

National College of Ireland

Programme Validation



Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies

Application for Validation

November 2020

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National College of Ireland

Programme Validation



Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies

Independent Evaluation Report

October 2020

**QQI**Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training

Part 1

Provider name	National College of Ireland
Date of site visit	September 16 th , 2020
Date of report	October 16 th , 2020
Is this a re-validation report (Yes/No)	No

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies (Part-time)
	Award	Level 7 Special Purpose Award
	Credit	20
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to a proposed special condition

Embedded programme	Title	Not Applicable
	Award	
	Credit	
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	Role	Affiliation
Mr. Hugh McBride	Chair	Senior Lecturer, School of Business, Galway-Mayo IT
Mr. Rory Byrne	Recording Secretary	Independent Educational Advisor
Dr. Donna O'Shea	Subject Matter Expert	Head of Department of Computer Science, Cork IT
Dr. Catherine Hurley	Subject Matter Expert	Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Maynooth University.
Dr. Paul Doyle	Subject Matter Expert	Senior Lecturer, School of Computing, TU Dublin.
Ms. Elaine Robinson	Industry Representative	Analytics Manager, ESB.
Mr. Cathal Curry	Learner Representative	Recent Graduate of DCU; trained by QQI and NSTEP.

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
National College of Ireland, IFSC Campus	100 per annum	25 per annum

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	January 2021
	Date of last intake	December 2025
Maximum number of annual intakes	2	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	75 (on the understanding that the annual number of learners per annum will be 100).	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	3	
Target learner groups	<p>The programme is designed to provide learners with an opportunity to upskill their knowledge in the progressive and developing area of Emerging Digital Technologies. Applicants may be from IT or a non-IT backgrounds.</p> <p>Target learners include non-IT professionals who wish to understand and integrate emerging digital technologies into their workplace.</p>	

	A minimum of a Level 6 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications is required to be considered for application onto the programme.	
Approved countries for provision	Republic of Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time/Part-time/Blended Learning	
The teaching and learning modalities	The programme will be delivered through face-to-face and blended learning modes.	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	The programme aims to produce high-quality technically competent and innovative graduates who will become practitioners in the field of Digital Emerging Technologies. The programme leads to an NFQ Level 7 Special Purpose QQI award. Graduates of the programme may pursue further education or employment in the field of IT and Computing.	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE	Qualifications and experience
	2	Bachelor or/and Master's degree in computing or relevant cognate discipline with relevant industry and academic experience delivering modules in ICT at NFQ Level 8 as a minimum.
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	Staff to learner ratio	Learning activity type
	1:60	Lectures
	1:25	Tutorials/Labs
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio	1:12.5 – assuming an average intake of 50 learners per session	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
N/A		

Embedded programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
N/A		

Other noteworthy features of the application

The Panel wishes to commend the programme team for their ambition and planning in developing a programme which addresses a developing area in the marketplace. In particular, the Panel welcomes the upskilling opportunity provided by the proposed programme for learners from both IT and non-IT backgrounds.

The Panel recognises the extensive skillset of the programme team. It commends the openness of the team in their engagement with the Panel, their evident ownership of the programme design, and the level of coherence displayed in responding to Panel issues and concerns. The programme team's commitment to quality assurance and enhancement was evident to the Panel throughout the site visit (remotely conducted).

The Panel acknowledges the overall quality of the documentation as submitted. It was generally well laid out, professionally presented and informative. However, the Panel flagged a number of editing issues which it recommends would improve the documents.

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommends that a thorough proofing of the Programme documentation be undertaken. This exercise should consider in particular the consistency of terminology used throughout.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).

Not Applicable

Comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme.

Not Applicable

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

QQI's validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey Panels.

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.	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

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.
 - (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.

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

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>In particular, the Panel note the clarity provided in relation to a), c) and f) above as referred to in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the Programme Document. In clearly specifying the mapping arrangements for this programme under Sections 2.6, 2.6.1 2.7 and 2.8, the programme team demonstrated a thorough understanding of the importance of programme learning outcomes being consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards.</p>

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel is satisfied that the programme learning outcomes have been written to take account of key stakeholders, ensuring graduates of the programme should find it assists their career development.</p> <p>The rationale for the programme is clearly stated in Section 3.1 of the programme document and it was also stated consistently and accurately throughout the site visit.</p> <p>Sections 3.7 and 3.8 of the programme document demonstrated the considerable amount of stakeholder consultation which took place at concept and design stages of this programme.</p>

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 (CEFR) 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel recognise that the access, transfer and progression arrangements are appropriate and clearly explained in Sections 4.1 to 4.7 in the programme document.</p> <p>The Panel accepts that the reference in the programme document to the prior attainment of a degree was a proofing error that will be amended.</p>

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel considers that the two modules included in the programme are well written, relevant and current.</p> <p>The Panel had some concerns about the proposed amount of content to be covered, over a twelve-week period, at a standard consistent with the intended learning outcomes. In this context, the Panel recommends the following:</p> <p><u>Recommendation 2</u></p> <p><i>The Panel recommend that its concern about the amount of content be noted as a consideration for the programme team in reviewing their experience in the delivery of the programme in 2021 and subsequent years.</i></p>

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel is satisfied that the staff who participated in the site visits clearly demonstrated interest, competence and ability in their module area/s and in learner development. The Panel particularly welcomed the discussions relating to the objectives of the programme and found the staff input on this to be of particular note.</p> <p>The input provided by the lecturing staff who would be delivering modules on the programme was helpful and welcomed by the Panel.</p> <p>The provider has well established processes to support the integration of staff. These are comprehensively referred to in Section 7 of the programme document.</p> <p>It was clear to the Panel that the industry experience amongst the programme team further heightened the ability of the provider to meet this criterion.</p>

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 e.g. 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 (e.g. kitchen, 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Panel site visit was undertaken virtually and therefore it was not possible on this occasion to view physical facilities. The Panel recognises however that the provider has significant experience in delivering ICT programmes and accepts the assurances provided by the Programme team and the College Executive confirming that there are sufficient physical resources as required and planned to implement the programme.</p> <p>The Librarian and the Online Academic Programme Supervisor each provided the Panel with significant detail in relation to the services provided to learners and staff. It was confirmed that the Library continues to meet the needs of the learners, particularly in light of the limitations placed on learners due to the current pandemic. The library has a significant physical presence and also a significant online presence. As the proposed programme will be delivered through both face-to-face and blended learning modes, the Panel particularly welcomes the provision of the online library and the introduction of a Click and Collect service.</p> <p>The Panel also welcomes the access learners have to the Online Academic</p>

	Programme Supervisor. It was clear to the Panel from the site visit that the focus on providing tangible IT support to the learners is being actioned.
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Criterion 8

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The College has a well-established induction and orientation process in place for all new learners, and the Panel is satisfied that there are significant supports provided to learners consistent with a duty of care.</p> <p>The Panel noted the willingness of the Programme team to provide additional support to all learners on the programme (and indeed other programmes) including, for example, to those who may have difficulty accessing online resources remotely.</p> <p>The Panel raised a potential challenge in relation to enabling a positive social environment for the learners in the context of a programme of short duration and delivery through blended learning. The Programme team recognise the limitations from a social integration perspective that this implies, but expressed a confidence in the structures and processes in place to address the challenge of enriching the learner experience. In this regard, their prior experience of blended learning and their experiences gained in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic should prove valuable.</p>

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The programme teaching and learning strategy is comprehensively set out in section 5.6 of the programme document, including a Learner Success Strategy (5.6.3).</p> <p>The Programme team recognise the particular challenges posed in delivering a programme designed to appeal to a diverse cohort of learners, including learners with both IT and non-IT backgrounds. The Panel are satisfied that the Programme team provided relevant, accurate and informed responses to concerns in this regard during the site visit.</p> <p>The delivery modes were clarified and the Panel consider that proposals for both traditional and blended modes of delivery are sound and fit-for-purpose. The Panel are confident that the Programme team has the appropriate teaching and learning skillsets required for the optimal delivery of both modes, and that the College provides the encouragement and supports for developing necessary competence internally.</p>

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

	<p>enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>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.</p>
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme only partially meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel has concerns about the module assessment strategies arising from the programme documentation and the related discussions with the Programme team during the site visit.</p> <p>The Panel consider that there is scope to implement changes in module assessment strategies which will benefit learners in terms of enhancing the learning process and ensuring demonstration of their achievement of intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>Re the Emerging Digital Technologies module: The Panel has concerns about the absence of any form of integrative assessment in the module. As such, Module Intended Learning Outcome (MILO) 4 cannot be adequately assessed. This is a significant limiting factor in enabling the attainment of the Programme Aims and Objectives set out in section 2.1 of the programme document.</p> <p>The Panel also has concerns that not all MILOs will be adequately addressed by the proposed schedule of assessment. Specifically, assignment number 2 is listed as due for submission in week 10 of the programme. The implication is that learners will not be in a position to demonstrate in this assignment their knowledge of learning outcomes relevant to content delivered in weeks 11 and 12 of the programme. This also increases the likelihood that some learners will not participate in weeks 11 and 12 if they feel the material covered in these lectures is not relevant to their overall result.</p> <p>The Panel considers that the programme document does not clarify proposals for formative assessment, and in particular the proposed feedback mechanisms to apply to ensure learners receive sufficient formative feedback after their first assessment submission (which is worth 60%). The Panel are concerned that the provision of feedback might not receive the attention it requires.</p> <p>Re the Digital Business Transformation module: Assignment number 2 is currently due for submission in week 12 of the programme. Section 6.12.13 of the programme document indicates that the Project report submission will be presented “in class” by the learner. Similar to the concern raised</p>

	<p>about the Emerging Digital Technologies module, the Panel is concerned that the syllabus content cited for delivery in week 12 of the programme might not be completed due to the logistics of having learners present their work in this final lecture.</p> <p>The concern expressed by the Panel in relation to formative feedback provision identified for Emerging Digital Technologies module also applies for this module.</p> <p><u>Special condition of approval</u> The Panel require that the Programme team review and revise the assessment strategies for both modules. In particular: to include an integrative assessment element in the Emerging Digital Technologies module; to include a final assessment element in each module after delivery of the modules has been completed (and not during the delivery period); to include specification of appropriate formative feedback mechanisms.</p> <p>The Panel also noted that Section's 6.1.13 and 6.2.13 were predominantly focused on 'in class assessment'. Whilst this is appropriate for face-to-face delivery, the Panel questioned whether this might not be entirely suitable for learners who opt to undertake the programme through the blended learning mode.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 3</u> The Panel recommend that the Programme team consider whether amendments are needed to the reference to 'in class assessment' for blended learning provision.</p> <p>Sections 6.1.14 and 6.2.14 of the programme document relate to arrangements for 'module re-assessment'. Arrangements relating to the design and scheduling of re-assessments were further clarified by the Programme team during the site visit. The Panel considers that the arrangements as documented are incomplete and lack clarity.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 4</u> The Panel recommend that the Programme team document more fully the intended arrangements for the design and scheduling of re-assessments.</p>
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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

<p>services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i> 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.</p> <p>j) The programme’s learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. 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).</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel was impressed with the responses provided by the Programme team members in relation to this key area. Input provided by the Librarian, the Disability Support Officer and the Online Academic Programme Supervisor showed a genuine effort on behalf of the provider to ensure learners are well informed, guided and cared for. This is also reflected throughout the Programme documentation.</p>

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 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.

<p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	<p>The Panel has evaluated the proposed programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The Panel met staff members from a range of different functional areas during the site visit. All participants demonstrated a professional understanding of their role. This provided the Panel with assurance that the programme will be well managed.</p> <p>The procedures presented in the Quality Assurance Handbook and the evident commitment of the Programme team to quality assurance and enhancement are indicative of a professional QA system being adhered to and of a culture of quality.</p> <p>The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines. The Panel consider there is a clear and consistent commitment to QA procedures evident in the programme submission.</p>

Overall recommendation to QQI

Principal programme

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
X	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (minor) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons for the overall recommendation

The Panel is of the view that the provider has a genuine intent and competence to deliver a modern and current programme which will enable learners from various disciplines and diverse experience to gain a strong understanding of Emerging Digital Technologies in accordance with the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes. The Panel recommends that National College of Ireland can be satisfied that the proposed programme meets 11 of the 12 validation criteria. The outstanding criterion relating to sound assessment strategies will be met once the special condition of validation specified below has been satisfactorily addressed by the Programme team. This special condition must be addressed prior to the commencement of the programme and the associated recruitment of learners.

Summary of recommended **special conditions** of validation are as follows:

Special Condition of Validation

The Panel require that the Programme team review and revise the assessment strategies for both modules. In particular: to include an integrative assessment element in the Emerging Digital Technologies module; to include a final assessment element in each module after delivery of the modules has been completed (and not during the delivery period); to include specification of appropriate formative feedback mechanisms.

Summary of **recommendations** to the provider

1. The Panel recommends that a thorough proofing of the Programme documentation be undertaken. This exercise should consider in particular the consistency of terminology used throughout.
2. The Panel recommend that its concern about the amount of content be noted as a consideration for the programme team in reviewing their experience in the delivery of the programme in 2021 and subsequent years.
3. The Panel recommend that the Programme team consider whether amendments are needed to the reference to 'in class assessment' for blended learning provision.
4. The Panel recommend that the Programme team document more fully the intended arrangements for the design and scheduling of re-assessments.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

No interests have been declared by members of the revalidation Panel that would affect the impartiality of the Panel and its ability to make a recommendation to QQI regarding the revalidation of the primary programme and the two embedded programmes.

This report has been agreed by the evaluation Panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Panel chairperson:

Date:

Mr. Hugh McBride.

16th October 2020.

Signed: *H. McBride*

Disclaimer

The Report of the External Review Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.

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Part 3: Proposed programme schedule

Name of Provider:		National College of Ireland												
Programme Title		Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies												
Award Title		Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies												
Stage Exit Award Title³		n/a												
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Part-time												
Teaching and learning modalities		Face-to-face												
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level	Stage EQF Level	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code						
Special Purpose	7	6	Award Stage	7	6	20	January 2021	0613						
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
			Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Units ECTS	Total Hours	Contact Hours	Directed eLearning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based Learning	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Practical demonstration %	Proctored practical
Emerging Digital Technologies		1	M	7	10	250	36		214		100			
Digital Business Transformation		1	M	7	10	250	36		214		100			
Special Regulations: Not applicable														

Name of Provider:		National College of Ireland													
Programme Title		Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies													
Award Title		Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies													
Stage Exit Award Title³		n/a													
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Part Time													
Teaching and learning modalities		Blended Learning													
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level	Stage EQF Level	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code							
Special Purpose	7	6	Award Stage	7	6	20	January 2021	0613							
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
			Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Contact Hours	Directed eLearning	Independent Learning	Hours of learning based Work-based	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Practical demonstration %	Proctored practical exam %	Proctored written exam %
					ECTS										
Emerging Digital Technologies		1	M	7	10	250	24	12	214		100				
Digital Business Transformation		1	M	7	10	250	24	12	214		100				
Special Regulations: Not applicable															

National College of Ireland

Programme Validation



Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies

Programme Team Response to Independent Evaluation
Report

October 2020

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Introduction

The programme team for the Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies would like to express their appreciation to the Expert Panel for their deliberations and valuable feedback. The proposed programme has undergone a set of considered amendments based on the panel's feedback and the conditions and recommendations relating to the proposed programme. The response to each of the conditions and recommendations made by the panel in light of the evaluation against the validation criteria are detailed below.

Responses to Conditions of Validation

Condition 1

The Panel require that the Programme team review and revise the assessment strategies for both modules. In particular: to include an integrative assessment element in the Emerging Digital Technologies module; to include a final assessment element in each module after delivery of the modules has been completed (and not during the delivery period); to include specification of appropriate formative feedback mechanisms.

Assessment strategies for both modules have been reviewed to give greater weight to the analysis of all emerging digital technologies (EDTs) covered across the two modules. Emphasis has now been placed on demonstrating knowledge of all EDTs and on the applied use cases of EDTs at the industry level and company case study level. This will require students to research more thoroughly and to demonstrate deep knowledge of the curriculum. Students are now required to evaluate all EDTs covered during the programme, justifying why or why not each EDT should be applied according to the business challenges.

Submission dates for the second (and final) assessments have been placed two or three weeks *after* lecture sessions end for both modules, to give learners the opportunity to apply all the acquired knowledge more comprehensively.

The school endeavours to give feedback on assessment in a timely manner and the date is communicated in the continuous assessment schedule. It is confirmed that class level general feedback usually is provided to learners two weeks after submission of the assessment for each module, except in the case of terminal assessments in line with standard NCI/SoC policy. Students may also request individual feedback during the semester or during Feedback Day, which is organised at the School level and is common across all programmes. A well-defined process regarding Feedback Day already exists that is communicated to the students in advance. *Section 5.9 Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners* was updated to include the above details.

Responses to Recommendations to the Provider

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommends that a thorough proofing of the Programme documentation be undertaken. This exercise should consider in particular the consistency of terminology used throughout.

The programme team has reviewed the entire programme document in terms of consistency of terminologies used, typo errors, text formatting errors, and formation consistency across different sections. The term Emerging Digital Technologies has been used across the entire document. Any reference to the title of the programme has been checked to ensure *Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies*.

Recommendation 2

The Panel recommend that its concern about the amount of content be noted as a consideration for the programme team in reviewing their experience in the delivery of the programme in 2021 and subsequent years.

The content/topics covered by the two modules are consistent with the current emerging technologies being used in the industry or intended to be used in the near future. The programme team believes that all 8 EDTs cover by the course are of important to be study and relevant for the current industry market.

Before the semester starts, a programme committee meeting will take place and the programme team will discuss various aspects related to the programme delivery including module descriptor updates. Student feedback, lecturer feedback, market requirements, industry feedback and programme performance are discussed and improvements are proposed in order to keep the programme up to date and address any emerging trends. As part of this annual programme review process, the programme team will continue to consider the experience of staff and students in terms of the amount of content delivered per module. Section 9.3 provides information on mechanisms used by the School to review the programme and ensure it is always up-to-date and informed by the experience of staff and students.

Recommendation 3

The Panel recommend that the Programme team consider whether amendments are needed to the reference to 'in class assessment' for blended learning provision.

The term “assessment” has been used now across the entire the document in order to accommodate blended and 100% online delivery mode of the course. It should be also noted that the assignment description for the two modules (see Appendix 3) was updated and it clearly indicates that online submission is required. There is no in-class assessment for the two modules.

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommend that the Programme team document more fully the intended arrangements for the design and scheduling of re-assessments.
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Module Re-assessment section specific to each module (e.g. 6. X. 14) was updated in order to provide information regarding design and scheduling of the re-assessment. The following paragraph was added:

If a student does not achieve an overall pass mark (40) per module, then a single final repeat assignment worth 100% of marks must be attempted. There is no repeat written examination. The repeat strategy will assess all module learning outcomes. The repeat assessment is designed by the lecturer and will be reviewed by the external examiner. Repeat assessments schedule is defined at school level and is common across all programmes.

National College of Ireland

Programme Validation



Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies

Panel Acknowledgment of Programme Team Response and
Sign-Off

November 2020

Panel acknowledgment of NCI response to the Conditions of Validation and the Recommendations to the Provider

Condition 1	Action Taken	Panel's Comment
<p>The Panel require that the Programme team review and revise the assessment strategies for both modules. In particular: to include an integrative assessment element in the Emerging Digital Technologies module; to include a final assessment element in each module after delivery of the modules has been completed (and not during the delivery period); to include specification of appropriate formative feedback mechanisms.</p>	<p>Assessment strategies for both modules have been reviewed to give greater weight to the analysis of all emerging digital technologies (EDTs) covered across the two modules. Emphasis has now been placed on demonstrating knowledge of all EDTs and on the applied use cases of EDTs at the industry level and company case study level. This will require students to research more thoroughly and to demonstrate deep knowledge of the curriculum. Students are now required to evaluate all EDTs covered during the programme, justifying why or why not each EDT should be applied according to the business challenges.</p> <p>Submission dates for the second (and final) assessments have been placed two or three weeks <i>after</i> lecture sessions end for both modules, to give learners the opportunity to apply all the acquired knowledge more comprehensively.</p> <p>The school endeavours to give feedback on assessment in a timely manner and the date is communicated in the continuous assessment schedule. It is confirmed that class level general feedback usually is provided to learners two weeks after submission of the assessment for each module, except in the case of terminal assessments in line with standard NCI/SoC policy. Students may also request individual feedback during the semester or during Feedback</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p>

	Day, which is organised at the School level and is common across all programmes. A well-defined process regarding Feedback Day already exists that is communicated to the students in advance. <i>Section 5.9 Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners</i> was updated to include the above details.	
Recommendation 1	Action Taken	Panel's Comment
The Panel recommends that a thorough proofing of the Programme documentation be undertaken. This exercise should consider in particular the consistency of terminology used throughout.	The programme team has reviewed the entire programme document in terms of consistency of terminologies used, typo errors, text formatting errors, and formation consistency across different sections. The term Emerging Digital Technologies has been used across the entire document. Any reference to the title of the programme has been checked to ensure <i>Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies</i> .	Satisfactory
Recommendation 2	Action Taken	Panel's Comment
The Panel recommend that its concern about the amount of content be noted as a consideration for the programme team in reviewing their experience in the delivery of the programme in 2021 and subsequent years.	The content/topics covered by the two modules are consistent with the current emerging technologies being used in the industry or intended to be used in the near future. The programme team believes that all 8 EDTs cover by the course are of important to be study and relevant for the current industry market. Before the semester starts, a programme committee meeting will take place and the programme team will discuss various aspects related to the programme delivery including module descriptor updates. Student feedback, lecturer feedback, market requirements, industry	Satisfactory

	<p>feedback and programme performance are discussed and improvements are proposed in order to keep the programme up to date and address any emerging trends. As part of this annual programme review process, the programme team will continue to consider the experience of staff and students in terms of the amount of content delivered per module. Section 9.3 provides information on mechanisms used by the School to review the programme and ensure it is always up-to-date and informed by the experience of staff and students.</p>	
Recommendation 3	Action Taken	Panel's Comment
<p>The Panel recommend that the Programme team consider whether amendments are needed to the reference to 'in class assessment' for blended learning provision.</p>	<p>The term "assessment" has been used now across the entire the document in order to accommodate blended and 100% online delivery mode of the course. It should be also noted that the assignment description for the two modules (see Appendix 4) was updated and it clearly indicates that online submission is required. There is no in-class assessment for the two modules.</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p>
Recommendation 4	Action Taken	Panel's Comment
<p>The Panel recommend that the Programme team document more fully the intended arrangements for the design and scheduling of re-assessments.</p>	<p>Module Re-assessment section specific to each module (e.g. 6. X. 14) was updated in order to provide information regarding design and scheduling of the re-assessment. The following paragraph was added:</p> <p><i>If a student does not achieve an overall pass mark (40) per module, then a single final repeat assignment worth 100% of marks must be attempted. There is no repeat written examination. The repeat strategy will assess all module learning outcomes. The repeat</i></p>	<p>Satisfactory</p>

	<i>assessment is designed by the lecturer and will be reviewed by the external examiner. Repeat assessments schedule is defined at school level and is common across all programmes.</i>	
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The panel is satisfied that the Programme Team have sufficiently responded to each of the Conditions of Validation and Recommendations to the Provider, and have modified the programme documentation accordingly.

Signed by Panel Chair, *H. Mc Bude*

Date: *06/11/2020*