECTS Credits with clearly articulated learner effort defined in terms of hours. The credit “allocated to each module



[must be] consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes” (ibid).

- iii. “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 standards and with the [ECTS] credit allocation” (ibid).

**8. Rigorous Internal & External Reviewing:** Ensuring all proposed programmes are reviewed internally (by the Academic Council and Governing Body) and externally through independent external panels before being submitted for official external validation/approval (e.g. QQI), provided the evidence supports validation application

**9. Developing Clear Access, Transfer, & Progression Guidelines:** Ensuring all proposed programmes comply with QQI’s (2015b) *Policy Restatement: Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training*. The programme documentation must specify:

- i. Guidelines and systems to ensure “programme information for learners is provided in plain language...[specifying] 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” (QQI 2017b section 17.4).
- ii. Where programmes are designed for native English speakers, the level of English proficiency required to enter the programme must be clearly articulated and “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” (QQI 2017a section 17.4).
- iii. “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 (QQI 2017a section 17.4).
- iv. Comprehensive and “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” (QQI 2017a section 17.4).

**10. Programmes must be well managed:** Programme development and programme delivery must be well managed. This requires continuous internal monitoring of new programmes in development and new programme development infrastructure through the usage of internally gathered evidence and also externally procured guidance and feedback on educational/graduate needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (e.g. through interfacing with external stakeholders such as the business community, and bodies such as QQI and ACCA). The programme documentation must comprehensively and clearly articulate:

- i. The mechanisms that will be used to “keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders” (QQI 2017a section 17.3) using programme reviewing and quality assurance and enhancement policies, procedures, and infrastructure at ICD.
- ii. The programmes specific “governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with” ICD’s institutional QA policy (as approved by QQI) and procedures (QQI 2017a section 17.12)
- iii. “Any proposed incremental changes to [ICD’s] QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures” (ibid) as a result of this new programme
- iv. Explicit and programme-specific staff requirements and any changes to existing available staffing resources required by the programme
- v. Programme-specific criteria for selecting suitable physical or technological resources and detailing of same
- vi. Arrangements for continually monitoring enrolment, progression, and completion rates and any other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved in programme design and delivery and opportunities for quality enhancement
- vii. Clear and comprehensive documentation for how the programme will be operated and managed
- viii. Procedures for interfacing with QQI certification

- ix. Any potential risks presented by the programme, its development, or delivery, including plans to manage, monitor, and mitigate risk(s)

**11. Business case (including cost/benefit) analysis for developing and delivering new programmes must be rigorously evidence based** (including clear definition of resource [physical, financial, human, technological] requirements of programmes and clear evidence of need) to ensure feasibility of new programmes before submitting programmes to a validating body (e.g. QQI). All new programme development processes must ensure “there are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available” (QQI 2017a section 17.6) and “sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned” (QQI 2017a section 17.7). Programme documentation must clearly and comprehensively articulate:

- i. The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements including a rigorous comparison between staffing requirements to deliver the programme successfully (e.g. professional and educational qualifications and experience) and staff already in place. Where staff are not already in post, specific plans to rectify this gap must be comprehensively articulated (ibid)
- ii. Staff/learner ratio requirements
- iii. “Arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles...[including] staff development opportunities...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” (ibid). Programme documentation must clearly articulate that “there are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance” (ibid).
- iv. “The specification of the programme’s physical resources requirements...[including] suitable premises and accommodation...[and] information technology and resources

(including educational technology and any virtual learning environments...)...technical support...administrative support” which are already in place, and any physical or technological resources, which will need to be procured/improved to deliver a programme successfully (ibid).

- v. A five year plan for the programme which addresses the planned intake for the first five years and the total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake (ibid).

**12. Emphasis on accreditation and exemption from professional bodies:** during the earliest stages of new programme development, professional body accreditation/exemptions must be sought, given the value these provide to graduates. To comply with QQI (2017a section 17.3) all new programmes that will be professionally or vocationally oriented, or that are intended to lead to professional body accreditation or exemption(s), will provide clearly articulated documentation and systematic procedures to ensure employers, practitioners, and professional bodies (e.g. ACCA) are consulted during the development of new programmes and the ongoing reviewing of already validated programmes.

**13. Learner supports focused:** The programme documentation must clearly and comprehensively articulate policy, procedures, and infrastructure that are required to ensure “learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for” (QQI 2017a section 17.11). This requires that programme documentation clearly and comprehensively specifies:

- i. Policies and procedures that are in place “to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments” (ibid)
- ii. All available learner supports and how learners will be informed about these supports
- iii. Complaints and appeals procedures
- iv. Learning pathways within the programme (e.g. elective modules)

- v. Progression routes (career and academic) available upon completion of the programme
- vi. Reasonable accommodations and related policies and procedures that are available to accommodate learners with differing learning needs, disabilities, or extenuating circumstances
- vii. How the programme complies with the QQI's (2015a) *Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners*, including specific induction arrangements, learning skills training, information technology skills training, English language training and supports
- viii. Policies, procedures, and systems in place to ensure learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme (including any work-based learning policies and supports)

#### **NPDP Stage 7: Review of Full Programme Documentation Internally**

Academic Council will review the programme documentation in its entirety, using the ICD Principles of New Programme Development (as specified at NPDP Stage 6) as the criteria for assessment. If Academic Council rejects the programme documentation, it may:

1. Recommend that further development of the programme is abandoned
2. Recommend that the Programme Development Subcommittee change the programme and its documentation, pending a further application to Academic Council for review at a later date

If Academic Council approves the programme documentation, it will recommend that it is reviewed by Governing Body. Governing Body will review the programme documentation using the ICD Principles of New Programme Development (detailed at NPDP Stage 6) as criteria for assessment. Governing Body may:

1. Reject the programme and recommend that its development is abandoned
2. Reject the programme and recommend that Academic Council direct the Programme Development Subcommittee to make specific changes to enhance the programme and its documentation (a repeat of NPDP Stage 6)

for a further application to Academic Council (a repeat of NPDP Stage 7). If Academic Council approved the improved programme, it must, again, be reviewed by Governing Body

3. Approve the programme

If Academic Council and Governing Body approve the full programme documentation, the programme enters NPDP Stage 8.

### **NPDP Stage 8: External Review of the Programme by a Mock Panel**

Academic Council will direct the Programme Development Subcommittee to recruit a suitably qualified team to carry out a 'mock' review of the programme, following QQI procedures for programme validation. Selected members of the mock programme validation review panel must satisfy the following criteria:

1. A mock panel will consist of no less than three external members and cannot contain any internal ICD staff
2. At least one member of the mock panel must be experienced in the area of quality assurance
3. At least one member of the mock panel must be an experienced academic in the same field or discipline (e.g. accounting, business, marketing) as the proposed programme
4. At least one member of the mock panel must be a practitioner in the same field or discipline as the proposed programme
5. At least one member of the mock panel must have experience as a member of QQI external validation panels

The mock panel will be advised to follow QQI guidelines for the validation of new programmes.

The mock panel will visit ICD and the panel visit will be approached in the same manner as an official QQI validation panel site visit.

The outcome of the panel will be reported to ICD and will contain requirements/recommendations as to how the programme can be improved. This report will be forwarded to Academic Council who will decide whether the programme should be either:

1. Abandoned
2. Improved in line with recommendations of the mock external panel (NPDP Stage 9). If this is deemed, by Academic Council, to require substantial resources, it will require approval from Governing Body

### **NPDP Stage 9: Enhancing Programme and Programme Documentation as Recommended by Mock Panel**

This stage is a repeat of NPDP Stage 6 but takes specific direction from the findings/recommendations of the mock panel.

The outcome of this stage will be an enhanced programme and programme documentation, which will be required to be resubmitted to Academic Council and Governing Body for approval, as per NPDP Stage 7. Depending on the level (i.e. amount) of change and the nature of the change to the programme and programme documentation, Academic Council and/or Governing Body may require a repeat (second) mock external panel review of the programme (a repeat of NPDP Stage 8).

Once the programme has been satisfactorily and rigorously internally and externally reviewed, and Academic Council and Governing Body are satisfied that the programme is ready for submission to QQI for validation, the programme enters NPDP Stage 10.

### **NPDP Stage 10: Validation Application**

By delegation from Academic Council, the Programme Development Subcommittee will send the programme proposal/validation application to QQI for validation assessment.

## Appendix 4.1.1 Lecturer Feedback Survey

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Dear Colleague

I would be very grateful if you might take a few minutes to respond to the below questions list (with qualitative answers) for each of the modules you deliver on this programme [INSERT PROGRAMME NAME]

1. Please indicate the name of the module, year/stage, programme name, and semester and year when most recently delivered?
  2. What went particularly well in the module?
  3. How might the module be improved with regard to the following categories:
    - a. Does the module descriptor need to be updated or changed? If so, how?
    - b. Does the module assessment strategy need to be updated or changed? If so, how?
    - c. Does the resourcing of the module need to be changed or improved? If so, how?
  4. How may ICD and/or the Programme Director help you to improve the module or its delivery, if applicable?
  5. Do you have any other feedback regarding the module, the programme, or ICD in general that you wish for the Programme Director to consider?
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