



ICHAS

Section 4 – Policies and Procedures Associated with Programmes of Education & Training

Subject:	Procedure associated with Programme Review and Revalidation		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:		February 2021	
Policy Version	1/2021	Date due for Revision	February 2024
Parent Policy	Policy on Programme Review and Revalidation		

INTRODUCTION

Programme Review is a College led and “provider owned” process, working in conjunction with the requirements of QQI. It is the responsibility of the College to plan, initiate and respond to the programmatic review. The College undertakes Programmatic Review within the context of stated specific objectives, as laid out below:

Programme Review Objectives

The specific objectives for programmatic review include review, evaluation and analysis of:

- The effectiveness and efficiency of each validated programme in delivering minimum intended learning outcomes (MIPLO’s and MIMLO’s) and meeting educational needs of learners with reference to capacity and capabilities to deliver the programme as validated in the context of adherence to educational standards and the range of other organisational commitments. In short it is analysis of “what has been learned about the programme” (QQI 2018) during its lifetime.
- The quantitative data accumulated on the programme including details of student numbers, retention, attrition and success rates
- The feedback mechanisms for students and the processes for acting on this feedback
- The physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme(s)
- The formal links which have been established with industry, business and the wider community in order to maintain the relevance of its programmes
- Research activities in the field of learning under review and their impact on teaching and learning (notwithstanding that the reviews of the research degree programmes may be undertaken separately)
- The development of the programmes in context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, national and international socio-economic & regulatory contexts and the response of the provider/ school/department to market requirements and educational developments

- Stakeholder feedback with reference to the reputation of the programme and College as a provider of the programme
- The continued justification of the programme based on the QQI validated criteria including a justification of any proposed modifications
- The implications of any modifications for any related policies, procedures or criteria including QA implications
- SWOT informed projections for the following five years in the programme(s)/field of learning under review.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/ PERSON	RESPONSIBILITY
Registrar	Agree TOR with QQI. Devise project plan. Compile Self Evaluation Report with the relevant Director of Studies. Act as secretary to the Peer Review Group.
Director of Studies	Compile Self Evaluation Report in cooperation with the Registrar.
Programme Board	Arrange stakeholder feedback and liaise with Registrar to access and analyse feedback
Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Agrees project Plan and membership as well as stakeholder involvement in review processes
Academic Council	Approve Self Evaluation Report; Approve Programme Revalidation Submission to QQI.

PROCEDURES

The programmatic review process is project-managed by the Registrar, in close collaboration with the Vice President (Academic Affairs) and the relevant Programme Board. The review process should be initiated with sufficient time in advance of the proposed starting date of the revised programme to allow for the review procedures to be carried out in a timely manner and in accordance with the QQI guidelines on programme monitoring (2014). The process comprises an internal phase and an external phase as follows:

Internal Phase

Programme Review Initial Planning

When a programme or suite of programmes is due for a five-yearly review, the Registrar agrees the Terms of Reference with QQI. The review may not proceed until such time as QQI formally agrees in writing to the Terms of Reference. A detailed project plan which identifies timelines and responsibilities is completed and circulated to the Vice President (Academic Affairs) and the members of the relevant programme Board and will include:

- Identification of the programme to be reviewed
- A statement of the roles and responsibilities of the review leader and team.

- An overall timetable for the process addressing details of the programme under review and a mile-stoned plan of the review
- Details of the external consultation process.
- Detail the objectives and strategy (including membership) for the generation of the self-evaluation process and the independent review panel.
- An overview of all quantitative and qualitative sources that will inform the review process including all necessary programme documentation.

The Registrar consults with individual members as appropriate to allocated specific tasks and duties to individual programme board members or groups of members, as appropriate.

Programme Review - Advance Planning

Planning includes:

- Identification of the programme to be reviewed
- Establishment of roles and responsibilities of review leader and team
- Construct plan incorporating the following milestones:
 - Agree Terms of Reference with QQI
 - Stakeholder Consultation
 - Provider's Evaluation Report
 - Appointment of Independent Panel
 - Independent Panel Site Visit
 - Independent Programme Review Report
 - Revalidation Application

Stakeholder Consultation

The feedback and opinions of relevant stakeholders are gathered in order to evaluate the success of the programmes and receive suggestions for continuous improvement. The appropriate methodology for consultation is identified by the Registrar, and a wide selection of stakeholders are consulted, including at a minimum:

- Students
- Lecturers and Staff
- Practice Placement Providers
- Communities of practice (including other training and education providers)
- Professional Body Representatives
- Regulatory bodies
- Relevant External Agencies
- Graduates
- Employers
- Funding agencies
- Community Interest Groups

Stakeholder consultations inform a SWOT appraisal of the programme and its continuing viability.

Review of data and development of recommendations

The main source of data for the self-study is derived from:

- consultation with external stakeholders
- annual Programme Quality Reports
- considerations of the relevant programme board over the five-year period.

The data is critically analysed to establish the extent to which the programme continues to meet the core QQI validation criteria, and the ability of the programme to respond to internal and external events that arose in the five-year period. Through internal dialogue and consultation, with recourse to external opinion where necessary, a set of defined recommendations for programme enhancement is developed and is presented to the Programme Board for finalisation.

Production of a Self-Evaluation Report

The Self Evaluation Report is jointly compiled by the relevant Director of Studies and the Registrar. The role and function of each participant is expressed and communicated. It focuses on qualitative analysis, referring to quantitative analysis and statistical evidence to support conclusions reached. It is designed to provide the External Peer Review Group with an overview of developments over the 5-year period under review and to provide all information.

The report includes:

- A clear statement of Terms of Reference, strategies and objectives of the review process
- All baseline quantitative and qualitative on the outgoing programme
- Review of programme management and evolution over the five year cycle
- Current evaluation of the programme incorporating all stakeholder feedback
- Analysis based on review findings
- Modifications and revision of programme incorporating compatibility analysis with existing QA and QQI validation criteria
- A SWOT analysis
- A description of the approach to review
- the findings of the internal self-study and the recommendations being made for programme enhancement.
- Confirmation of the proposed programme schedules, module descriptors, learning outcomes and assessment strategy for the programme for the subsequent five-year period.

The final Self Evaluation Report is presented to Academic Council for endorsement prior to submission to the Peer Review Group.

External Phase

Formation of an External Peer Review Group

The External Peer Review Group is compiled by ICHAS. Its membership includes external peers familiar with current practice and developments in the areas of quality assurance in higher education and the academic programme area. It should include at a minimum:

- a suitably qualified Chairperson,

- a minimum of two academic experts in the field of learning, a student representative and
- a representative of the industry or profession.

Where acceptable to the Chairperson, the Registrar acts as secretary to the Peer Review Group. Where preferred by the Chairperson, he/she appoints a secretary to the Group. The panel is selected on the basis of its composite ability to form a balanced opinion and arrive at a set of relevant recommendations, based on their combined understanding of the programmatic review process, developments in higher education and quality assurance, experience of the industry/professional sector, expertise in relation to teaching and assessment, and national and international trends relevant to the programme.

External Peer Review Group Panel Visit

The External Peer Review Group normally visits the College to review the relevant documentation and meet with College representatives. A detailed agenda for the visit is agreed between the Chairperson and the Registrar in advance, and usually allows for meetings with faculty, support staff, students, graduates and employers.

It also facilitates private discussions of the panel and the review of further documentation and evidence not included in the Self Evaluation Report. The Chairperson of the Group provides verbal feedback to College representatives at the end of the visit, indicating overall conclusions, whether the Group recommends the programme(s) for further validation, and any conditions and recommendations associated with same.

Panel Report

The formal report, referred to as *Independent Programme Review Report of the Peer Review Group*, is compiled by the Chairperson of the Group and is based on their combined review and evaluation of the Self Evaluation Report and the Panel Visit. It will make a recommendation in respect of the continuing validation of the programme, including the duration of the revalidation recommended (not exceeding 5 years).

The report includes proposed programme schedules and any conditions and recommendations associated with the continuing validation of the programme. It provides full details of all panel members with attention to qualifications, experience and any potential conflicts of interest. The Report also includes feedback on:

- Fitness for purpose of the programme
- On the data and evidence provided by the provider on the existing programme
- The Achievement of the existing programme based on stated objectives
- Learner profiling and suitability of the programme to these learners needs
- Learner performance/attainment (grades, attrition, completion, benchmarking)
- Appropriateness and sustainability of modular and programmatic workload
- learner assessment strategy
- QA arrangements for the programme
- Proposed modifications
- Connectivity with QQI validation criteria

The College receives a copy of the Panel Report and can check the factually accuracy of same

before being finalised by the Chairperson.

Provider Response to Panel Report

The Final Report is considered by the College Programme Board and Academic Council. Academic Council decides whether to request re-validation from QQI for the programme. A formal response to the report is then prepared and this must include an implementation plan which addresses the internal findings and the report of the Peer Review Group (including accountabilities and timelines).

Submission to QQI for re-validation

The Report of the Peer Review Group and the Provider Response is submitted to QQI for consideration by the PEAC, accompanied by a formal request for validation or withdrawal of validation.

Decision by QQI's Programme Evaluation Academic Committee

QQI is responsible for informing the College of the decision of the QQI Academic Committee. The reports submitted to QQI are published on the Learning management system following the decision of the Programme Evaluation Academic Committee.

GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION OF PROCEDURE

The following Chart outlines the internal phase of the programme review procedure.

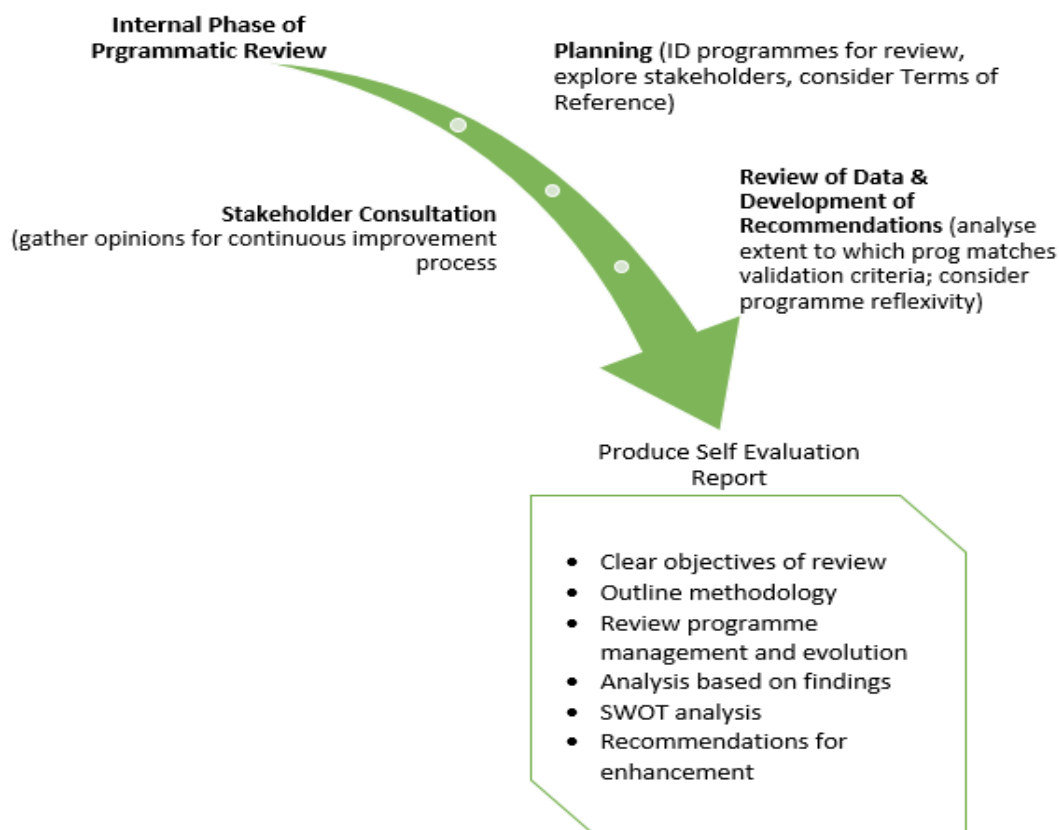


Figure 1 - Internal phase of the programme review procedure

The following Chart outlines the external phase of the programme review procedure.

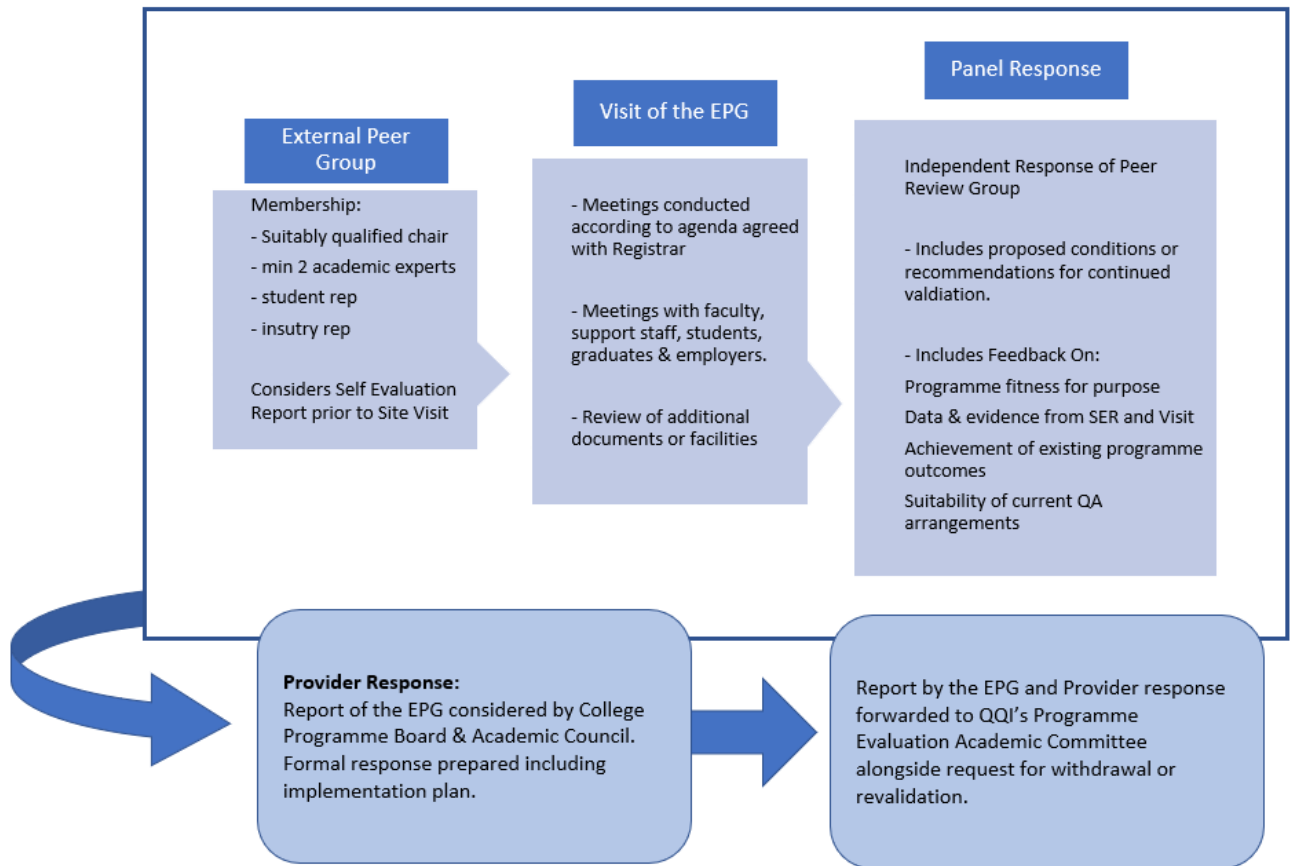


Figure 2 - External phase of the programme review procedure

Linked Policies & Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Validation of New Programmes Policy on Programme Review and Revalidation Policy on Programme Design and Development Policy on Programme Management and Annual Monitoring
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Validation of New Programmes Procedures associated with Programme Design and Development Procedures associated with Programme Management and Annual Monitoring

