

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

Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of Provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	<i>CCT Education Ltd / CCT College Dublin</i>
Address:	30-34 Westmoreland Street, Dublin 2.
Date of Application:	12 th June 2018
Date of resubmission of application:	Not applicable
Date of evaluation:	29 th August 2018
Date of site visit (if applicable):	29 th August 2018 (See Annex 3 for Agenda of Site Visit)
Date of Recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	6 th December 2018

1.2 Profile of Provider

CCT College Dublin is an existing provider of programmes of study leading to QQI awards. The College secured approval of QA procedures from HETAC in 2009 for both further and higher education. It subsequently discontinued further education provision and has continued as a higher education only provider.

The current scope of CCT's provision leading to QQI awards is full-time and part-time up to NFQ level 8 delivered on-site and face-to-face in the areas of Information Technology (IT), Computing and Business. The college does not deliver programmes in blended learning mode nor does it engage in transnational or collaborative programmes or programmes leading to joint awards.

Note(s):

CCT indicated in their submission their intention to apply for validation of Level 9 taught programmes. This would constitute an extension of current scope of provision to NFQ Level 9 and this was factored into the panel's evaluation of their QA procedures.

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Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of Panel Member	Organisation
Mr David Denieffe	Chair	Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, Institute of Technology Carlow
Dr Brendan Ryder	Secretary	Head of Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)
Dr Deirdre Lillis	Academic Representative	Head of Computer Science, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
Ms Maura Hunt	Industry Representative	Network Director, Software Skillnet
Ms Laura Loftus (not present during site visit due to family bereavement)	Student Representative	Student, formerly of Galway Business School

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The panel would like to commend CCT's management and staff for their openness and proactive engagement during the panel visit. There is clear demonstrable evidence of a quality culture/ethos throughout the organisation (referred to as a "live" QA system) with a clear and ongoing commitment to both quality assurance and enhancement, all of which supports the organisation's objective of providing an exemplary student experience for all its learners. A significant body of work, which involved substantial self-assessment and reflection, together with relevant stakeholder consultation, was undertaken in a systematic and thorough manner by CCT as part of the re-engagement process.



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3.2 Recommendation of the Panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

The panel recommends approval to the current level of provision. The Provider's governance, capacity, resources and Quality Assurance (QA) are sufficient for the current scope of provision.

The panel acknowledges CCT's strategic intention to extend its scope of provision beyond NFQ Level 8. However, the panel are of the view that CCT's capacity and readiness need to be enhanced to support provision at NFQ Level 9. The panel advises that CCT address the following recommendations before making an NFQ Level 9 programme submission to QQI:

Recommendation(s)

Governance:

The panel recommends the expansion of the Board of Directors with reference to best practice in other comparable organisations. This is in addition to the planned appointment of an Independent Chair.

Nature of NFQ Level 9 Programmes:

The panel recommends that CCT give careful consideration to the Level 9 model adopted. Consideration should be given to the introduction of a professional Masters model (more practice and/or career focussed) as an alternative to the traditional taught masters model.

Industry Engagement:

The panel recommends that the team formally embed industry engagement (e.g. industry advisory group) across all levels from programme level upwards (for example: Live case studies, work placement, industry involvement in Quality Assurance, etc.).

Staff Development and Supports:

The panel recommends an expansion of Section 8 (Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff and Human Resources of the Quality Assurance (QA) manual (pg. 177) to cater for the development of staff at NFQ Level 9. Individual staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plans should be aligned to and intrinsically support the Masters programme proposed.

Information Management:

The panel recommends that CCT should consider benchmarking against similar providers internationally (acknowledging the difficulties that CCT identified in acquiring national comparative data)



Part 4 Evaluation of Provider Capacity

4.1 Legal and Compliance Requirements:

Criterion	Yes / No	Finding(s)
4.1.1(a) Criterion: <i>Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Certification of Incorporation○ Certificate of Registration○ Insurance Schedule○ CCT HECA PEL Access○ CCT HECA PEL Signed Framework Agreement○ CCT ISACA Agreement○ Springboard Approval Letter
4.1.2(a) Criterion: <i>Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Certification of Incorporation○ Certificate of Registration• According to QQI's records (Ref: PC00797) CCT Dublin has 22 programmes currently validated (Major: 15; Non-Major:7) and has had 839 awards conferred since 2010.
4.1.3(a) Criterion: <i>Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence relating to collaborations and partnerships was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ CCT HECA PEL Access○ CCT HECA PEL Signed Framework Agreement○ CCT ISACA Agreement
4.1.4(a) Criterion: <i>Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See 4.1.3(a) above.



Criterion	Yes / No	Finding(s)
4.1.5(a) Criterion: <i>Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCT operates exclusively in Ireland and the organisation complies with all applicable regulations and legislation.
4.1.6(a) Criterion: <i>Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCT is in good standing with qualifications systems and education and training systems in Ireland.• QA (FETAC/FET) was agreed with QQI in November 2009 and QA (HETAC / HET) was agreed with QQI in June 2009.• According to QQI's records (Ref: PC00797) CCT Dublin has 22 programmes currently validated (Major: 15; Non-Major:7).

4.2 Resource, Governance and Structural Requirements:

Criterion	Yes / No	Finding(s)
4.2.1(a) Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Letter of Good Financial Standing;○ Tax Clearance Certificate;○ CCT Physical Resources Overview;○ CCT Staff Register.
4.2.2(a) Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCT has focused its provision in the disciplines of Business and ICT.• There is a well-established student body on full-time QQI accredited programmes which involve



		<p>mainly international and mature learners. Part-time non-accredited offerings are also well established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider’s provision is evolving with an increasing number of students undertaking NFQ Level 7 and 8 programmes. • CCT provided a rationale for extending their scope of provision to NFQ Level 9. • CCT are satisfied that progression and completion rates are in line with national norms (pg. 17 of Re-engagement application). • According to QQI’s records (Ref: PC00797) CCT has had 839 awards conferred since 2010.
<p>4.2.3(a) Criterion: Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider’s submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QA Manual Section 2: Governance and Decision Making; ○ Organisation chart (pgs. 9 and 10 of the Re-engagement application); ○ CCT Quality Assurance Structure (pgs. 14 and 15 of the Re-engagement application).
<p>4.2.4(a) Criterion: Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider’s submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QA Manual Section 2: Governance and Decision Making; ○ QA Manual Section 4 Programme Development and Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CCTP401 – Validation Policy; ▪ CCTP402 – Programme Review and Revalidation; ○ QA Manual Section 5: Teaching, Learning and Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CCTP515 – Board of Examiners Policy; ▪ QA Manual ○ QA Manual Section 10 Information Management:



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CCTP1005 – Information Management.
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4.3 Programme Development and Provision Requirements:

Criterion	Yes / No	Finding(s)
<p>4.3.1(a) Criterion: Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCT has developed experience in programme development, delivery, management and assessment in programmes of study leading to awards up to NFQ Level 9 (learner partner support agreement between the University of Hertfordshire and CCT). • According to QQI’s records (Ref: PC00797) CCT Dublin has 22 programmes currently validated (Major: 15; Non-Major:7) and has had 839 awards conferred since 2010.
<p>4.3.2(a) Criterion: Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider’s submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCT Staff Register; ○ Organisation chart (pgs. 9 and 10 of the Re-engagement application); ○ QA Manual Section 8: Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff and Human Resources.
<p>4.3.3(a) Criterion: Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider’s submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QA Manual Section 5: Student-Centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment; ○ QA Manual Section 6: Admissions, Access, Transfer, Progression, Recognition and Certification; ○ QA Manual Section 7: Protection of Enrolled Learners



Criterion	Yes / No	Finding(s)
4.3.4(a) Criterion: Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ CCT Physical Resources Overview;• A tour of facilities by the re-engagement panel on the day of the site visit confirmed the premises, facilities and resources.
4.3.5(a) Criterion: Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ QA Manual Section 6: Admissions, Access, Transfer, Progression, Recognition and Certification;○ QA Manual Section 7: Protection of Enrolled Learners.
4.3.6(a) Criterion: Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ QA Manual Section 5: Student-Centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
4.3.7(a) Criterion: Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ CCT HECA PEL Access○ CCT HECA PEL Signed Framework Agreement○ CCT ISACA Agreement○ QA Manual Section 7: Protection of Enrolled Learners – Public Information.



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4.4 Overall Findings in Respect of Provider Capacity to Provide Sustainable Education and Training

CCT is an experienced higher education provider that has the appropriate governance, capacity and resources to support programmes of study up to NFQ Level 8.

Recommendations concerning NFQ Level 9 provision can be found in Section 3.1: Summary Findings.



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Part 5 Evaluation of Draft QA Procedures Submitted by CCT College Dublin

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of CCT College Dublin quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). This section of the report follows the structure and referencing of the guidelines.

CCT provided a detailed mapping of their QA policies and procedures against QQI guidelines (Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and Sector-Specific Guidelines for Independent Providers), pgs. 21 – 27 in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). A quality enhancement action plan aligned to the QQI QA guidelines provides further evidence of CCT's commitment to continuous quality enhancement.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 22 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 28-31 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 22 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 32-33 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 22 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 34-35 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- The panel recommends that CCT consider the introduction of a professional Masters model (more practice and/or career focussed) as an alternative to the traditional taught masters model.



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- The panel recommends that CCT formally embed industry engagement (e.g. industry advisory group) across all levels from programme level upwards (for example: Live case studies, work placement, industry involvement in Quality Assurance, etc.).

4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pgs. 22 and 23 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 36-38 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)
- The panel commends CCT for their participation in the National Forum Digital Badges initiative which will provides a suitable and structured professional development programme for faculty.
- The panel recommends an expansion of Section 8 (Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff and Human Resources of the Quality Assurance (QA) manual (pg. 177) to cater for the development of staff at NFQ Level 9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plans should be aligned to and intrinsically support the Masters programme proposed.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pgs. 23 and 24 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 39-42 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- The panel commend the ongoing engagement of CCT staff with colleagues in the sector (Dublin Business School, RCSI, Trinity College Dublin) in relation to enhancing aspects of the student experience. Examples include the expansion of the library and the introduction of the Centre for Teaching and Learning.



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6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 24 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 43-45 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- The panel commends the programme development teams for their incorporation of assessment best practice when considering programme assessment strategies, particularly the embedding of integrated / programme-level assessment.

7 SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 25 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 46-47 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 25 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pgs. 48-49 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- The panel recommends that CCT should consider benchmarking against similar providers internationally (acknowledging the difficulties that CCT identified in acquiring national comparative data)

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pgs. 25-26 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pg. 50 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).



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10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pg. 26 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pg. 51 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

- QQI's QA guidelines under this quality dimension have been comprehensively addressed. Detailed evidence is catalogued on pgs. 26-27 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and provided in the CCT Quality Manual. Self-reflection evidence can be found on pg. 52 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

Evaluation of Draft QA Procedures - Overall Panel Findings

CCT's QA policies and procedures are comprehensively aligned to QQI's QA Guidelines (<http://www.qqi-gaguidelines.com/>). This includes the Core Statutory QA Guidelines and Sector-Specific Guidelines for Independent Providers (pgs. 22-27 of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) provides the mapping of CCT's QA policies and procedures against QQI guidelines).

The quality assurance and enhancement system as documented has the potential to provide an effective framework for the ongoing enhancement of CCT's programmes, services, and the learner experience.

As indicated, the panel recommends some enhancements to the QA system in advance of making application for validation of Level 9 programmes. It is understood that any extension of scope of approval will result from a validation decision.

The panel notes that the establishment of effectiveness will be determined using a separate QQI process in the future.



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Part 6 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

6.1 Mandatory Changes

1. N/A

6.2 Specific Advice

1. See Part 3: Findings of the Panel, specifically recommendations relating to improving preparedness for applications for validation of Level 9 programmes.

Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this Provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Min: 6; Max: 8	Major, Minor, Special-Purpose, Supplemental	Information Technology (IT)
Min: 6; Max: 8	Major, Minor, Special-Purpose, Supplemental	Computing
Min: 6; Max: 8	Major, Minor, Special-Purpose, Supplemental	Business

Part 8 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of CCT College Dublin.

Name:


Mr David Denieffe.

Date:

11th October 2018.

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Annexe 1: Documentation Provided to the Panel in the Course of the Evaluation

Document	Related to
Re-engagement Application	Re-engagement Application
Rationale for Extension of Scope of Provision	Rationale for Extension of Scope of Provision
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	Self-assessment
Independent Report of Re-Engagement Submission (Dr Dermot Douglas)	Independent Report of Re-Engagement Submission
Quality Assurance Manual	Draft QA procedures
CCT College Dublin, Strategic Plan 2018-2020	Strategic Plan
CCT College Dublin, Institutional Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
Supporting Documentation:	
Certification of Incorporation	Certification of Incorporation
Certificate of Registration	Certificate of Registration
Organisation Chart (included in Re-engagement Application)	Organisation Chart
Quality Assurance System, diagrammatic representation Chart (included in Re-engagement Application)	Quality Assurance System
CCT Progression and Completion Data	Progression and Completion Data
CCT HECA PEL Access CCT HECA PEL Signed Framework Agreement CCT ISACA Agreement	Collaboration and Partnerships
Letter of Good Financial Standing	Financial Viability and Resources
Insurance Schedule	Public Liability Insurance Details



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Tax Clearance Certificate	Current Tax Clearance Certificate
Statutory declaration signed by Owner, Director or Principal Executive Officer, witnessed by an authorised person	Statutory declaration
CCT Physical Resources Overview CCT Staff Register	Sufficient resource base
Springboard Approval Letter	Good standing in education system
CCT Employee Handbook	Employee support



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Annexe 2: Provider Staff Met in the Course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Neil Gallagher	College President
Karl Gallagher	Dean of Administration and Finance
Graham Glanville	Dean of School
Naomi Jackson	Dean of Academic Affairs
Ger O'Callaghan	Head of Admissions
Amanda Russell	Quality Assurance (QA) Officer
Justin Smyth	Librarian
Ken Healy	Head of Faculty of IT
Charlie Dayman	Head of Faculty of Business
Greg South	Lecturer and Assistant Head of Faculty of IT
Laura Cassin	Lecturer of Business
Dermot Glanville	Faculty Co-ordinator



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Annexe 3: Site Visit Agenda

CCT Re-Engagement with QQI Peer Evaluation of Quality Assurance Procedures and Institutional Capacity

on

29th August 2018

at

CCT College

30-34 Westmoreland Street

Dublin 2

Agenda

Time	Activity
08:30	Panel arrives
08:35 – 09:45	Private Meeting of the panel
09:45 – 11.30	Session 1: Presentation of Application for Reengagement (Panel to seek clarification as required): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions and context setting.• Presentation by Provider on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Gap Analysis / Self-assessment – findings and actions;○ Resourcing and Capacity – strengths and vulnerabilities;○ Governance – structure, strengths and vulnerabilities;○ QA Procedures for approval:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Structure of QA documentation;▪ Communication of QA to those who will use it;▪ Monitoring of effectiveness of QA – how;▪ Further development required.
11.30 – 11.45	Tour of Facilities
11:45 -12:00	Tea/Coffee Break



Time	Activity
12:00 – 12:30	Session 2: Meeting with Senior Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope of Provision• Governance structures and processes• Resourcing
12:30-13:45	Session 3: Meeting with Registrar / Programme Managers / Lecturers / Tutors: QA Procedures for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching and Learning;• Programme development and approval processes;• Access, Transfer and Progression;• Assessment;• Staff Development and Supports.
13.45 –14:15	Lunch
14:15 -15:15	Session 4: Meeting with relevant staff / management QA Procedures for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learner Recruitment / Learner Supports;• Learner Records / Information management.
15:15 – 15:30	Private Meeting of Panel
15:30 – 16:00	Session 6: Meeting with selected provider representatives (to clarify any outstanding issues, if required)
16:00– 16:30	Private Meeting of Panel
16:30 – 16:45	Session 7: Preliminary Feedback to Senior Management
16:45	Finish



College Dublin

Computing • IT • Business

Walter Balfe
Head of Provider Approval
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
26-27 Denzille Lane
Dublin 2

November 13th, 2018

Dear Walter,

Please find enclosed CCT's response to the Panel Report following the recent site visit for the re-engagement process.

CCT acknowledges the extensive work of the panel in undertaking the in-depth review of the application for re-engagement. The rigour they applied to the process, resulting in several commendations along with specific advice to assist in CCT's preparedness for postgraduate provision, is greatly appreciated. The enhancement the Panel's insight has brought to the College is not underestimated.

We trust the response to the report is sufficient and appropriate to facilitate conclusion of the re-engagement process. Should further information or clarification be required, however, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the input and support that you and your colleagues in QQI provided to CCT, and all providers, in preparing for this process. The introduction of a new evaluation mechanism can be challenging for all parties. Re-engagement is a significant milestone in CCT's development and being the first provider to undergo the process proper introduced additional challenges. While we found the process to be justifiably demanding, it was a valuable and worthwhile experience, which was, and will continue to be, of great benefit to the College.

Yours sincerely

Neil Gallagher
College President

CCT College Dublin

30-34 Westmoreland St., Dublin 2, D02 HK35.

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Company Registration No. 390136. Registered Office: 30-34 Westmoreland St., Dublin 2, Ireland.

Directors: Neil Gallagher & Karl Gallagher.

CCT College Dublin Response to Re-engagement Panel Report November 2018

In response to the panel report dated October 11th, 2018, CCT College Dublin would firstly like to express gratitude to the panel for their supportive approach and constructive dialogue with College representatives during the panel visit on August 29th. College management and staff found the visit and contributions of the panel to be extremely positive and a valuable enhancement activity. The significant time commitment given by each panel member in reviewing the re-engagement submission in preparation for the visit is greatly appreciated. It was evident to management and staff that the panel had a detailed understanding of the College, its programmes and its strategic intentions.

Commendations

The panel commends:

- CCT's management and staff for their openness and proactive engagement during the panel visit. There is clear demonstrable evidence of a quality culture/ethos throughout the organisation (referred to as a "live" QA system) with a clear and ongoing commitment to both quality assurance and enhancement, all of which supports the organisation's objective of providing an exemplary student experience for all its learners. A significant body of work, which involved substantial self-assessment and reflection, together with relevant stakeholder consultation, was undertaken in a systematic and thorough manner by CCT as part of the re-engagement process.
- CCT for their participation in the National Forum Digital Badges initiative which provides a suitable and structured professional development programme for faculty.
- the ongoing engagement of CCT staff with colleagues in the sector (Dublin Business School, RCSI, Trinity College Dublin) in relation to enhancing aspects of the student experience. Examples include the expansion of the library and the introduction of the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
- the programme development teams for their incorporation of assessment best practice when considering programme assessment strategies, particularly the embedding of integrated / programme-level assessment.

The College management team is pleased to note these commendations and wishes to advise of the commitment to continue with these and other examples of good practice to enhance the quality of CCT programmes and the experience for CCT students.

Recommendations

The panel identify recommendations related to improving preparedness for level 9. The Management and staff have considered these recommendations and wish to advise the panel and QQI of intentions in relation to same.

1. The panel acknowledges the planned appointment of an Independent Chair for the Board of Directors and Independent Chair of the Academic Council. This reinforces the separation of academic and commercial decision making. It recommends that the same openness to external expertise be maintained and expanded, especially in the planning and development of Level 9 programmes.

CCT Response:

In the last academic year CCT has extended the external membership of its Advisory Board to include Donna Bell (Higher Education QA Consultant and Strategic Mentor) and Tom Farrell (Guidance Counsellor and Consultant, Original Lead Developer of national Qualifax database). They join the existing members:

Emeritus Professor Michael Ryan (DCU School of Computing)

Professor John Hurley (DCU Business School)

Dr. Tony O'Donnell (Vice President of Engineering, Shutterstock, Adjunct Asst. Professor – TCD)

Mary Cleary (Deputy CEO – Irish Computer Society / ICS-Skills)

Karl Heery (Head of IT – Aon Centre for Innovation and Analytics)

Subsequent to the panel visit, CCT has progressed its intentions to increase externality in governance. Dr Dermot Douglas has commenced the role of Chair of Academic Council with effect from September 2018. Initial discussions with a potential Chair of the Board of Directors have also taken place over a number of months. No appointment has yet been made in this instance, but the matter is still being progressed. The College will take this recommendation into account and seek the input of the two new appointments regarding potential further expansion of the Board of Directors in the context of the strategic objectives of the college.

2. The panel recommends that CCT consider the introduction of a professional Masters model (more practice and/or career focussed) as an alternative to the traditional taught masters model.

CCT Response:

The College welcomes this recommendation and the enthusiasm for this approach to Masters programmes as it supports the intentions of the programme team. CCT has been working on the development of a Masters programme over a protracted period of time, utilising input from industry to best inform the nature and content of the programme. The programme concerned is applied in nature and therefore incorporates a greater emphasis on practice than more traditional taught masters might, including the use of employer-led assessments and industry-initiated capstone project briefs which require students to demonstrate their practical ability in specific areas of IT innovation. The programme development team is encouraged by this recommendation and the openness to such an approach, having identified traditional essay and exam type assessments and a theoretical piece of research as the typical capstone assessment in the majority of programmes that were investigated for comparative purposes.

The College is mindful of the requirement to evidence a research culture to support the delivery of postgraduate programmes and therefore opted for this approach as it capitalises on the expertise of faculty and their creation of new knowledge largely through development and innovation in IT but also through more traditional means of scholarship and research.

While recognising that the professional Masters model is in itself quite diverse, and the practice and careers focus can be incorporated in different ways and different extents, moving forward, the College will also look to adopt this approach to postgraduate programmes in the future.

3. The panel recommends that CCT formally embed industry engagement (e.g. industry advisory group) across all levels from programme level upwards (for example: Live case studies, work placement, industry involvement in Quality Assurance, etc.).

CCT Response:

Having identified this objective as part of the College's strategic plan in January 2017 and further prioritised it in the Quality Improvement Plan following self-evaluation for re-engagement, the College has made notable progress in moving existing employer engagement from an informal activity in response to specific need, to a formally embedded activity at the heart of CCT programmes and enhancing student experience. Having debated the role, purpose and operation of such a body and the ways and means it may engage with CCT, the term Industry Advisory Group has been replaced with Industry Engagement Forum. The College recognises that active engagement is substantially more than an advisory function and the nomenclature in that regard could be misleading. The Engagement Forum will meet at regular intervals to plan and evaluate the employer engagement activities over a specified period of time. They will still perform an advisory function, which is vital, but the engagement will extend beyond this to a range of programme and college level activities as part of a regularised programme agreed in advance.

From a general review of research in the area of HEI / Employer engagement, it is clear that the most effective engagement comes from mutually beneficial interaction, across a continuum of levels of activity reflecting the depth of engagement the employer wishes to subscribe to. CCT has opted to apply such an approach rather than attempt a one size fits all. The level of engagement depends on the nature of the relationship (lower level of engagement, working relationship, strategic partnership) between CCT and the employer(s), and what both organisations wish to achieve from the relationship.

CCT staff and faculty work with industry representatives to operationalise the activities agreed by the forum. Current activities include employer input in programme design, provision of internships, providing masterclasses and guest lecturer expertise, assisting in employability enhancement activities for students, participating in the CCT Careers Fair, and providing feedback on suitability of programmes and services offered by the College. More recently, the College has moved to engage employers in assessment design and is currently agreeing approaches to increase the role of industry in assessment. Through the forum this work will be formalised, and employer partnerships will be extended to increase levels of engagement and widened to involve a greater number and diversity of employers, professional bodies and industry representatives.

4. The panel recommends an expansion of Section 8 (Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff and Human Resources of the Quality Assurance (QA) manual (pg. 177) to cater for the development of staff to enable delivery at NFQ Level 9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plans should be aligned to and intrinsically support the Masters programme proposed.

CCT Response:

The College acknowledges the recommendation of the panel and understands that embedding the commitment of the development of staff at NFQ level 9 within the existing policy CCTP805, "Scholarship, Professional Development, Innovation and Research" may be better served as a discreet policy specifically addressing the staff development requirements, expectations and supports in place to support faculty engaged in postgraduate provision or developing faculty for future involvement in postgraduate provision. As stated within this policy, the College offers in-house staff development and also provides financial and time support for staff to undertake further study, up to and including PhD level. The policy further outlines the requirement for staff development plans to attend to, among other matters, the maturation and growth of individuals and the organisation and that they must derive from the develop plans of the college. In this regard, it is

expected that CPD plans are intrinsically aligned to College developments, including the proposed Masters programme for those staff involved in that.

Notwithstanding the above, the College acknowledges that plans relating to the development of faculty specifically related to delivery of postgraduate provision, were outlined to the panel as part of the site visit and this could be better reflected in policy.

As indicated in the self-evaluation report, the introduction of the Centre for Teaching and Learning in CCT will assist lecturers in increasing their engagement in research, development, innovation and scholarship but also provide them with the supports for learning and trialling new approaches and techniques. In respect of developing confidence and experience in pedagogic approaches at level 9, The Centre for Teaching and Learning will launch the CCT Certificate in Pedagogic Practice in the new year. This is an in-house programme that will specifically focus on pedagogic approaches in postgraduate education. Staff will benefit from the insights and expertise of experienced postgraduate professionals within and outside CCT who will demonstrate different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment appropriate to level 9. Staff will be afforded the opportunity to apply these approaches and reflect on their effectiveness and their own development. As indicated in the self-evaluation report, this programme will also incorporate a mentoring programme to assist faculty in developing their confidence and ability in engaging postgraduate students, promoting self-directed learning and in establishing their understanding of grading standards at level 9. It is the intention that the programme will enable participants to attain the National Forum's Digital Badge "Teaching Strategies for (New) Lecturers", for which the Dean of Academic Affairs is an approved facilitator.

Prior to formally applying for an extension of scope of provision to level 9, through a validation application, section 8 of the QA manual will be revisited and revised to reflect the specific arrangements to enable staff to deliver programmes at level 9 as per the panel recommendation.

5. The panel recommends that CCT should consider benchmarking against similar providers internationally (acknowledging the difficulties that CCT identified in acquiring national comparative data).

CCT Response:

CCT acknowledges the value that benchmarking brings and is always keen to engage in activities which will assist in self-learning and enhancement. The panel's recommendation which supports the College's own quality improvement target to identify opportunities for benchmarking is welcome. The suggestion provided by panel members in respect of potential international opportunities provided useful insight to the College and are being investigated.

Not unrelated to this, the College was recently represented at the National Forum symposium "Using Data for Student Success". The College intends developing a student success strategy based on data analytics as early indicators of potential to progress and succeed. Interventions to promote success and to reduce potential for attrition or failure will be developed in conjunction with this. It's understood that many institutions are embarking upon such an approach and CCT's implementation of this should provide a further opportunity for benchmarking once established.

Since the panel visit, the College has become aware of developments within QQI which may see the publication of data by discipline and award type in relation to QQI awards for programmes of private providers. The College welcomes this and will look to engage as fully as possible to secure maximum benefit.

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Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of QA Procedures for Blended Learning

Part 1 Details of provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	CCT College Dublin
Address:	30 – 34 Westmoreland Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
Date of Application:	26th of March 2020
Date of resubmission of application:	
Date of evaluation:	
Date of (virtual) site visit:	31 st of July 2020
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	10th September 2020

1.2 Profile of provider

CCT College Dublin (CCT) is a well-established education and training provider, offering QQI awards at NFQ Levels 6 – 9 in the domains of Information Technology, Computing and Business. The College's QA processes were approved by HETAC in 2009. CCT's current QA procedures were approved following a successful reengagement process with QQI in 2018.

CCT is committed to providing learners with accessible and flexible higher education opportunities. The College offers professional development programmes as well as a range of higher education programmes validated by QQI. The stated ethos of CCT is learner-centred and inclusive. Programmes are industry-aligned, and promote a culture of enquiry and innovation.

The College is committed to continuing and expanding its campus-based programme offerings, and to integrating on campus interaction with the remote study opportunities it will offer learners enrolling in the programmes proposed for delivery in blended mode.



Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
David Denieffe	Chair	Registrar, Institute of Technology Carlow
Dr. Catherine Peck	QA Expert & Secretary	Independent Education Consultant
Dr. Silvia Gallagher	Blended Learning Expert	Research Fellow, Trinity College Dublin

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The panel would first like to commend the team at CCT on the quality of the College's submission for an extension of the approved scope of provision to include blended learning delivery. The QA documentation and associated resources submitted to the panel for evaluation provided evidence of a strategic and planned approach to blended learning. The panel further notes and commends CCT's commitment of appropriate resources to facilitate the implementation of blended modes of delivery. The College has made substantive investments, and has systematically built its organisational capacity with regard to IT infrastructure and human resources. Finally, the panel would like to commend the team at CCT for the open and constructive tone of dialogue with the panel throughout the evaluation.

At the conclusion of the virtual site visit, the panel identified limited and discrete issues that needed to be addressed by CCT in order to demonstrate the College's comprehensive alignment to QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018). These are listed in Section 5.1 of this report as proposed mandatory changes. The panel availed of its option to defer its recommendation, allowing the provider a period of up to six weeks to address these. The panel reconvened to review evidence of implementation of the proposed mandatory changes submitted by CCT on the 24th of August, 2020. The panel was of the view that CCT had sufficiently addressed these, and proceeded to recommend approval of CCT's draft QA procedures for Blended Learning.



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3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

	Tick <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve CCT's draft QA procedures for Blended Learning	X
Refuse approval of CCT's draft QA procedures for blended learning pending mandatory changes set out in Section 6.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
Refuse to approve CCT's draft QA procedures for blended learning	



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Part 4 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures for Blended Learning submitted by CCT College Dublin

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of CCT's quality assurance procedures for blended learning against QQI's Topic Specific QA Guidelines - Blended Learning.

Panel Findings:

The panel's evaluation of CCT's quality assurance procedures for blended learning was closely guided by QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018). The guidelines outline expectations pertaining to the Organisational Context, Programme Context and Learner Context.

Organisational Context

Within this dimension of the guidelines, providers are required to demonstrate a strategic approach to the use of blended learning, to make appropriate investment in infrastructure and identify accountable key roles. The College's application for an extension of its scope of provision to include blended learning is aligned to the priorities within its current strategic plan, and reflects the provider's development over time from technology enhanced to technology enabled provision. CCT has mapped the relevant strategic objectives and KPIs within the College's current overall strategic plan to its blended learning strategy. The latter document outlines actions identified by the College which will address gaps identified during a self-evaluation process. Although the evaluation of the application occurred following the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on face to face delivery, the application is the outcome of a planned and systematic development process. CCT works with an external service provider to support the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and has identified a suite of platforms and tools that have been approved for programme delivery.

During the site visit, the panel explored what human resources and key roles the College felt were necessary to support the implementation of its blended learning strategy. CCT representatives confirmed that the need for additional technical support to be available to learners during synchronous online delivery had been identified, and consideration was being given to how this would be provided. In the short-term, CCT has developed the capacity of its existing staff in relation to knowledge of blended learning pedagogies and learning design frameworks. In particular, the Head of Enhancement plays a key role in providing support to academic staff. During the discussion, CCT representatives confirmed that if additional expertise (potentially external, part-time or contract) were required the College would commit resources to this as appropriate. At the time of the virtual site visit the panel identified a proposed mandatory change for CCT pertaining to this. This required CCT to finalise and present its capacity plan for this area, identifying and specifying the additional human resource requirements discussed. Acknowledging the dynamic and expanding nature of the College's ambitions, the panel encourages CCT



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to give consideration to both short-term and medium-term capacity, as current arrangements to support the learning design function may not be scalable.

Programme Context

Within this dimension of the guidelines, providers are required to develop processes that enable close collaboration between academic subject specialists and those responsible for online education technology and/or instructional design. Processes also need to be in place to ensure that all online learning materials and media are subject to informed peer comment, and meet clear quality standards. Protocols for staff and learners regarding online interaction, and information regarding the availability of advice and support are also required. As discussed above, in the short-term, CCT has developed internal staff capacity and the Head of Enhancement holds an accountable key role in relation to supporting academic subject specialists. CCT submitted a 'Good Practice Guide for Faculty' outlining quality standards for online teaching and learning. The panel acknowledged the importance of this document, and references to peer review within the documentation. However, at the time of the virtual site visit the panel identified a proposed mandatory change for CCT relevant to this. This required CCT to develop a clear set of standards for its online learning materials and resources. These should be referenced within the faculty guide but exist as a discrete document that provides a clear reference point for all staff, learners and stakeholders. Within this, CCT must include a visible requirement for informed peer review process for online learning material. The panel notes that standards may usefully encompass elements of QQI's guidelines pertaining to Equality of Opportunity (Section 5.2).

A further requirement under this dimension of the guidelines is that approval and validation processes for blended learning programmes are fit for purpose and include, for example, information regarding the critical review and appraisal of draft learning resources and the ongoing development of staff involved in either developing online resources or teaching online. The panel noted an item of specific advice for CCT pertaining to this.

Learner Context

Within this dimension of the guidelines, providers are required to have procedures in place to ensure that learners are supported to make informed choices about participating in blended learning programmes, and that learners have identified and available contacts (academic, administrative and technical). Moreover, providers must ensure that learning and teaching activities and associated resources provide all learners with equitable, fair and realistic opportunities to achieve intended learning outcomes. The panel was of the view that learners at CCT are both well-informed and well-supported, and that careful consideration has been given to how learner support will transfer to the online components of blended learning programmes. During the virtual site visit, the panel discussed the range of supports offered with staff working in the areas of learner support, enhancement and the library as well as CCT's academic managers. The panel also reviewed the extensive support materials hosted within CCT's Online Learner Toolkit. Notably, CCT has been able to draw upon its experience of pivoting to online delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic to inform its practices in this area.



Part 5 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures for Blended Learning and Specific Advice

5.1 Mandatory Changes

The following proposed mandatory changes were identified at the conclusion of the virtual site visit on July 31st, 2020. The panel availed of the option to defer its decision to allow CCT an opportunity to address these within a six-week period.

5.1.1

Develop a clear set of standards for online learning materials and resources. The standards must include a visible process of informed peer review for the design, development and implementation of online learning.

5.1.2

Finalise areas of the Blended Learning capacity plan that identify and specify the human resource requirements within this, including those specific to technical support for learners.

The panel reconvened to review the evidence submitted by CCT of implementation of the proposed mandatory changes on the 24th of August, 2020. The panel was of the view that CCT had addressed the mandatory changes identified by the panel on July 31st sufficiently for the panel to recommend approval of CCT's QA Procedures for Blended Learning to QQI.

However, the panel have some concerns regarding the practical implementation of the new standards. Specifically, the allocation of the bulk of responsibility for upholding the standards to lecturers and the ready availability of technical support staff.

The panel further advises that future iterations of the capacity plan documentation should include a specification of responsibilities for the proposed roles and an indication of candidate competencies.

5.2 Specific Advice

The panel offers one item of Specific Advice to CCT for consideration as the provider moves forward with the validation and implementation of programmes delivered in blended modes.

5.2.1

Continue to develop capacity with regard to Blended Learning pedagogies, and ensure that these are visible within programme development processes and programme and module documentation.



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Part 6 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures or Blended Learning of CCT College Dublin.

Name:



DAVID DENIEFFE

Date:

25th AUGUST 2020



Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Document	Related to
No further documentation was provided during the virtual site visit.	

Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Neil Gallagher	President
Karl Gallagher	Dean of Admin and Finance
Graham Glanville	Dean of School
Naomi Jackson	Registrar/Academic Affairs
Marie O'Neill	Head of Enhancement
Kathleen Embleton	Head of Student Services
Amanda Russell	QA Officer
Justin Smyth	Librarian

Appendix: Provider response to the Blended Learning QA Approval Panel Report



College Dublin

Computing • IT • Business

Walter Balfe
Head of Provider Approval
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
26-27 Denzille Lane
Dublin 2

August 27th, 2020

Dear Walter,

Please find, accompanying this letter, the CCT College Dublin response to the Panel Report for the Assessment of QA Procedures for Blended Learning.

On behalf of all in CCT, I'd like to acknowledge the extensive work of the Panel and commend their approach to the process and engagement with colleagues in CCT. We found the interaction to be highly positive and a useful learning experience. I would also like to extend our appreciation to colleagues in QQI who, like all of us, are working in challenging circumstances. Enabling the College to progress this application through the introduction of virtual visits is greatly appreciated. Particular thanks to Michelle Gallagher who I understand has been the primary contact for CCT throughout this process.

I trust the enclosed response satisfies the requirements to move the process to its conclusion but if further information or clarification is required, please do not hesitate to contact me or Naomi Jackson.

Yours sincerely

Neil Gallagher
College President



College Dublin
Computing • IT • Business

CCT College Dublin

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Directors: Neil Gallagher & Karl Gallagher.