



**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 details.....	2
Part 2.	Evaluation against the validation criteria.....	22
	Criterion 1 .....	22
	Criterion 2 .....	24
	Criterion 3 .....	26
	Criterion 4 .....	29
	Criterion 5 .....	32
	Criterion 6 .....	36
	Criterion 7 .....	38
	Criterion 8 .....	40
	Criterion 9 .....	43
	Criterion 10 .....	45
	Criterion 11 .....	48
	Criterion 12 .....	50
Part 3.	Overall recommendation to QQI.....	52
Part 4.	Appendix 1 – Proposed Programme Structure.....	60

## Part 1. Provider details

<b>Provider name</b>	The City Education and Learning Group Limited t/a The City Education Group (CEG)
<b>Date of site visit</b>	30 January 2023 – Meeting in QQI offices 31 January 2023 – Virtual Meeting
<b>Date of report</b>	8 February 2023

## Section A. Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care
	<b>Award</b>	Major
	<b>Credit</b>	240 FET credits
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

<b>Embedded programme 1</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Early Learning and Care
	<b>Award</b>	Major
	<b>Credit</b>	120 FET credits – Level 5
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

<b>Embedded programme 2</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding
	<b>Award</b>	Minor
	<b>Credit</b>	15 FET Credits
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

## 1.1

<b>Embedded programme 3</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC
	<b>Award</b>	Minor
	<b>Credit</b>	15 FET Credits – Level 5
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

<b>Embedded programme 4</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC
	<b>Award</b>	Minor
	<b>Credit</b>	25 FET credits – Level 6
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

<b>Embedded programme 5</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC
	<b>Award</b>	Minor
	<b>Credit</b>	15 FET credits – Level 6
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

## Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Stephen Mc Manus	Chair of Panel	Retired. Formerly Registrar of Dundalk IT
Aoife Cooney	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, ATU Sligo
Valerie Gaynor	Industry Expert	Manager, Creative Kids and Co., Walkinstown, Dublin 12
Dr. Máire Mhic Mhathúna	Subject Matter Expert	School of Social Sciences and Law, TU Dublin
Orla O'Loughlen	Blending Learning Expert	Learning Designer, Hibernia College
Kevin Devine	Report Writer	Retired. Formerly Deputy Principal, Ballyfermot CFE, City of Dublin ETB.

## Section C.

## Principal Programme - Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided		Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)		
City Education Group (CEG)		70 per intake for all modes of delivery	70 per intake for all modes of delivery		
Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	January 2023	FT= 48 weeks (delivered over 4 x12 week terms= 21 months)	12 intakes for all modes	8	70
Part-Time	January 2023	PT= 72 weeks (delivered over 6 x12 week terms= 24 months)	12 intakes for all modes	8	70

**Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:****Principal Programme**

- The first intake date is dependent on validation approval.
- The provider indicates that there is notionally a potential for a total intake of 12 x 70 = 840 learners.
- In practice the provider expects a total of 140 learners in year 1 building to 350 learners in year 5
- The provider confirmed in discussions that it is expected most learners will enrol in the part-time blended programme.
- As the embedded programmes will be run in conjunction with the principal programme the comments above on the principal programme enrolment apply in general terms to the embedded programmes described below

**Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)****Principal Programme**

This level 6 certificate is designed with Early Childhood professionals, and the children they will engage with, in mind. The aim of the (two stage) programme is to enable learners to develop the knowledge, skills, and competence to work as autonomous practitioners, subject to practice

supervision, promoting and supporting the holistic needs of children from 0 to six years, and/or to take responsibility for a room or area in an Early Learning and Care setting. This proposed two-stage programme leads to an Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care at NFQ level 6. This programme is designed to meet the QQI professional award standards for Early Learning and Care at NFQ level 6.

The programme comprises of 12 mandatory modules, six at stage 1 and six at stage 2, enabling the learner to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies required to work as an autonomous practitioner in an Early Learning and Care setting and/or take responsibility for an area or room leading and coordinating the provision of a quality Early Learning and Care environment.

The focus is on promoting the holistic wellbeing, development and learning of children from 0 to six years across a range of Early Learning and Care settings. The programme offers a balance of theory and practice, and professional practice placement is integral to the teaching and learning.

Learners who successfully complete the programme will have opportunities to progress into the workplace or into further and higher education

#### Target learner groups

This programme is designed for learners interested in a career in early learning and care with children between the ages of 0 to six years, particularly those who may have an interest in working as room leaders, or for those wishing to progress to higher education in this field. Target learners include school-leavers and mature learners returning to education. Full-time, part-time and/or blended learning courses are intended to meet the needs of a range of learners, such as those already working in the sector who want to develop their skills and/or acquire qualification, people working in other areas or who are unemployed who want to move into the ELC sector, people with responsibilities that do not enable them to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time and/or blended programme.

#### Approved countries for provision

Ireland

#### Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time

Full Time

Part Time (Classroom)

Part Time (Blended)

#### The teaching and learning modalities

Mode	Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)
Classroom / Face to Face	FT = 25% PT (Classroom) = 25% PT (Blended) = 5%
Workplace	FT = 27% PT (Classroom) = 27% PT (Blended) = 27%
On Line	FT = 48% PT (Classroom) = 48%

	PT (Blended) = 68%
--	--------------------

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role	Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)	No. (WTEs) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile
Academic Director	Master's degree in education (L9 on NFQ) or equivalent. Minimum three years of experience working with students, administration, and staff at third/further education level and/or three years in a similar role	1
Academic Liaison Officer/Administrator	Bachelor's degree in appropriate field at, L7/8 on NFQ or equivalent. For example, BA in Education or BSc in Business Administration. Minimum two years of experience working with students, administration, and staff at third/further education level and/or two years in a similar role.	1
Student Support Officer	A primary degree or equivalent professional experience. A qualification in education, social work or related discipline would be an advantage. Excellent organisational, people, communications and IT skills are also required.	0.25
Head of IT	Primary or Master's degree in a computer related field (i.e.; computer science, information technology or management information systems), with three or more years of IT work experience.	0.05
IT Support Officer	Primary degree in computer science, computer engineering, information systems or other computer-related field with two or more years relative experience.	0.1
Sales & Marketing Executive	A primary degree or postgraduate qualification in a subject such as marketing, economics, business, statistics or sociology and a minimum of two years relevant experience.	0.15
Teaching Staff	At a minimum, staff teaching components on this proposed programme must have a relevant qualification at level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as well as a minimum of two years practical experience in Early Year	0.4
	The WTE is pro-rata to calculate the level of learner support required.	

Methodology/ Learning Activity	Description	Staff to Learner Ratio
Face to face sessions	For FT/PT options, face to face sessions consist of on-site classroom attendance and/or live online interactive webinars. Those completing the	1:35



	programme on a part-time basis will complete three terms each stage where they complete two modules per term. For PT (BL) option, Learner's log into a live and interactive webinar with the tutor. There are normally two webinars per module	
Online Engagement	FT/PT – In addition to on-site, face to face sessions, learners will be required to engage in directed online activities PT (BL) – consists of Pre-recorded/on demand sessions, Live Interactive Webinars (students would watch the pre-recorded sessions in advance of and preparation for the webinars), forums (which would run parallel to both pre-recorded and live webinars)	1:35
Group Discussions/Peer Learning	For FT/PT small group discussions take place in the classroom/live webinar. Typically, they involve small groups discussing a chosen topic and/or question and answer sessions. Delivery will include lectures, robust discussions, active class participation, examination of documents, and a range of methods and strategies designed to meet all types of learners' needs. Additional and/or supplementary readings will inform discussions and debates. For the PT (BL) group discussions are facilitated using MOODLE chat, Adobe Connect and/or Microsoft Teams. Typically, they involve small break out group sessions discussing a chosen topic and/or question and answer session., Delivery will include lectures, robust discussions, active class participation, examination of documents, and a range of methods and strategies designed to meet all types of learners' needs. Additional and/or supplementary readings	1:7
Practical Demonstration Sessions	For FT/PT practical demonstrations are presented by the tutor within the classroom environment For PT (BL), Practical Demonstrations are presented as recorded sessions that the learner can review at a set time and return to in their own time.	1:35
Pre-Recorded Lectures	Topic specific pre-recorded lectures are included as part of the programmes regardless of delivery method. These lectures are normally 20/30 minutes in duration and focus on a specific topic relative the field of study. They are released on a specific date and learners can watch and review in their own time. They can also be used as a study aid.	N/A
Moderated Forum Sessions	For all programme delivery options, forum activities are used by tutors and learners for online discussions which promote collaborative working, engagement and interactivity with all members of the group	1:35
Power Point Presentations	Used by tutors to illustrate specific topics and/or to support the delivery of a topic specific lecture or	N/A

	webinar. Powerpoint presentations are uploaded to Moodle for the learner to use as a study aid.	
Guest Lectures/Speakers	Industry experts and other appropriate individuals will be invited to speak to whole groups	1:35
Experiential Work-Based Learning	Experiential learning while on work placement will be an integral part	N/A

**Panel Commentary on programme outline, physical resources and staffing:**

The provider has an established track record in delivering programmes in this sector as a provider. The provider is satisfied that there are sufficient staff in place to run these programmes.

**Embedded Programme 1 - Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5**

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided			Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)	
City Education Group (CEG)			70 per intake for all modes of delivery	70 per intake for all modes of delivery	
Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	Q1 2023	24 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70
Part-Time	Q1 2023	36 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70

**Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:****Embedded Programme 1**

As the embedded programmes will be run in conjunction with the principal programme the comments above on the principal programme enrolment apply in general terms to the embedded programmes.

**Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)****Embedded Programme 1**

This level 5 certificate has been developed in response to the Professional Award Type Descriptors levels 5-8: Annotated for QQI ELC Awards. The aim of the programme is to enable learners to develop the knowledge, skills, and competence to work independently and as part of a team, subject to practice supervision, promoting and supporting the holistic needs of children from 0 to six years.

This proposed programme leads to a Certificate in Early Learning and Care at NFQ level 5. This programme is designed to meet the QQI professional award standards for early learning and care at NFQ level 5. The programme comprises 6 mandatory modules, enabling the learner to develop the knowledge, skills and competences required to work independently and as part of a team, subject to practice supervision, in an ELC setting. The focus is on promoting the holistic wellbeing, development and learning of children from 0 to six years across a range of ELC settings. The programme offers a balance of theory and practice, with the professional practice placement being integral to the teaching and learning. Learners who successfully complete the programme will have opportunities to progress into the workplace or into further and higher education.

**Target learner groups****Embedded Programme 1**

This programme is designed for learners interested in a career in early learning and care with children between the ages of 0 to six years, particularly those who may have an interest in working as early years professionals. Target learners include school-leavers and mature learners returning to education.

Full-time, part time and blended learning/online courses are intended to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners, such as those already working in the sector who want to develop their skills and/or acquire qualifications, people working in other areas or who are unemployed who want to move into the ELC sector, people with responsibilities that do not enable them to undertake full-time day courses and people whose preference is to undertake an part time evening (FT Hours), or blended/ online programme of training.

<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full Time Part Time (Classroom) Part Time (Blended)

<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	
<b>Mode</b>	<b>Proportion</b> (% of Total Directed Learning)
As for main programme	

<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)</b>	<b>No. (WTEs) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile</b>
	As for main programme	

<b>Methodology/ Learning Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Staff to Learner Ratio</b>
	As for main programme	

**Embedded Programme 2 - Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5**

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided			Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)	
City Education Group (CEG)			70 per intake for all modes of delivery	70 per intake for all modes of delivery	
Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	Q1 2023	12 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70
Part-Time	Q1 2023	18 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70

**Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:****Embedded Programme 2**

As the embedded programmes will be run in conjunction with the principal programme the comments above on the principal programme enrolment apply in general terms to the embedded programmes.

**Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)****Embedded Programme 2**

The purpose of this minor award is to provide learners who are interested in embarking on a career within the Early Years sector, those who wish to upskill (i.e., learners with older Early Years qualifications who wish to update their knowledge) or those with a personal interest in the sector (i.e., parents of children in Early Years) with an introduction to Early Learning and Care and Child Safeguarding.

It aims to provide learners with an understanding of the sector as it currently stands in Ireland to include the various service types available, the key stakeholder groups, the role of policies and procedures within Early Learning and Care, and the primary legislation, frameworks, and strategies it operates within.

This minor award also aims to draw attention to the relevant child protection legislation and the key roles played by those within the Early Learning and Care sector.

**Target learner groups****Embedded Programme 2**

Target learners include school-leavers, mature learners and those with previous early years qualifications who are returning to education. Full-time, part-time and/or blended learning courses are intended to meet the needs of a range of learners, such as those already working in the sector who want to develop or update their knowledge, those considering a career in early years or those with a personal interest in learning about the sector with an introduction to child safeguarding practices.

This programme will also provide an excellent pathway for learners who are in receipt of Department of Social Protection Funding or other education funding sources. It will allow learners considering a career in this area to avail of funding and complete and gain a qualification which will provide entry options to progress and complete the Certificate in Early Learning and Care.

Part time and blended learning options also provide access for learners who are unable to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time and/or blended programme of training.

<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full Time Part Time (Classroom) Part Time (Blended)

The teaching and learning modalities	
Mode	Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)
As for main programme	

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role	Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)	No. (WTEs) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile
	As for main programme	

Methodology/ Learning Activity	Description	Staff to Learner Ratio
	As for main programme	

### Embedded Programme 3 - Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided			Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)	
City Education Group (CEG)			70 per intake for all modes of delivery	70 per intake for all modes of delivery	
Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	Q1 2023	12 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70
Part-Time	Q1 2023	18 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70

#### Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

##### Embedded Programme 3

As the embedded programmes will be run in conjunction with the principal programme the comments above on the principal programme enrolment apply in general terms to the embedded programmes.

#### Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)

##### Embedded Programme 3

The purpose of this minor award is to provide learners who are interested in embarking on a career within the Early Years sector, those who wish to upskill (i.e., learners with older Early Years qualifications who wish to update their knowledge or those who did not previously complete a module on equality, diversity, and inclusive practice) or those with a personal interest in the sector (i.e., parents of children with additional education needs in Early Years).

The programme aims to introduce the learner to special education provision within the Irish education system, in particular within the Early Years/Pre-school sector and offer learners the opportunity to develop their understanding and enhance their knowledge of equality, diversity, and inclusive practice in Early Learning and Care.

#### Target learner groups

##### Embedded Programme 3

This programme is designed for learners interested in a career in Early Learning and Care with children between the ages of 0 to six years or those wishing to progress to higher

education in this field. Target learners include school-leavers and mature learners returning to education.

Target learners include school-leavers, mature learners and those with previous early years qualifications who are returning to education. Full-time, part-time and/or blended learning courses are intended to meet the needs of a range of learners, such as those already working in the sector who want to develop update their knowledge, those considering a career in early years or those with a personal interest in learning about equality, diversity, and inclusive practice in ELC.

This programme will also provide an excellent pathway for learners who are in receipt of Department of Social Protection Funding or other education funding sources. It will allow learners considering a career in this area to avail of funding and complete and gain a qualification which will provide entry options to progress and complete the Certificate in Early Learning and Care.

Part time and blended learning options also provide access for those unable to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time and/or blended programme of training.

<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full Time Part Time (Classroom) Part Time (Blended)

<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	
<b>Mode</b>	<b>Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)</b>
As for main programme	

<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)</b>	<b>No. (WTEs) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile</b>
	As for main programme	

<b>Methodology/ Learning Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Staff to Learner Ratio</b>
	As for main programme	



**Embedded Programme 4 - Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6**

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided			Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)	
City Education Group (CEG)			70 per intake for all modes of delivery	70 per intake for all modes of delivery	
Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	Q1 2023	12 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70
Part-Time	Q1 2023	18 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70

**Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:****Embedded Programme 4**

As the embedded programmes will be run in conjunction with the principal programme the comments above on the principal programme enrolment apply in general terms to the embedded programmes.

As noted below this particular embedded programme seeks to fill a perceived gap in previous awards.

**Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)****Embedded Programme 4**

The purpose of this minor award is to provide learners with an opportunity to upskill and further develop their knowledge, skills, and competence to effectively lead teams within an Early Learning and Care context. The programme will provide learners with a framework for the identification and development of key leadership skills and competencies.

On completion of this programme learners will also be able to recognise the key stakeholder groups within their organisational setting and develop leadership strategies to communicate and manage professional relationships. Learners will reflect on and evaluate their own leadership skills, styles and effectiveness and engage with Personal Development Planning to improve own effectiveness.

**Target learner groups****Embedded Programme 4**

Target learners are expected to be those with existing Early Learning and Care or Early Childhood Care and education awards who wish to upskill or undertake formal training in this

area. The previous, soon to be deactivated, 6M2007 award contained an elective module in the area of supervision. Provider experience has found demand for this type of award as learners may not have completed formal training in this area when completing their level 6 major award, but now find themselves in leadership roles within their own setting.

This programme will also provide an excellent pathway for learners who are in receipt of Department of Social Protection Funding or other education funding sources. It will allow learners who wish to upskill and add to their qualifications / CV to avail of funding and complete and gain a qualification which will enhance employment opportunities and may also provide entry options to progress and complete the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care.

Part time and blended learning options also provide access for those not able them to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time and/or blended programme of training.

<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full Time Part Time (Classroom) Part Time (Blended)

<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	
<b>Mode</b>	<b>Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)</b>
As for main programme	

<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)</b>	<b>No. (WTEs) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile</b>
	As for main programme	

<b>Methodology/ Learning Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Staff to Learner Ratio</b>
	As for main programme	

**Embedded Programme 5 - Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6**

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided			Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)	
City Education Group (CEG)			70 per intake for all modes of delivery	70 per intake for all modes of delivery	
Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	Q1 2023	12 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70
Part-Time	Q1 2023	18 weeks	12 intakes for all modes	8	70

**Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:****Embedded Programme 5**

As the embedded programmes will be run in conjunction with the principal programme the comments above on the principal programme enrolment apply in general terms to the embedded programmes.

As noted below this particular embedded programme seeks to fill a perceived gap in previous awards.

**Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)****Embedded Programme 5**

The purpose of this minor award is to provide learners with an opportunity to upskill and develop their knowledge and understanding of inclusivity, equality and diversity in Early Learning and Care practice in Ireland.

Learners will explore their understanding of inclusivity, equality, and diversity as well as examining theories and approaches to equality and diversity. They will address barriers and challenges to providing Inclusivity, equality and diversity in practice and explore practical strategies that support all children's participation. They will critically analyse the evolution and impact of policy and legislation on inclusivity, equality, and diversity in Early Learning and Care and develop an inclusion policy.

**Target learner groups****Embedded Programme 5**

Target learners are expected to be those with existing Early Learning and Care or Early Childhood Care and Education awards who wish to upskill or undertake formal training in this area. The previous, soon to be deactivated, 6M2007 award contained an elective module in the area of

equality and diversity. Provider experience has found demand for this type of award as learners may not have completed formal training in this area when completing their level 6 major award.

This programme will also provide an excellent pathway for learners who are in receipt of Department of Social Protection Funding or other education funding sources. It will allow learners who wish to upskill and add to their qualifications / CV to avail of funding and complete and gain a qualification which will enhance employment opportunities and may also provide entry options to progress and complete the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care.

Part time and blended learning options also provide access for those not able to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time and/or blended programme of training.

<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full Time Part Time (Classroom) Part Time (Blended)

The teaching and learning modalities	
Mode	Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)
As for main programme	

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role	Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)	No. (WTEs) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile
	As for main programme	

Methodology/ Learning Activity	Description	Staff to Learner Ratio
	As for main programme	

## Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

### National Context

- In November 2019, QQI published a Professional Award Type Descriptor (PATD) annotated for Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards, at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The standards described at levels 5 & 6 in the annotated PATD were intended to be used to replace the existing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) CAS awards, and they became the award standard for the new ELC programmes at levels 5 & 6.
- These programmes have been developed in response to this initiative. There is further information on the national context in this report in the comments under Criterion 3.

### Programme Development

- This validation application is one of three applications that were developed in a shared process between the three providers.
- Chevron College, City Education Group (Progressive College) and College of Management and IT (CMIT) have a combined experience of over 60 years in the delivery of accredited further education and they certify, collectively, about 3500 learners each year. A substantial percentage of these learners are participating in programmes in the field of Early Learning and Care (ELC).
- Having agreed to explore further a collaborative approach, all three providers met with QQI to propose the planned consortium approach for the development of such a curriculum. QQI welcomed this collaborative and innovative proposal, after which a timeline and set of actions to formally solidify the consortium was agreed between the three providers.
- All of the providers will use the same curriculum, but the individual colleges will deliver their own programmes.
- This report contains material relating to the shared curriculum and also material relating to the specific programmes to be delivered by City Education Group (CEG).

### Legacy Programmes

- Although these are new programmes and do not directly replace existing programmes there are currently two programmes called Early Childhood Care and Education (Level 5 – 5M2009 and Level 6 – 6M2007) that can be viewed as legacy programmes. It is intended that the awards associated with these programmes will be de-activated on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.
- CEG intends to deliver the new programme (Stage 1) commencing in early 2023. Learners with a number of minor awards on the legacy programmes will be facilitated to complete the old programmes before the award deactivation date.

### Professional Practice Placement (PPP)

- Learners must have access to professional practice placements with TúsIa-registered ELC settings as specified in the PATD for ELC.
- Each (full-time equivalent) learner completes 150 hours of professional practice placement per stage in a minimum of two ELC settings: (1) working directly with children aged between 0 and two years 8 months, and (2) working with children aged between 2 years 8 months and six years, with an appropriate balance between settings.
- Learners must have the opportunity to carry out some activities in an outdoor area while on placement.

- The panel discussions and findings relating to the PPP are reported in the comments under Criterion 8 below.

## Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

*The panel should complete this section with commentary against each criterion to support the recommendation given in the 'Satisfactory?' column i.e. Yes, No, or Partially.*

*If 'Yes', there should be a comment citing the evidence for this finding. Likewise, there should be an explanation as to why the panel have concluded that the criterion has either not been met or only partially so.*

### Criterion 1 The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme

<p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.<sup>1</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
<p><u>Principal Programme</u></p> <p>Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6</p>	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provider, City Education Group (CEG) has established procedures for quality assurance under section 28 of the 2012 Act and QQI has approved CEG's QA system following the report of the Quality and Capacity Panel in June 2019.</li> <li>• CEG has established procedures for access, transfer and progression under section 56 and these procedures are documented in their QA documentation and summarised in the programme descriptor.</li> <li>• There are arrangements in place for the protection of enrolled learners under the provisions of section 65 of the 2012 Act.</li> <li>• The Chief Executive of CEG has signed the application to confirm that the information provided is truthful, that all the applicable criteria</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

		have been addressed and the programme complies with the necessary requirements.
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme

## 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.<sup>2</sup>
  - (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.<sup>3</sup>

Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The aims and objectives of the programme are clearly expressed in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the programme descriptor.</li> <li>As described earlier and as set out in Section 5.3 of the descriptor this programme has been developed using the new PATD standards for ELC awards, focussing on the statements for Level 5 for stage 1 and those of Level 6 for stage 2.</li> <li>The minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) are explicitly specified as evidenced in Section 5.5 and are mapped to the relevant QQI standards in section 5.6.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

<sup>3</sup> Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.



		The panel had some discussions with the provider and the project team on curriculum and the indicative content and these are reported on in the comments on Criterion 5 below.
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme

**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)**

<p>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.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>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.</p> <p>(i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).</p> <p>(iv) There is evidence<sup>5</sup> of learner demand for the programme.</p> <p>(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p>(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Yes	<p>The provider sets out in Section 6.1 a clear rationale for the programme and demonstrates that there was a systematic process of programme development.</p> <p>In the descriptor the provider traces the development of the programme from the publication in 2019 of the First Five Whole-of-Government Strategy to improve the lives of babies, young children and families (First 5*).</p> <p>Step 4 of the strategy is 'The Reform of Early Learning and Care' which highlights the importance of developing a professional Early Learning and Care workforce. It is envisaged that up to 50% of the ELC workforce will hold qualifications at Level 7 on the NFQ (240 Higher Education credits) and the balance of the workforce will</p>

<sup>4</sup> Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

<sup>5</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

<sup>6</sup> It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

<sup>7</sup> There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

		<p>have qualifications at Levels 5 and 6 from programmes such as the ones under evaluation.</p> <p>As described earlier this programme has been developed using the new PATD standards for ELC awards and the programme was developed in a collaborative process with two other providers in agreement with QQI.</p> <p>The descriptor sets out the development steps undertaken by the consortium group and the process of stakeholder consultation at every level. The group examined a number of comparable programmes as part of their work and their findings are set out in Section 6.1 of the descriptor.</p> <p>The provider explained in discussion with the panel that it was decided not to produce occupational profiles because of the diversity of situations that learners were placed in. The panel referred to the document called “Nurturing Skills*” which includes an appendix with role profiles.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1 – The provider should develop occupational profiles based on the latest version of the document “Nurturing Skills”.</i></p> <p>*The full title of the document is “Nurturing Skills: The Workforce Plan for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare 2022-2028”. The role profiles are in Appendix 3.</p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective	Yes	As for the principal programme

Leadership within ELC – Level 6		
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6		As for the principal programme

**Criterion 4 The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory**

<p>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<sup>8</sup>.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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<sup>9</sup>) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that <b>target learners</b> are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).</p> <p>e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the <b>recognition of prior learning</b> for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme): -</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(iii) Has long-lasting significance.</p> <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme <b>partially</b> meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The procedures for providing information to prospective learners are described in Section 8.1 of the programme descriptor.</li> <li>The selection procedures and entry criteria are set out in Section 8.2 of the programme descriptor. The entry criteria are clear and well described.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf) (accessed 26/09/2015)

		<p>As outlined earlier in this report although these programmes do not directly replace any programmes there are programmes that could be considered as legacy programmes.</p> <p>The panel considers that the provider should provide further information on access to the programme in the special case of applicants who have achieved minor awards associated with the programmes 5M2009 and 6M2007 (both Early Childhood Care and Education).</p> <p><b>Condition 1 – The provider should add to the programme descriptor information on the RPL processes planned for the special case of learners with minor awards from legacy programmes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>The RPL process should consider the date of the prior awards and any additional certified qualifications such as CPD and other micro-credentials.</b></li> <li>➤ <b>There should be specific entry requirements for the two Level 6 embedded programmes.</b></li> </ul> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the requirement for learners to have some basic IT skills. The provider explained that where possible applicants would be helped if there were specific gaps in their skills and would be referred to suitable courses where the gap in skills was substantial. The panel recommend that this procedure be recorded in the descriptor.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 2 – The provider should revise the documentation to describe the assistance made available to applicants with limited IT skills. The provider should submit processes for mitigating minor deficiencies and recommend suitable training modules elsewhere for those with major deficiencies in this area.</i></p> <p>The panel discussed the language requirements for learners and it was agreed that all providers would now frame the requirements in terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) and the required level would be B2+.</p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme

<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Partially	There is a need to specify the entry requirements for this programme, see Condition 1.
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Partially	There is a need to specify the entry requirements for this programme, see Condition 1.

**Criterion 5      The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose**

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage are suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles<sup>10</sup>.</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>j) The programme <b>duration</b> (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its <b>fulltime equivalent contact time</b> (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.<sup>11</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme <b>partially</b> meets this criterion.</p> <p>The programme is well documented, well-structured, coherent and designed so that the learner can achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. This is evidenced in Section 7: Programme Curriculum.</p> <p>The curriculum is presented in a logical manner and provides an incremental learning path for both knowledge and skills development and enables students to base learning on both skills' development and evidence-based theory. The panel notes the providers intention to include new developments and policies as the programme progresses.</p>

<sup>10</sup> This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

<sup>11</sup> If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified



		<p>The panel discussed the curriculum and the indicative content with the provider in some detail. The importance of the values underpinning the programme was discussed e.g., democratic and participatory practices and the child as a rights holder.</p> <p>During that discussion the panel pointed out a number of areas where changes could be made that would, in the opinion of the panel, further enhance the quality of the programme.</p> <p>These changes are set out here under the relevant module titles</p> <p><u>Holistic Care of Children in ELC</u></p> <p>The panel recommends that more emphasis is placed on collaboration and that participatory interaction with children is made explicit in the content.</p> <p>The word “consent” should be used throughout to embed this concept in the teaching and learning.</p> <p><u>Professional Practice</u></p> <p>The phrase “understanding all policies”, relating to the policies of the placement setting, could be replaced by the phrase “understanding key policies.”</p> <p>There should be more emphasis on the need for confidentiality.</p> <p>An increased emphasis on ethics would be welcomed by the panel but the provider noted that ethics were covered very specifically in induction material. It was agreed that ethics need to be discussed and analysed by learners before they are internalised.</p> <p><u>Inclusive Education and the care of Children with Additional Needs</u></p> <p>The panel identified a number of terms that could be revised/updated in the material for this module and the provider was in broad agreement with these revisions. For example, “Aspergers syndrome” is no longer diagnosed and is recognised to be on the spectrum of autism. The term “behaviour management” is considered outdated. Current practice using the term “supporting emotional regulation” is considered to be child centric and generally seen as being more positive.</p> <p>The panel recommends that the reading list here is brought up to date and this comment could be applied to a number of modules.</p> <p><u>Early Learning and Play</u></p>
--	--	---

		<p>The panel recommends that the language of Aistear be embedded throughout the programme and the child as a learner be brought to the forefront more explicitly. The panel recommends that more content on arts and creative practices and specifically to include the Arts in the concept of STEM to be STEAM.</p> <p><u>Child Development</u></p> <p>The ELC programme is for children from birth to six years and all of the module content should reflect this. The provider confirmed that to date, in legacy programmes, there were a small number of learners who had worked in settings where the first language was Gaeilge and these learners had followed the curriculum in English. The panel recommends that the needs of these learners be taken into consideration.</p> <p>It may be possible to combine some of the assessments to reduce the workload on learners here. There should be explicit links between the child development module and learning through play in relation to the purpose and use of the assessment methods being used. These should be linked to curriculum development and documentation.</p> <p><u>Sociology</u></p> <p>The panel recommends that the concept of children's rights should be stated explicitly and embedded in the module.</p> <p>The panel recommends that the "Participation Framework*" document is consulted when reviewing the content of the module.</p> <p><i>*The full title of the document is "Participation Framework National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making."</i></p> <p><u>Effective Leadership within ELC</u></p> <p>The panel considers that the following topics should be included here</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to work with a diverse workforce</li> <li>• Leading staff induction processes</li> <li>• Leading pedagogy and change management theory therein.</li> </ul> <p><u>Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC</u></p> <p>The panel recommends that topics here are covered in more depth to demonstrate progression from the Stage 1 module.</p> <p><u>Advanced Child Development</u></p>
--	--	---

		<p>Child observations should be linked to and should inform the planning of future learning opportunities.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 3 – The provider should review the indicative content of the modules and make changes in the light of the discussions with the panel.</i></p> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the ratio of staff to learners. The panel considers that the ratio of 35:1 is too high for group workshops with learners.</p> <p>The provider explained that the practice is to break the large group into a number of smaller groups managed by one tutor. In some cases, the tutor has technical support and in others a second tutor is present. The provider employs strategies such as polls and quizzes to ensure learners fully participate.</p> <p><b>Condition 2 - The provider should specify the number of learners for which a second academic tutor is required for those workshops and webinars where group work takes place (i.e., where a group of students is divided into smaller groups) and update the documentation to reflect this.</b></p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Partially	
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Partially	
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Partially	
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Partially	
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Partially	

**Criterion 6      There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**

<p>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).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff<sup>12</sup> (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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<sup>13</sup> opportunities<sup>14</sup>.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <p>The qualifications and experience required for teaching and other staff delivering the programme are set out in Section 3.1.21 of the programme descriptor.</p> <p>Teaching staff will hold a Level 8 qualification in ECEC or a related discipline and relevant experience in ECEC or a related discipline.</p>

<sup>12</sup> Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

<sup>13</sup> Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

<sup>14</sup> Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. 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. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme

**Criterion 7      There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned**

<p>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).</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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)</li> <li>(ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)</li> <li>(iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment</li> <li>(iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g., kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable</li> <li>(v) technical support</li> <li>(vi) administrative support</li> <li>(vii) company placements/internships – if applicable</li> </ul> <p>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).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Planned intake (first five years) and</li> <li>(ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.</li> </ul> <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<u>Principal Programme</u> Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Yes	The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.  The panel are satisfied that the necessary resources are in place. In discussion with the panel the provider stated that it was expected that the majority of learners in the initial period of the programme will be on the part-time or part-time blended programme.
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of	yes	As for the principal programme

Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5		
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme

**Criterion 8      The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners**

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	
<u>Principal Programme</u> Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme <b>partially</b> meets the criteria and sub criteria.</p> <p>Based on a review of the programme documentation and the re-engagement panel report together with the discussions with the provider and the project team, the panel is satisfied that there is a well-established culture of supporting learners.</p> <p>The documentation includes many examples of policies, procedures, checklists and toolkits designed to help support and inform learners. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A student support officer and an academic advisor are available for learner (Section 3.1.21)</li> <li>b) Learner handbooks, and documentation containing clear details of its programmes are provided to CEG learners (Section 7.8)</li> <li>c) Orientation/induction session (Section 7.6a).</li> </ul> <p>The provider has produced a handbook for the professional practice placement (PPP) setting out the roles of all the parties involved including visiting tutors/assessors.</p> <p>The panel considers that the provider has partially met the sub-criterion 8c in respect of placements. However, the panel considers that it is essential to have a direct contact between the placement and the provider and that the contact should be face to face. That is not the case at present.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the instances when there is no suitably qualified other member of staff to mentor the student e.g., in the case of sole traders.</p>



		<p>The provider stated that in all cases one of the assessments is carried out in a different setting. There are a number of different strategies employed to ensure the second assessment is carried out in an appropriate manner. In some cases, a temporary placement is used, in others a suitably qualified supervisor is used on a temporary basis. The panel accepts that appropriate arrangements are made but considers these procedures should be set out in the documentation.</p> <p>The panel sets the following condition in respect of the professional practice placement;</p> <p><b>Condition 3 - The provider should ensure that, in respect of professional practice placement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) each new setting is visited by the provider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The setting should be physically inspected and evaluated, according to set criteria and</li> <li>○ the placement requirements should be discussed with the setting manager/supervisor before being accepted as suitable.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>b) there is one monitoring visit, on site, for each learner placement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ where there is an opportunity for a meeting between the learner and their tutor/supervisor.</li> <li>○ where as far as possible observation of the learner interacting with children during placement is carried out and</li> <li>○ outside that visit there is regular scheduled contact between the learner and tutor during the placement.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>c) the provider should ensure that in all cases the professional practice module should be wholly assessed by the tutor using evidence supplied by the learner and by the setting supervisor</b></li> <li><b>d) The provider should ensure that the relevant handbooks are updated</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the documents should set out roles of the visiting tutors and supervisors and the criteria, including staff qualifications, for assessing potential settings and learner practice.</li> <li>○ The documents should describe the procedures for appropriate assessment of sole trader learners.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--	---

		<p>In addition, the panel are making a recommendation in respect of PPP. The role of the supervisor is critical in the placement process.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 4 – The provider should ensure that placement supervisors have undergone mentorship training.</i></p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Partially	As for the principal programme

**Criterion 9      There are sound teaching and learning strategies**

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support<sup>15</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
<u>Principal Programme</u> Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme <b>partially</b> meets this criterion.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has adopted teaching strategies that are varied and authentic and they are appropriately applied to support the learner to meet the programme learning outcomes. The evidence for this conclusion is the programme documentation and also the presentation to and discussions with the panel by the provider.</p> <p>In Section 7.5 of the programme descriptor the policies underlying the monitoring of learning and the use of feedback mechanisms are described. Learners are encouraged to engage in reflective practice and tutors are encouraged to provide feedback. Evidence that feedback has been given to learners is monitored.</p> <p>In Section 9.7a of the individual module descriptors there are suggestions for providing formative assessments for learners.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the different modes of delivery. In the case of the blended learning version of the programme, learners will have no physical face-to-face contact with each other or with provider staff.</p> <p>The panel is aware of the mitigation measures put in place by QQI to alleviate the impact of the COVID-19</p>

<sup>15</sup> Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

		<p>pandemic. These temporary measures allowed providers to substitute on-line delivery for face-to-face delivery in certain circumstances and are due to end in June 2023.</p> <p>Therefore the panel makes a condition of validation</p> <p><b>Condition 4 – The provider should include at least two scheduled face-to-face classroom sessions at each stage of the programme where learners physically meet their peers and tutors. One session should be at the start of the programme and one should be an academic session, such as a workshop, during the programme.</b></p> <p>As with any programme developed by a project team not all teaching staff will be familiar with the detail of the new programmes.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 5 – The provider should arrange a training session for staff teaching on the programme before the first delivery. This session should allow tutors to understand and internalise the programme outcomes before commencement.</i></p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Partially	As for the principal programme

**Criterion 10    *There are sound assessment strategies***

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i><sup>16</sup></p> <p>b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written <i>programme assessment strategy</i> for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.<sup>18</sup></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.<sup>19</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that CEG's standard policies and procedures for assessment are based on the principles of fairness, consistency, authenticity and transparency and apply to the programme. There is an external examining system in place to ensure that assessments standards are met. The assessment procedures are described in Section 7.6a of the programme descriptor.</p> <p>The provider has established sound procedures for the moderation of assessment and the reliable certification of results. The provider confirmed that reasonable accommodations are made available to those learners who need them.</p> <p>The panel discussed a number of assessments with the provider.</p>

<sup>16</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>17</sup> This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

<sup>18</sup> The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>19</sup> If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

		<p><u>Curriculum and Pedagogy</u></p> <p>There are only 6 experiences with children for learners and the panel asked if that was considered sufficient interaction. The provider responded that learners would engage in many more experiences that were not formal assessments and that these experiences are logged in journals which contribute overall to assessment.</p> <p>Placement supervisors are encouraged to ensure learners cover a range of experiences and the placement handbook supports this. It could be made explicit that students will need to discuss these, and the learning taken from these in their reflective entries.</p> <p><u>Advanced Child Development</u></p> <p>The idea of linking the assessment to the planning was discussed and it was agreed that it works better when the idea is generated by the child.</p> <p><u>Professional Practice</u></p> <p>The Professional Practice modules are discussed in the comments under Criterion 8.</p> <p>The panel is making a condition in respect of the professional practice placement namely that there is a site visit by tutors during the placement. The condition also stipulates that the professional practice module should be wholly assessed by the tutor using evidence supplied by the learner and by the setting supervisor. (Refer to Condition 3)</p> <p>The panel is making two recommendations in respect of assessment.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 3 – The provider should review the indicative content of the modules and the relevant assessments and make changes in the light of the discussions with the panel.</i></p> <p><i>Recommendation 6 – The provider should revise the assessment guidelines to allow only two repeats in the case of placement practice assessments.</i></p> <p>The recommendation on placement practice assessments is made to ensure there is not too much disruption in the workplace setting for staff and children.</p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early	Yes	As for the principal programme

Learning and Care – Level 5		
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6		As for the principal programme

**Criterion 11 Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for**

<p>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.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</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<sup>20</sup>.</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><sup>21</sup> 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>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has established policies and procedures to support learners. The evidence for this conclusion is the programme documentation and also the presentation to and discussions with the panel by provider and project team staff.</p> <p>In Section 8.1 of the programme descriptor the provider sets out the information made available to learners. This information is available through the website or the learner handbook or is presented during induction sessions.</p>

<sup>20</sup> For more information on making reasonable accommodations see [www.AHEAD.ie](http://www.AHEAD.ie) and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

<sup>21</sup> See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)



		There is a Student Support Officer in place.
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Yes	As for the principal programme

**Criterion 12 The programme is well managed**

<p>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.</p> <p>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-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance<sup>22</sup> is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>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> <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>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (Yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6	Partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support the conclusion is the programme descriptor together with additional information made available by the provider.</p> <p>There is additional evidence in the report of the reengagement panel which reported on the provider's QA systems as part of the re-engagement process in 2019. This panel approved the QA procedures.</p> <p>The report stated <i>"The panel was impressed by the significant restructuring, development of processes and cultural transformation evident over the past 6 months at CEG. The provider's previously noted aspiration to excellence is now tangible and evident within its internal structures and procedures."</i></p>

<sup>22</sup> See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

		<p>The panel discussed the role of the consortium board with the provider. It was confirmed that each of the providers in the consortium are seeking to validate their own version of the programme and that each provider will interact individually with QQI after the three programmes are approved.</p> <p>It follows that the role of the consortium board post-validation is a supplementary one only. The panel recognises that the consortium approach is a valuable approach that has proved very beneficial to all the parties involved. Nevertheless, the panel considers that the documentation should be revised to underline the future relationships.</p> <p><b>Condition 5 – The provider should revise the programme documentation to clarify that the individual colleges interact with QQI and the role of consortium board is a supplementary one.</b></p>
<u>Embedded Programme 1</u> Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 2</u> Certificate in Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 3</u> Certificate in Inclusive Education and Care of Children with Additional Needs in ELC – Level 5	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 4</u> Certificate in Effective Leadership within ELC – Level 6	Partially	As for the principal programme
<u>Embedded Programme 5</u> Certificate in Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC – Level 6	Partially	As for the principal programme

## Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

### 3.1 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;
Satisfactory subject to conditions set out below	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e., proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

- Each of the providers in the consortium are well established providers in good standing with QQI.
- There is a need for such a programme arising from national policy changes in respect of staff qualifications (First 5, “Nurturing Skills”) and standards (PATD for ELC).
- There is evidence of a target market and evidence of employment opportunities.
- The documentation submitted was of a very high standard and included a coherent curriculum, strong teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
- The programme has been developed through a logical and coherent process informed by feedback from stakeholders.
- The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI award.
- The panel considers that some changes are necessary in the programme and has set a number of conditions of validation.
- The panel has made a number of recommendations to further enhance the programme.

On that basis the panel is making an overall recommendation to QQI of satisfactory subject to conditions.

#### Commendations

- All of the providers in the consortium are to be commended in working together in a cooperative way to produce a programme that will help to improve the lives of children and families.
- The project team are to be commended on the documentation of the extensive development work undertaken.
- The provider is to be commended on the open manner in which the panel discussions were held.

#### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

**Condition 1 – The provider should add to the programme descriptor information on the RPL processes planned for the special case of learners with minor awards from legacy programmes**

- **The RPL process should consider the date of the prior awards and any additional certified qualifications such as CPD and other micro-credentials.**

- **There should be specific entry requirements for the two Level 6 embedded programmes (Criterion 4).**

**Condition 2 - The provider should specify the number of learners for which a second academic tutor is required for those workshops and webinars where group work takes place (i.e., where a group of students is divided into smaller groups) and update the documentation to reflect this (C5).**

**Condition 3 - The provider should ensure that, in respect of professional practice placement**

- a) each new setting is visited by the provider**
  - The setting should be physically inspected and evaluated, according to set criteria and
  - the placement requirements should be discussed with the setting manager/supervisor before being accepted as suitable.
- b) there is one monitoring visit, on site, for each learner placement**
  - where there is an opportunity for a meeting between the learner and their tutor/supervisor.
  - where as far as possible observation of the learner interacting with children during placement is carried out and
  - outside that visit there is regular scheduled contact between the learner and tutor during the placement.
- c) the provider should ensure that in all cases the professional practice module should be wholly assessed by the tutor using evidence supplied by the learner and by the setting supervisor**
- d) The provider should ensure that the relevant handbooks are updated**
  - the documents should set out roles of the visiting tutors and supervisors and the criteria, including staff qualifications, for assessing potential settings and learner practice.
  - The documents should describe the procedures for appropriate assessment of sole trader learners (C8).

**Condition 4 – The provider should include at least two scheduled face-to-face classroom sessions at each stage of the programme, where learners physically meet their peers and tutors. One session should be at the start of the programme and one should be an academic session, such as a workshop, during the programme (C9).**

**Condition 5 – The provider should revise the programme documentation to clarify that the individual colleges interact with QQI and the consortium board is an advisory board only (C12)**

### Summary of recommendations to the provider

*Recommendation 1 – The provider should develop occupational profiles based on the latest version of the document “Nurturing Skills” (C3).*

*Recommendation 2 – The provider should revise the documentation to describe the assistance made available to applicants with limited IT skills. The provider should provide processes for mitigating minor deficiencies and should recommend suitable training modules elsewhere for those with major deficiencies in this area (C4).*

*Recommendation 3 – The provider should review the indicative content of the modules and the relevant assessments make changes in the light of the discussions with the panel (C5 and C10).*

*Recommendation 4 – The provider should ensure that placement supervisors have undergone mentorship training (C8).*

*Recommendation 5 – The provider should arrange a training session for staff teaching on the programme before the first delivery. This session should allow tutors to understand and internalise the programme outcomes before commencement (C9).*

*Recommendation 6 – The provider should revise the assessment guidelines to allow only two repeats in the case of placement assessments (C10).*

### 3.2 Embedded programme 1

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;
Satisfactory subject to principal programme conditions	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e., proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

As for principal programme

#### Commendations

As for principal programme

#### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

As for principal programme

#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

As for principal programme

### 3.3 Embedded programme 2

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;
Satisfactory subject to principal programme conditions	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e., proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

As for principal programme

#### Commendations

As for principal programme

#### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

As for principal programme

#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

As for principal programme

### 3.4 Embedded programme 3

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;
Satisfactory subject to principal programme conditions	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

As for principal programme



### Commendations

As for principal programme

### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

As for principal programme

### Summary of recommendations to the provider

As for principal programme

### 3.5 Embedded programme 4

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;
Satisfactory subject to principal programme conditions	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e., proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

As for principal programme

#### Commendations

As for principal programme

#### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

As for principal programme

#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

As for principal programme

### 3.6 Embedded programme 5

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;
Satisfactory subject to principal programme conditions	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e., proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

As for principal programme

#### Commendations

As for principal programme

#### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

As for principal programme

#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

As for principal programme

### Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

All members of the panel have declared that they have no conflict of interest when evaluating this programme

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

Panel chairperson: Stephen Mc Manus

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2023

Signed: 

### 3.7 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.

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

#### Part 4. Appendix 1 – Proposed Programme Structure

Principal Programme	Awar d Class	Award Level	Award Credits		Award Title				
	Major	6	240		Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care- Level 6				
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O	Mode/s of delivery	Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)		Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due	
				Directed	Self- Directed	Technique	Weighting		
1. Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	40% 60%	Stage 1, Term 1 Week 6 & 12	
2. Holistic Care of Children in ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 100 PT (Classroom)= 100 PT (Blended) = 100	FT = 150 PT (Classroom)= 150 PT (Blended) = 150	Assignment Portfolio	30% 70%	Stage 1, Term 2 Week 6 & 12	
3. Professional Practice	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 186 PT (Classroom)= 186 PT (Blended) = 186	FT = 64 PT (Classroom)= 64 PT (Blended) = 64	Portfolio/Collection of Work	100%	Stage 1, Term 3 Week 6 & 12	
4. Inclusive Education and the care of Children with Additional Needs	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	50% 50%	Stage 1, Term 2 Week 6 & 12	
5. Early Learning and Play	M	Tutor supported blended learning	20	FT = 80 PT (Classroom)= 80 PT (Blended) = 80	FT = 120 PT (Classroom)= 120 PT (Blended) = 120	Assignment Portfolio	30% 70%	Stage 1, Term 3 Week 6 & 12	
6. Child Development	M	Tutor supported blended learning	20	FT = 80 PT (Classroom)= 80 PT (Blended) = 80	FT = 120 PT (Classroom)= 120 PT (Blended) = 120	Assignment Assignment Project	20% 20% 60%	Stage 1, Term 3 Week 6 & 12	

7. Sociology and Social Policy in ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Project Assignment	60% 40%	Stage 2, Term 1 Week 6 & 12
8. Effective Leadership within ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 100 PT (Classroom)= 100 PT (Blended) = 100	FT = 150 PT (Classroom)= 150 PT (Blended) = 150	Assignment Learner Record	40% 60%	Stage 2, Term 1 Week 6 & 12
9. Advanced Professional Practice	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 186 PT (Classroom)= 186 PT (Blended) = 186	FT = 64 PT (Classroom)= 64 PT (Blended) = 64	Portfolio/Collection of Work	100%	Stage 2, Term 3 Week 6 & 12
10. Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	30% 70%	Stage 2, Term 2 Week 6 & 12
11. Advanced Child Development	M	Tutor supported blended learning	20	FT = 80 PT (Classroom)= 80 PT (Blended) = 80	FT = 120 PT (Classroom)= 120 PT (Blended) = 120	Assignment Project Learner Record	30% 50% 20%	Stage 2, Term 3 Week 6 & 12
12. Curriculum and Pedagogy	M	Tutor supported blended learning	20	FT = 80 PT (Classroom)= 80 PT (Blended) = 80	FT = 120 PT (Classroom)= 120 PT (Blended) = 120	Assignment Project	40% 60%	Stage 2, Term 3 Week 6 & 12

Embedded Programme 1	Awar d Class	Award Level	Award Credits		Award Title				
	Major	5	120		Certificate in Early Learning and Care – Level 5				
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O 23	Mode/s of delivery	Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)		Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due	
				Directed	Self- Directed	Technique	Weighting		
1. Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	40% 60%	Term 1 Week 6 & 12	
2. Holistic Care of Children in ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 100 PT (Classroom)= 100 PT (Blended) = 100	FT = 150 PT (Classroom)= 150 PT (Blended) = 150	Assignment Portfolio	30% 70%	Term 2 Week 6 & 12	
3. Professional Practice	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 186 PT (Classroom)= 186 PT (Blended) = 186	FT = 64 PT (Classroom)= 64 PT (Blended) = 64	Portfolio/Collectio n of Work	100%	Term 3 Week 6 & 12	
4. Inclusive Education and the care of Children with Additional Needs	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	50% 50%	Term 2 Week 6 & 12	
5. Early Learning and Play	M	Tutor supported blended learning	20	FT = 80 PT (Classroom)= 80 PT (Blended) = 80	FT = 120 PT (Classroom)= 120 PT (Blended) = 120	Assignment Portfolio	30% 70%	Term 3 Week 6 & 12	
6. Child Development	M	Tutor supported blended learning	20	FT = 80 PT (Classroom)= 80 PT (Blended) = 80	FT = 120 PT (Classroom)= 120 PT (Blended) = 120	Assignment Assignment Project	20% 20% 20%	Term 3 Week 6 & 12	

<sup>23</sup> Mandatory or Optional

Embedded Programme 2	Award Class	Award Level	Award Credits		Award Title				
	Minor	5	15		Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding				
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O	Mode/s of delivery		Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)		Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due
					Directed	Self- Directed	Technique	Weighting	
Introduction to ELC and Child Safeguarding	M	Tutor supported blended learning		15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	40% 60%	Week 5 Week 10
Embedded Programme 3	Award Class	Award Level	Award Credits		Award Title				
	Minor	5	15		Inclusive Education and the care of Children with Additional Needs				
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O	Mode/s of delivery		Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)		Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due
					Directed	Self- Directed	Technique	Weighting	
Inclusive Education and the care of Children with Additional Needs	M	Tutor supported blended learning		15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom) = 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	50% 50%	Week 5 Week 10

Embedded Programme 4	Award Class	Award Level	Award Credits		Award Title			
	Minor	6	25		Effective Leadership within ELC			
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O	Mode/s of delivery	Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)		Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due
				Directed	Self- Directed	Technique	Weighting	
Effective Leadership within ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	25	FT = 100 PT (Classroom)= 100 PT (Blended) = 100	FT = 50 PT (Classroom)= 50 PT (Blended) = 50	Assignment Learner Record	40% 60%	Week 5 Week 10

Embedded Programme 5	Award Class	Award Level	Award Credits		Award Title			
	Minor	6	15		Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC			
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O	Mode/s of delivery	Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)		Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due
				Directed	Self- Directed	Technique	Weighting	
Inclusion, Equality and Diversity in ELC	M	Tutor supported blended learning	15	FT = 60 PT (Classroom)= 60 PT (Blended) = 60	FT = 90 PT (Classroom)= 90 PT (Blended) = 90	Assignment Project	30% 70%	Week 5 Week 10