



ICHAS

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

Subject:	Procedures associated with Validation of New Programmes		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:		February 2021	
Policy Version	1/2021	Date due for Revision	February 2024
Parent Policy	Policy on Validation of New Programmes		

INTRODUCTION

The procedures set out below apply to all new programme developments at the College and are set out in graphic form and the phases are explained. New programme proposals need to be evidence-based, including evidence of demand and details of similar provision available, including international comparators.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/ PERSON	RESPONSIBILITY
Programme Design Team	Prepare an internal evaluation report against QQI guidelines on validation and revalidation.
Academic Council	Consideration of preliminary proposals; Consideration and approval for submission to QQI of completed proposals for new programmes.
Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Ensure a 5-year plan for the programme is prepared and approved by relevant Programme Board and Academic Council as well as the Board of Management. Appoint Programme Director
Programme Director/ Director of Studies	Lead the Design team and liaise with QQI as delegated by the VP (Academic Affairs) on programme Approval processes.
Board of Management	Support Vice President (Academic Affairs) establish viability and put in place appropriate resources to support programme development and validation and subsequent marketing.

PROCEDURES

There are a range of phases involved in a Validation process. The initial phases of Programme Validation are described in the Policy on Programme Design and Development & procedures associated with Programme Design and Development. The following sections describe the entire phases involved.

Preparatory Procedures

Initiation of the Validation process are described under the Procedures for New Programme Development & Design, but it is appropriate to reinforce the fact that the preparatory phase must address the following:

- The production of an internal evaluation report against QQI approved QA policies and procedures
- The development of 5-year cyclical plan for the programme
- The production of a draft programme document including comprehensive detail on:
 - Managerial, administrative and operational strategies.
 - Teaching and learning strategies.
 - Assessment strategies.
 - Resource requirements and availability (staffing and physical).

Independent External Evaluation

All programmes proposed for validation undergo external independent review. The process:

- Is conducted according to QQI programme evaluation criteria policies and procedures
- Is decided on the validity of any proposed programme will attend to “The Core Validation Criteria” as outlined in unit 17 of Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training” (2016). Copies of same will be furnished to the review panel
- Is undertaken by independent evaluators.
- Involves a site visit.
- Involves interviews with leadership, the programme personnel and other relevant stakeholders including any relevant learners
- Produces an independent evaluation report outlining satisfaction, satisfaction subject to special conditions, non-satisfaction.

Selection Criteria for Evaluators

Whether QQI retains responsibility or the College is provided with devolved responsibility to appoint the independent panel by QQI, evaluators:

- Are entirely independent of ICHAS.
- Are required to state any conflict of interest.
- Are comprised of at least three members.
- Must have sufficient competence to evaluate the programmes as proposed.
- Normally possess special expertise in the programme or aspects of operation of the programme.
- Include a student representative.
- Are sufficiently trained where required.

Conditions of Validation

ICHAS accepts that successful validation is based on the following conditions;

- Statutory prerequisites as appropriate are adhered to.
- Should QQI alter award title, specification or standard that the validated programme depends upon then ICHAS will not enrol any further learners on that programme.
- ICHAS shall not enrol any learners past the agreed enrolment interval (typically five years) unless an extension of the agreed interval has been confirmed.
- The integrity of the validated programme is maintained during delivery and that no significant changes are made without prior approval from QQI.
- That staff and physical resourcing is maintained to the approved standard.
- That enrolment on the programme commences no later than 18 months after Certification of Validation is received.
- That all underpinning QA policies and procedures are monitored and maintained throughout the programmatic cycle.
- Only the validated title of the programme and the appropriate QQI award title(s), type(s) and class(es) is applied and advertised and that all procedures for certification are adhered to.

ICHAS agrees to immediately engage with QQI on any query that might be made regarding a validated programme and undertakes to inform/report to QQI on matters relating to:

- any material changes to the programme;
- any concern relating to the integrity or reputation of the programme or the corresponding QQI awards.
- Any infringement of the stated conditions of validation; or anything that ICHAS believes might require QQI to review validation
- Any plan to amalgamate with another entity

Differential Validation - Changes to a validated programme

As outlined in Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training" (2016) it is anticipated that validated programmes require "enhancements and adaptations" over the five year cycle but that any changes should not be extensive, be subject to internal collaborative expert review and be within the scope of existing QA boundaries. Any change made to core validation criteria, stated learning outcomes or requirements will not be countenanced. Any "significant" changes are subject to Differential Validation. The policy on differential validation is as follows:

- Differential validation is undertaken with comparable rigor to all other forms of validation.
- If the proposed changes are deemed "significant" then a new validation process should be undertaken.

Internal collaborative review leading to Differential Validation consider and record considerations on:

- The differences between the proposed programme and the validated programme
- A detailed rationale for the changes being proposed.
- An analysis of the changes with reference to impact on the original programme and/or QA policies.
- The implication of differential validation is explored through self-assessed piloting

GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION OF PROCEDURE

The following Chart outlines the Validation process

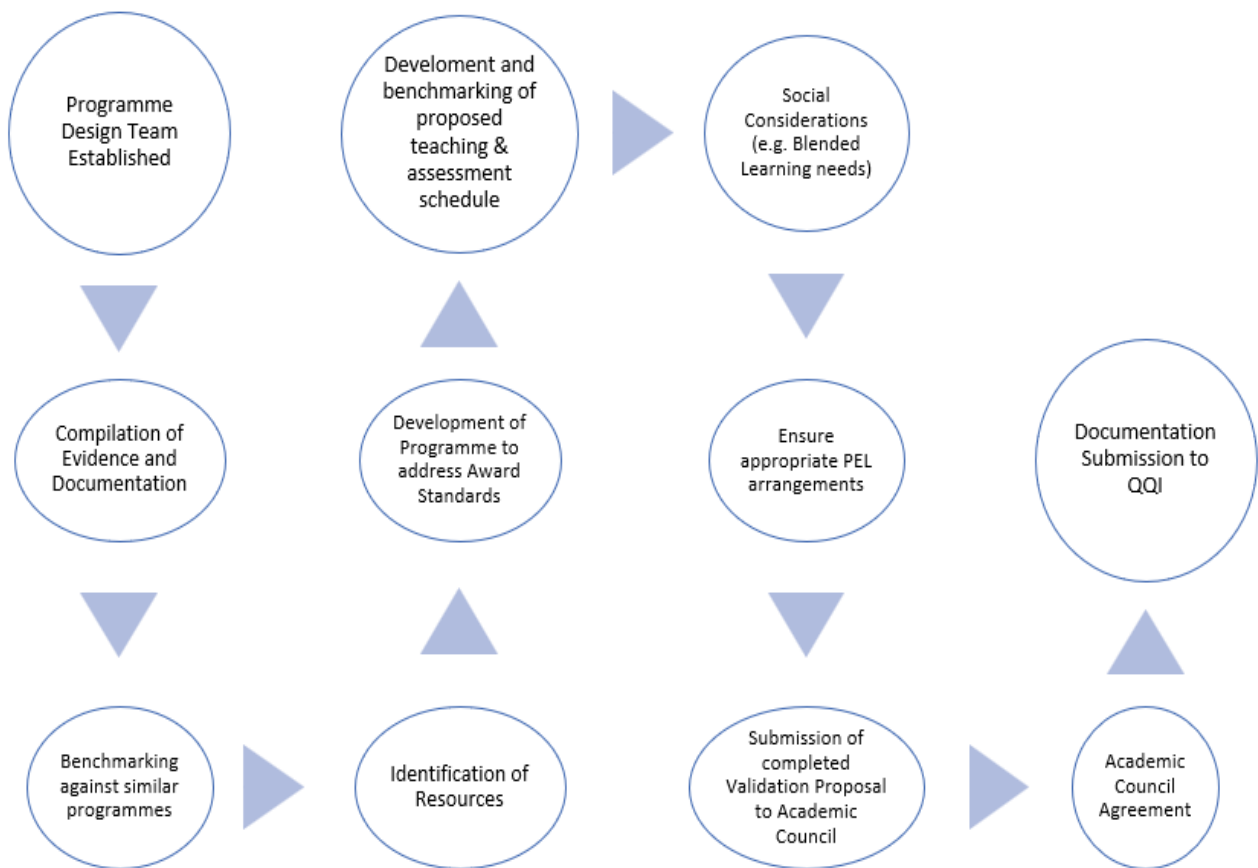


Figure 1 - Outline of the Validation Process

Linked Policies & Procedures

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

