Programme Validation Manual

for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET)

(Edition 3, 2018)

This document assumes familiarity with “[Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training”](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf) .That is the definitive source.

**Part 1:**  provides an overall template for presenting applications.

**Part 2:**  provides supporting templates e.g. for the proposed programme schedule.

**Part 3:**  provides further information for applicants and guidelines for completing and presenting an application

**All applicants must use the templates provided and complete all sections—this is required for administrative purposes. The templates can be adapted to some degree, but must meet the validation criteria.**

The purpose of this document is to help applicants (for validation) present their applications and programmes consistently and systematically. However, it is the applicant’s sole responsibility to ensure that all the criteria are addressed. The manual needs to be read in conjunction with [QQI’s Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

**CHANGES IN VERSION 3**

*This version is for use by applicants, but it will be updated from time to time. Consult QQI for the latest version.*

Version 3 aims to rationalise and streamline the application manual – all sections must be completed. However, where there are shared features or where similar information is requested in different sections this should be referenced rather than duplicated as a general principle there should be limited repetition

**Part 1**

**Overall Template for Presenting an Application**

# Provider Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Relevant provider** | |
| **Name** |  |
| **Address** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact for validation** | |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Title:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **E-mail:** |  |
| **Phone:** |  |
| **Mobile:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme director** | |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Title:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **E-mail:** |  |
| **Phone:** |  |
| **Mobile:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Provider type:** |  |

## Contextual information about the provider and its other programmes

## An outline of the programme and identification of the QQI award(s) to which it designed to lead *(when submitting an add-on programme for validation, please ensure that a copy of the programme document that is being added to is included in the submission)*

### Principal programme

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Award** | **ISCED[[1]](#footnote-1) code (detail: use four digits)** | **Duration[[2]](#footnote-2)**  *(years, months, weeks)* | **If[[3]](#footnote-3) an embedded programme is this an exit award** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposed enrolment** | **First intake (date)** | **Last intake (date)** |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Maximum number of intake groups/cohorts per annum** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Will the programme enrol international learners (yes/no)** |  |
| **Will the programme accept Erasmus exchange students** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years** | | | | | |
|  | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** |
| **Minimum total enrolment into first year** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Maximum total enrolment into first year** |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Detail any articulation arrangements involving advanced entry** | **Maximum number of learners involved** | **Stage of entry** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided** | **Maximum enrolment per annum** | **Minimum enrolment per annum** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Target learner groups** | This should explain the prior knowledge (what learning is assumed) and the likely aspirations of targeted learners (why they are likely to be interested in the programme). | |
| **Proposed countries for provision (i.e. where enrolled learners will be based)** |  | |
| **Delivery mode: Full-time/part-time** |  | |
| **List the teaching and learning modes[[4]](#footnote-4)** |  | |
| **Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)** |  | |
| **Outline of staffing requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors)[[5]](#footnote-5)** | WTE[[6]](#footnote-6) | Qualifications and experience[[7]](#footnote-7) |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Outline the physical resource requirements (the details are provided in the module descriptors)** |  | |
| **Outline specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching staff** | Staff to learner ratio | Learning activity type |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Overall WTE staff/learner ratio[[8]](#footnote-8)** |  | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Work placements for which credit is allocated** | | | |
| **Title of the placement** | **Stage number** | **Credit (specify units[[9]](#footnote-9))** | **Total hours in the workplace** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

If the programme involves work placements this should be noted here. Otherwise insert ‘not applicable’ in the box provided.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme(s) being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)** | | | |
| **Code** | **Title** | **Last Intake date** | **Estimated Closure date** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

### Embedded programme

### Stand-alone module leading to a minor award

# Educational and training objectives and minimum intended programme and module learning outcomes

## Programme aims and objectives

## Rationale for the choice of QQI named award stem sought and for the named award title

## QQI awards standards used

## Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs)

## Minimum intended module and (where applicable) stage learning outcomes (MIMLOs)

## Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency

## Comparing the MIPLOs with those of comparable programmes

## Mapping the MIMLOs against the QQI awards standards

## Other matters

# Programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards

## Rationale for providing the programme

## Profile of learners that would be enrolled (target learners)

## Education and training needs met by the programme

## Alignment of the programme with the professional/occupational profile if the programme is a professional one

## How the programme and its intended programme learning outcomes were conceived, researched and developed

## Interpretation of the awards standards and research supporting the programme’s aims, objectives and the MIPLOs

## Involvement of employers and practitioners in the design of a vocationally oriented programme: process and outcomes

## Comparison with other programmes (of other providers)

## Evidence of support for the introduction of the programme

## Evidence of learner demand for the programme

## Evidence of employment opportunities for graduates

## Planned intake

## Five-year plan for the proposed programme

## Other matters

# Access, transfer and progression procedures, criteria and arrangements for the programme

## Information to be made available to learners about the programme

## Entry procedures and criteria for the programme including procedures recognition of prior learning

### Entry procedures

### Minimum requirements for general learning

### Minimum requirements for discipline-specific learning

### Minimum experiential requirements (if applicable)

### Minimum language proficiency requirements

### Minimum mathematical proficiency requirements

### Minimum criteria for passing the access interview (if applicable)

### Detail any other criteria for selecting learners

### Programme-specific RPL criteria, and arrangements for entry, exemptions from modules, advanced entry and direct access to the award

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Summary of RPL criteria for advanced entry or access to the award (cite supporting documentation)** | |
| **Stage 1** |  |
| **Stage 2** |  |
| **Stage 3** |  |
| **Stage 4** |  |
| **Award** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **List of specific arrangements for transfer from other programme (inward) to the proposed programme** | | |
|  | **Programme name, Provider** | **Details** |
| **Stage 1** |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Stage 2** |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Stage 3** |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Stage 4** |  |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **List of specific arrangements for progression (inward) to the proposed programme** | | |
|  | **Programme name, Provider** | **Details** |
| **Stage 1** |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Stage 2** |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Stage 3** |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Stage 4** |  |  |
|  |  |

## Programme-specific transfer (outward) procedures and criteria

## Identified transfer and progression destinations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Progression destinations** | |
| **Programme name, Provider** | **Details** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Transfer destinations** | |
| **Programme name, Provider** | **Details** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Professional accreditation of the programme

## Detail the credit system used for the programme

## Other matters

# Written curriculum

## Outline of the curriculum

### Stage level outline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage label** | **Stage synopsis** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

### Rules for electives and their rationale

### Module-level outline

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage label** | **Module title** | **Module synopsis** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Rationale for the curriculum structure

## Rationale for the programme’s duration, credit allocation

## Indicative timetable and its rationale

## Integrated learning opportunities and assessment in light of the MIPLOs

## Programme teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

## Integration, organisation and oversight of work-based learning

## Programme learning environment

## Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners

## Programme summative assessment strategy

## Proposed programme and stage schedules

# Module Documentation

## Module 1

### Headline information about the module

The following table MUST be used to provided headline information about each module.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module title** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Module number/reference** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated.** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Stage of parent programme** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Module credit number of units** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **List the teaching and learning modes** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Pre-requisite module titles** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Co-requisite module titles** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Duration of the module** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see \* below)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Module-specific physical resources and support required** **per centre (or instance of the module)** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Analysis of required learning effort**  **(much of the remainder of this table must also be presented in the programme schedule—take care to ensure consistency)** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **\*Effort while in contact with staff** | | | | | | |  | | | | |
| **Classroom and demon-strations** | | **Mentoring and small-group tutoring** | | | **Other (specify)** | | **Directed e-learning (hours)** | **Independent learning (hours)** | **Other hours (specify)** | **Work-based learning hours of learning effort** | **Total effort (hours)** |
| **Hours** | **Minimum ratio teacher/learner** | **Hours** | **Minimum ratio teacher/learner** | | **Hours** | **Minimum ratio teacher/learner** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Allocation of marks (within the module)** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | **Continuous assessment** | | | **Supervised project** | **Proctored practical examination** | **Proctored written examination** | **Total** | |
| **Percentage contribution** | | | |  | | |  |  |  | **100%** | |

### Module aims and objectives

### Minimum intended module learning outcomes

### Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall IPLOs

### Information provided to learners about the module

### Module content, organisation and structure

### Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

### Work-based learning and practice-placement

### E-learning

### Module physical resource requirements

### Reading lists and other information resources

### Specifications for module staffing requirements

### Module summative assessment strategy

### Sample assessment materials

## Module [2]

Use the same headings as above and repeat as necessary.

# Programme Staff

## Programme director and board

## Complement of staff (or potential staff)

## Arrangements for the interface for work placement of employer-based personnel involved in apprenticeship or traineeship programmes

## Programme-specific staff performance management arrangements

## Arrangements for approval of staff who will have a formal role in this programme

## CVs for the programme’s key staff (e.g. the programme leadership) and for the identified complement of staff

## Recruitment plan for staff not already in post

# Physical resources

## Specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements

## Complement of supported physical resources (or potential ones)

### Premises

### Informational technology resources

### Materials for teaching, learning and assessment (software and printed)

### Specialised equipment

### Technical and administrative support services

## Company placement resources

## Criteria for approving a new centre where the programme may be provided (only if applicable)

## Entitlements to use the property required

# Programme management

## Documented procedures for the operation and management of the programme

## Supplementary QA procedures for the programme

## Mechanisms to keep the programme updated and how it will be updated in consultation with stakeholders

## Compliance with special validation criteria or requirements attached to the applicable awards standards

## Membership and terms of reference for the programme board

## Collaborative provision

## Apprenticeship coordinating provider role

## Transnational provision

# Proposed Programme Schedule

Template provided in Part 2

Detailed advice on preparing proposed programme schedule available in the Guidelines for completing and presenting an application (Part 3 of this document)

**Part 2**

**Supporting Templates**

# Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

Note that minor and embedded award programmes each require separate schedules.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Provider:** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Programme Title** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Award Title** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Stage Exit Award Title3** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Teaching and learning modalities** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Award Class4** | **Award NFQ level** | **Award EQF Level** | | **Stage** (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage)**:** | | | **Stage NFQ Level2** | | | **Stage EQF Level2** | | | **Stage Credit (ECTS)** | | **Date Effective** | | **ISCED Subject code** | |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  | | |  | | |  | |  | |  | |
| **Module Title**  (Up to 70 characters including spaces) | | | **Semester no where applicable.**  **(Semester 1 or Semester2)** | | **Module** | | **Credit**  **Number5** | **Total Student Effort Module (hours)** | | | | | | **Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)** | | | | |
| **Status[[10]](#footnote-10)** | **NFQ Level1**  **where specified** | **Credit Units** | **Total Hours** | **Class (or equiv) Contact Hours** | **Directed e-learning** | **Hours of Independent Learning** | **Work-based learning effort[[11]](#footnote-11)** | | **C.A. %** | **Supervised Project %** | **Proctored practical demonstration %** | | **Proctored written exam %** |
|  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
|  | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |
| **Special Regulations** (Up to 280 characters) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**See Guidelines for completing and presenting an application (Part 4 appended) for Notes on completing the Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage**

# Evaluation against the validation criteria

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 1** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme** |  |  |  |
| 1. The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[[12]](#footnote-12) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 2** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought** |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. |  |  |  |
| 1. A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. |  |  |  |
| * 1. Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme. |  |  |  |
| 1. There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s). |  |  |  |
| 1. The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI’s *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.* |  |  |  |
| 1. The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme title and any embedded programme titles are |  |  |  |
| * 1. Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought. |  |  |  |
| * 1. Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. |  |  |  |
| 1. For each programme and embedded programme |  |  |  |
| * 1. The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.[[13]](#footnote-13) |  |  |  |
| * 1. The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards. |  |  |  |
| 1. Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme’s modules. |  |  |  |
| 1. Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable. |  |  |  |
| * 1. For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[[14]](#footnote-14) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 3** | **Initial Evaluation** | **Changes based on feedback** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **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)** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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.[[15]](#footnote-15) |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| * 1. There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme. |  |  |  |
| * 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| * 1. There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies). |  |  |  |
| * 1. There is evidence[[16]](#footnote-16) of learner demand for the programme. |  |  |  |
| * 1. There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[[17]](#footnote-17). |  |  |  |
| * 1. The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[[18]](#footnote-18) |  |  |  |
| 1. There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications. |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 4** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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[[19]](#footnote-19). |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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 (CEFRL[[20]](#footnote-20)) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants). |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):- |  |  |  |
| * 1. Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). |  |  |  |
| * 1. Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; |  |  |  |
| * 1. Has long-lasting significance. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 5** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes. |  |  |  |
| 1. The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[[21]](#footnote-21). |  |  |  |
| 1. The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented. |  |  |  |
| 1. The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes. |  |  |  |
| 1. The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes. |  |  |  |
| 1. Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme **duration** (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its **fulltime equivalent contact time** (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.[[22]](#footnote-22) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 6** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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)). |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme has an identified complement of staff[[23]](#footnote-23) (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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[[24]](#footnote-24) opportunities[[25]](#footnote-25). |  |  |  |
| 1. There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 7** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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)). |  |  |  |
| 1. 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: |  |  |  |
| 1. 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) |  |  |  |
| 1. suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) |  |  |  |
| 1. printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment |  |  |  |
| 1. suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable |  |  |  |
| 1. technical support |  |  |  |
| 1. administrative support |  |  |  |
| 1. company placements/internships – if applicable |  |  |  |
| 1. 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). |  |  |  |
| 1. There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address |  |  |  |
| 1. Planned intake (first five years) and |  |  |  |
| 1. The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required. |  |  |  |
| **Criterion 8** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| **Criterion 9** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **There are sound teaching and learning strategies** |  |  |  |
| 1. The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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). |  |  |  |
| 1. Learning is monitored/supervised. |  |  |  |
| 1. Individualised guidance, support[[26]](#footnote-26) and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme. |  |  |  |
| **Criterion 10** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **There are sound assessment strategies** |  |  |  |
| 1. All assessment is undertaken consistently with ***Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards****[[27]](#footnote-27)* |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme’s assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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.[[28]](#footnote-28) |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme includes formative assessment to support learning. |  |  |  |
| 1. There is a satisfactory written **programme assessment strategy** for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.[[29]](#footnote-29) |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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.[[30]](#footnote-30) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Criterion 11** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme. |  |  |  |
| 1. Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures. |  |  |  |
| 1. If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[[31]](#footnote-31). |  |  |  |
| 1. If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[[32]](#footnote-32)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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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). |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion 12** | **Initial Evaluation (optional)** | **Changes made in light of initial evaluation (optional)** | **Final Evaluation** |
| **The programme is well managed** |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. Quality assurance[[33]](#footnote-33) is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. |  |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |  |
| 1. The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. |  |  |  |
| 1. There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification. |  |  |  |

# 

# Mapping MIPLOs against QQI awards standards

## Professional award-type descriptor (currently this is only for apprenticeship programmes)

The descriptors are available here: [http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional\_Award-types\_PS3\_2014.pdf](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf)

**Explanatory Text** should be removed when completing template

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Analysis of Purpose | | | | | | |
|  | **Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N-1 (one below the proposed level)**  **(For information on QQI’s current awards standards see** [http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) **)** | **Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N (the proposed level)**  **(For information on QQI’s current awards standards see** [http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) **)** | **Statement of programme’s purpose** | **Evidence**  Outline how the purpose is realised  Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything.  Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application. | **Analysis**  Demonstrate how the programme purpose statement is consistent with that from the award standard for the proposed award at NFQ level (N).  Focus on the Level N indicators from the award standard and on the differences between the Level N and Level N-1 indicators. | **Commentary**  Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the purpose of the QQI award standard for the award sought. |
| **Purpose** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Overview Analysis of the MIPLOs against QQI Standards (PATD) and Outline of the support for the MIPLOs  **Each thread must be addressed for all awards, where there is no outcome for a thread this should be justified** | | | | | | | |
|  | **Thread** | **Level N-1 (one below the proposed level) Professional Award expected learning outcomes** | **Level N (the proposed level) Professional Award expected learning outcomes** | **Minimum intended programme learning outcomes for each thread** | **Evidence**  Outline how the MIPLOs are achieved and assessed.  Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything.  Provide the main evidence in this table. Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application.  Don’t include outcomes that are aspirational and are not validly and reliably assessed.  Evidence and examples given must be representative and not outliers.  Note that some of the descriptor’s requirements will typically be met by required prior learning. The minimum entry requirements are relevant in this regard (but not the typical entry requirements!) | **Analysis**  Demonstrate how the MIPLOs are consistent with the descriptor for the proposed level (N).  Focus on the Level N descriptor and on the differences between the Level N and level N-1 indicators. | **Commentary**  Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the PADT at the level of the award sought. |
| **Knowledge: breadth and kind** | **Knowledge scope and coherence** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge Structure** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge of issues** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Know-how and skill: range and selectivity*** | **Use cognitive and practical skills (analytical and synthetic) to solve problems** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Draw insightful conclusions** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Communicate and influence** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Competence—**  **Context, Role,**  **learning-to-learn**  **and Insight** | **Exercising autonomy and judgement** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Exercising responsibility** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Working with others** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Learning and teaching** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Attitudes** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Articulation and**  **Progression** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Assessment** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## QQI awards standards for programmes of higher education and training

Note: Providers are expected to either map MIPLO’s to all strands of the award descriptor/standards or give a rationale as to why the strand is not relevant.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Analysis of Purpose | | | | | | |
|  | **Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N-1 (one below the proposed level). If there is no purpose indicator in the relevant award standard, use the purpose indicator from the relevant award type descriptor**  **(For information on QQI’s current awards standards see** [http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) **)** | **Copy the purpose indicator from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N (the proposed level). If there is no purpose indicator in the relevant award standard, use the purpose indicator from the relevant award type descriptor**  **(For information on QQI’s current awards standards see** [http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) **)** | **Statement of programme’s purpose** | **Evidence**  Outline how the purpose is realised  Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything.  Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application. | **Analysis**  Demonstrate how the programme purpose statement is consistent with that from the award standard for the proposed award at NFQ level (N).  Focus on the Level N indicators from the award standard and on the differences between the Level N and Level N-1 indicators. | **Commentary**  Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the purpose of the QQI award standard for the award sought. |
| **Purpose** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Overview Analysis of the MIPLOs against QQI Standards and Outline of the support for the MIPLOs | | | | | | | |
| **Substrand/row** | **Thread** | **Copy the indicators from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N-1 (one below the proposed level)**  **(For information on QQI’s current awards standards see** [http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) **)** | **Copy the indicators from the Relevant QQI Award Standard at Level N (the proposed level)**  **(For information on QQI’s current awards standards see** [http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) **)** | **Minimum intended programme learning outcomes for each thread** | **Evidence**  Outline how the MIPLOs are achieved and assessed.  Focus on the most compelling evidence rather than exhaustively including everything.  Provide the main evidence in this table. Cite relevant documents submitted as part of the application.  Don’t include outcomes that are aspirational and are not validly and reliably assessed.  Evidence and examples given must be representative and not outliers.  Note that some of the standards’s requirements will typically be met by required prior learning. The minimum entry requirements are relevant in this regard (but not the typical entry requirements!) | **Analysis**  Demonstrate how the MIPLOs are consistent with the award standard for the proposed award at NFQ level (N).  Focus on the Level N indicators from the award standard and on the differences between the Level N and level N-1 indicators. | **Commentary**  Comment on the evidence presented explaining how successful completion of the programme results in learning that is consistent with the QQI award standard for the award sought. |
| **Knowledge: breadth and kind** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Know-how and skill: range and selectivity*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Competence—**  **Context** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Competence—**  **Role** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Competence—**  **Learning-to-learn** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Competence—**  **Insight** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Articulation and**  **Progression** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Assessment** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Other QQI awards standards

The template in unit 2 may be used changing what needs to be changed.

Programme Validation Manual (2017) for Programmes

of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET)

Pilot Version (Edition 3)

Part 3

Information for applicants and guidelines for completing and presenting an application

# Information for applicants

The validation process is outlined in *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training.*

Providers should consult the following documents when preparing for validation (the underlined text is hyperlinked to the relevant document or webpage):

* [**QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Pages/QA-Guidelines.aspx)
* [**QQI Policy Restatement—Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Access%20Transfer%20and%20Progression%20-%20QQI%20Policy%20Restatement%202015.pdf)
* [**Policy and Criteria for Making Awards**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Making%20Awards.pdf)
* [**Policy for Determining Awards Standards**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Policy%20for%20Determining%20Awards.pdf)
* [**Awards Standards**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx) (HET non-apprenticeship)
* [**Awards standards for apprenticeship programmes**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf)
* [**Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Validation%20Policies%20and%20Criteria%20QP17.pdf)
* [**Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Policy%20for%20Collaborative%20Programmes%20Transnational%20Programmes%20and%20Joint%20Awards.pdf) provides special validation policy and criteria and quality assurance guidelines for programmes with a collaborative and/or transnational dimension. This document is due to be revised. Parts of it have been superseded by more recent validation policies and criteria and quality assurance guidelines.
* [**Research Degree Programme Policy and Criteria**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Research_Degree_Programme_Policy_and_Criteria.pdf) provides detailed information for prospective providers of research degree programmes including professional doctorate programmes.
* [**Assessment and Standards**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Assessment_and_Standards%20Revised%202013.pdf) (HET) is about the assessment of learners. Among these are *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* and *programme and module assessment strategies*.
* [**Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers,%20Revised%202013.pdf) (FET) This should be used as a guide but it must be noted that the common awards system references don’t apply to the terminal awards made in respect of apprenticeship programmes.
* [**ECTS User’s Guide**](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide_en.pdf)*(European Communities 2015)*
* [**Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training**](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/NQAI%20Guidelines%20and%20Principles%20for%20RPL.pdf) **(NQAI 2005)**sets out the principles and operational guidelines for the recognition of prior learning in further and higher education and training established by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland following consultation with stakeholders.
* **Principles and operational guidelines for the implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training (NQAI 2006)** sets out the national approach to credit in higher education and training. It is intended to complement the National Framework of Qualifications. The Framework is an outcomes-based awards system, and that the national approach to credit is compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation system (ECTS).

These documents are available on the [validation section of our website](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Pages/Programme-Validation07.aspx) via the “What We Do” drop-down menu.

# The Validation Process

The process is governed by [*Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training (2017)*](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Validation%20Policies%20and%20Criteria%20QP17.pdf).

**Unit 5** of *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training* outlines how to present an application for validation. That is the definitive source. This manual provides some supporting material and guidance.

Quotations from the policies and criteria document in this document are set in bold blue typeface (except for the for the validation criteria in the self-evaluation report template).

# Interpretations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **Assessment strategy** | A programme assessment strategy is a document aimed at those teachers, learners and assessors who are involved with the programme. It should be prepared for every programme during the programme’s development and maintained thereafter. The programme assessment strategy should have a number of features.  It should:   * Link a programme’s assessment instruments (summative and formative, including continuous assessment and repeat assessment) to the minimum (and any other) intended programme learning outcomes as well as intended module and stage learning outcomes. * Describe and provide a rationale for the choice of assessment tasks, criteria and procedures. It should also address their fairness and consistency, specifically their validity, reliability and authenticity. * Describe any special regulations (e.g. learners may be required to pass some key modules outright and not rely on pass by compensation). * Regulate, build upon and integrate the module assessment strategies and (where used) stage assessment strategies. * Provide contingent strategy for cases where learners claim exemption from modules, including for recognition of prior learning. * Match the programme’s assessment instruments to the requirements of the institutional grading system, particularly concerning the recording and combination of module grades/marks (i.e. provide clear criteria for grading/marking). * Ensure that the programme’s continuous assessment workload is appropriately balanced. * Relate to the programme’s teaching and learning strategy.   Assessment strategies should be plainly written and communicated at the start of a programme to learners and all those involved with teaching and assessment. A clear assessment strategy can complement a statement of intended learning outcomes and aid its interpretation.  Most programmes are modular to some degree — i.e. they are divisible into parts. When designing programme assessment strategies, it is therefore important to remember that knowledge, skill and competence acquired in particular contexts may not necessarily transfer to a different context without additional learning.  A major award programme will normally require a specific process which, working to the programme assessment strategy, integrates constituent modules so that the intended programme learning outcomes are supported. This should promote overall coherence; consistency between module and programme intended learning outcomes; and establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme.  It should also coordinate alignment of activities (i.e. the learning opportunities including formative assessment and summative assessment) with the intended programme of learning outcomes and induct learners into the broader community practice in their discipline.  When developing programme assessment strategies, developers should consider the practicalities of offering repeat continuous assessment opportunities. For example, it may not be feasible for some continuous assessment tasks to be repeated in the same time-frame as written examinations.  Contradictory assessment findings can emerge when the same learning outcomes are assessed by continuous assessment and written examinations. This can create dilemmas unless the potential for such contradictions is foreseen and provided for in the programme and module assessment strategies.  The guidelines for programme assessment strategies apply, with obvious changes made, to module assessment strategies. |
| **Capstone** | A capstone module is one that provides an opportunity for a learner to integrate accumulated learning and make the necessary connections in the context of a particular discipline.  An example of an award-stage capstone module is a dissertation or project.  Capstone assessment aims to measure cumulative learning at a particular stage, including at the award stage. It is particularly important for award-stage capstone assessment tasks to be authentic. |
| **Module** | A programme of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of being integrated with other modules into larger programmes. A module can be shared by different programmes. See Assessment and Standards for a more elaborate definition. |
|  |  |
| **Stage** | Programmes are normally divided into stages and modules.  Stages and modules are sub-programmes within programmes.  Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. It may comprise a set of modules at a similar level. Typically, the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level of the  intended learning outcomes of constituent modules increases as a learner progresses through successive stages of a programme.  Even where modules are not taken in parallel, the stage concept is important for grouping modules with the same level (NFQ) of learning and requiring a similar level of maturity in the relevant discipline. Full-time learners study all the modules in a stage in parallel, while part-time learners may study as little as one  module at a time.  Staged programmes are frequently organised in semesters. A semester is a period of time equal to half an academic year. Often, it corresponds to a 30-credit stage that extends to at least half an academic year. (Assessment & Standards 2009) |
| **Target learners** | Target learners are persons with specified prerequisite learning and other legitimate prescribed characteristics (e.g. a programme might be designed for students who wish to study through a particular language). |
| **Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLO)** | The minimum achievement (in terms of knowledge, skill and competence) that the learner is certified to have attained if he/she successfully completes a particular programme (i.e. passes all the required assessments).  The minimum intended programme learning outcomes define the minimum learning outcomes for a particular programme at the programme level. These must always be specified by the provider. If the programme allows substantial choice, there may need to be variant forms of the minimum intended programme outcomes — e.g. a programme might allow a person to choose from a number of specialisations.  A learner who completes a validated programme is eligible for the relevant award if he or she has demonstrated, through assessment (including by recognition of prior learning), attainment of the relevant minimum intended programme learning outcomes.  In addition to minimum intended programme learning outcomes, the programme provider may aspire to describing other ‘intended programme learning outcomes’ beyond the minimum. In this document, ‘intended learning outcomes’ refers to all or any of the intended outcomes, including the minimum ones. ‘Minimum intended learning outcomes’ refers exclusively to the minimum ones. The minimum intended programme learning outcomes identify the principal educational goal of the programme — effective assessment helps learners to attain that goal. Minimum intended programme learning outcomes are developed and maintained by providers. Programmes are designed to enable learners to achieve minimum intended programme learning outcomes. Minimum intended learning outcomes are specified for each of a programme’s constituent modules.  The number of learning outcomes in a statement of intended learning outcomes is variable (depending, for example, on the semantics and the level of explicitness used). This is not a proxy for credit.  Teachers and learners may strive for additional learning outcomes that are beyond the minimum. In addition to ‘minimum intended programme learning outcomes’, providers may describe other levels of intended programme learning outcomes beyond the minimum. |
| **Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLO)** | The definition for MIPLOs applies changing what needs to be changed. |
| **Module** | A programme (not necessarily self-standing as a programme) of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of being integrated with other modules into larger programmes. A module can be shared by different programmes.  In describing the educational formation provided by an independent module, it is necessary to specify (among other things): (i) the learning outcome; and (ii) the assumed (i.e. minimum) prior learning (prerequisite learning). Assumed prior learning is sometimes specified by listing prerequisite modules.  Certain parameters are often used in the description of a module. These include an indication of the level (e.g. of the outcome on the NFQ of the module) and of the average (entry qualified) learner effort required to complete the module successfully (normally represented using ECTS compatible credit).  To validate a programme, all of its modules must be considered together. Piecemeal validation (in isolation) of constituent modules within a larger programme cannot validate the larger programme. This is because the piecemeal process is blind to the joint effect of the modules, as well as to the ‘integration of learning and teaching’ that may be required.  Note also that learning acquired through a sequence of modules may depend on the order of the sequence. |
| **Stage** | Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. Many programmes are organised in either semester-based or year based stages. However, it should be stressed that other kinds of stages may be established. Even in cases where there is no temporal structure to the programme (i.e. a learner is only required to pass modules to progress), the stage concept may be used by the programme assessment strategy to group modules, taking the NFQ level and the pre- and co-requisites into account. Typically, the NFQ level of a module increases as a learner progresses through successive stages of a programme. |
| **Programme** | A process by which a learner acquires knowledge, skill or competence and includes a course of study, a course of instruction and an apprenticeship. |

# Guidelines for completing and presenting an application

# Provider Details

All sections must be completed, this is a requirement for a valid application.

## Contextual information about the provider and its other programmes

Providers making frequent applications may wish to document general contextual information separately and cite that document here along with more detail on programme specific aspects**,** in which case it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that this document is up-to-date and applies to the specific application.

Section 5.3 of “[Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training”](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Making%20Awards.pdf)  indicates the programme and supporting documentation that is required as part of an application for validation of a programme. The following extract from the policy summarises.

The programme-related documentation must include sufficient information to address the applicable validation criteria for example:

* An outline of the programme and identification of the QQI award(s) to which it is designed to lead;
* The documented programme (including for example what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and in which modes it is taught, by whom is it taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, how it is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom) should incorporate or be supported by, for example (note - this is indicative and not a check list):
  + The programme’s assessment strategies and procedures;
  + The programme’s teaching and learning strategies (this covers education and training);
  + Precise specifications of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) and an identified complement of staff (or potential staff);
  + CVs for the programme’s key staff (e.g. the programme leadership);
  + Precise specifications of the programme’s physical resource requirements (required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) and an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources);
  + Comprehensive listing of the programme’s key physical resources;
  + Documented procedures for the operation and management of the programme;
  + Five-year plan for the programme;
* Samples of the material to be provided to prospective learners;
* Samples of the material to be provided to enrolled learners;
* Samples of assessment tasks, model answers[[34]](#footnote-34) and marking schemes for each award stage.

Additional documentation may be required to address the applicable validation criteria. For example, any incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures should be documented and provided with the application.

The programme is expected to be developed to the point that it is ready to be offered to learners. Detailed information is required, not just an outline. The validation criteria must be addressed.

Additional or alternative requirements may be set out in the relevant specialised validation policy and criteria documents.

## An outline of the programme and identification of the QQI award(s) to which it designed to lead

The programme outline provides synoptic information about the programme. The template should be used to provide this outline information. Details of the principal programme must always be provided.

Embedded programmes are considered exceptional and must independently meet the validation criteria. Modules that lead to minor or special purpose awards must also meet the validation criteria—in higher education it is expected that most modules will NOT lead to QQI awards.

The term exit award is not used in the current validation policy. An exit award programme is a special case of an embedded programme where the exit award programme is never offered to learners independently and only accessed by learners who enrol on a principal programme and then exit early but have been assessed as having met the requirements for the lower NFQ level award.

### Principal programme

The minimum and maximum numbers requested may become conditions of validation.

If the programme involves work placements this should be noted. Otherwise insert ‘not applicable’ in the box provided.

### Embedded programme[[35]](#footnote-35)

An embedded programme could lead to a major, special purpose, supplemental or professional award.

For each embedded programme use the same form as used for the principal programme. **Shared features should be identified for the principal programme and referenced for each embedded programme**.

An exit award is a special case of an embedded award. However, the corresponding embedded award programme must only be accessible by learners who are suited to completing the principal programme. Exit award embedded programmes cannot be offered independently or listed publically as programmes.

### Stand-alone module[[36]](#footnote-36) leading to a minor award

Stand-alone modules are those that lead to a QQI award and can be offered independently of the programme. More information is required for a stand-alone module **however a separate document is not required.** Modules that are not standalone do not need to be addressed here as the principal programme information will suffice.

For each module leading to a QQI award (minor or special purpose) use the same table as used for the principal programme. Conventionally, the minimum credit for a HET award is **10 HET credits** (one sixth of the learner effort for a full academic year).

**Using the templates for embedded programmes and stand-alone modules**

The remaining parts are presented assuming a principal programme with no embedded programmes or stand-alone modules. **If there is an embedded programme it must without any exception be addressed explicitly and distinctly under every heading—ideally using a completely separate document.** An embedded programme must satisfy all of the validation criteria.

**On using the remaining sections to document the programme**

The remainder is intended to guide the topics to be covered when documenting the programme. For example, what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and in which modes it is taught, by whom is it taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, how it is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom.

For apprenticeship programmes the on-the-job processes must always be addressed as well as the off-the-job process.

The **MIPLOs** (minimum intended programme learning outcomes) and **MIMLOs** (minimum intended module learning outcomes) while important and intrinsic to the programme do not define it. Recall that a programme is defined a process by which a learner acquires knowledge, skill or competence. A metaphor for a programme is a journey with points of departure and destination. MIPLOs are the destination. MIMLOs are intermediate destinations. The entry standard for learners is the point of departure. The target learners must meet the entry standard but may have other characteristics to which the programme attunes. The programme documentation must describe the plan for the journey and **it is never sufficient** just to set out the minimum intended learning outcomes however detailed these are specified.

The information provided about the programme must be sufficient to address the validation policies and criteria comprehensively.

# Educational and training objectives and minimum intended programme and module learning outcomes

Address 17.2 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i)

## Programme aims and objectives

In addition to the overall aims and objectives, state whether there are specific objectives to meet specific statutory, regulatory or professional body requirements.

For example, indicate where the programme aims to meet educational requirements for entry into a specified profession including regulated professions.

For apprenticeship programmes this **must** always include the outcomes achieved via the on-the-job process as well as via the off-the-job process.

## Rationale for the choice of QQI named award stem sought and for the named award title

Providers should ensure the award title is legitimate in all respects. If there are applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements it must be consistent with these.

Providers should consult and its *Policy for Determining Awards Standards* as well as the suite of QQI awards standards.

Address criterion 17.4(f, g).

## QQI awards standards used

The list of HET awards standards is here [https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx)

The apprenticeship awards standards are here (these are generic) [http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Professional\_Award-types\_PS3\_2014.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf)

In some cases, more than one QQI standard applies e.g. a Bachelor of Science Honours in Business must satisfy both the science and business standards. The standards applied should be indicated.

## Minimum intended programme learning outcomes

State the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) in terms of knowledge, skill and competence. The MIPLOs are for the programme as a whole. It is not sufficient to list the minimum intended module learning outcomes for the constituent modules.

If the programme has streams where different group’s take different electives there will normally need to be separate MIPLOs for each stream.

## Minimum intended module and (where applicable) stage learning outcomes

State the minimum intended module learning outcomes for each of the programmes modules and stages. This must be done whether or not the modules or stages lead to QQI awards.

Modules and stages for this purpose are discrete parts of the programme.

If the programme involves work-based learning the learning outcomes associated with this learning must be stated explicitly.

If this information is presented with module descriptors, then cross-reference here.

If the programme has streams where different group’s take different electives there will normally need to be separate MISLOs for each stream.

## Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency

A programme’s volume, purpose, minimum intended learning outcomes, minimum prior learning at entry, articulation and progression arrangements and assessment procedures must **align** with the corresponding QQI standard for the award sought.

This should be demonstrated by mapping the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) (i.e. the minimum knowledge, skill and competence a person must achieve and demonstrate in order to be recommended for the award) against the applicable award standard.

The MIPLOs should meet or exceed the award standard’s expected learning outcomes statements.

The presentation of the case for an award at NFQ level N should pay particular attention to the difference between levels N and N-1, for example, the difference between Level 7 and Level 8.

In addition to this mapping of the MIPLOs to the relevant standard, there must be evidence that minimum intended programme learning outcomes (and subsidiary outcomes associated with strands, phases, modules, stages and such like) are assessed validly and reliably and that learners who enter with the minimum entry requirements are enabled to achieve the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and will achieve them should they complete the programme (successfully). In programmes that involve work-based learning there must be explicit intended outcomes associated with the work-based learning and these must be assessed and integrated into the programme and this alignment exercise.

**The tabled provided in Unit 13** **should also be completed to** help present the mapping and the main supporting evidence for consistency of the MIPLOs with the relevant awards standards. When using this a focus should be placed on the most powerful evidence for a programme’s MILPOs meeting or exceeding the expected learning outcomes of the applicable award standard, rather than trying to exhaustively link all of the evidence. Nevertheless, there must be sufficient evidence.

Note: Providers are expected to either map MIPLO’s to all strands of the award descriptor/standards or give a rationale as to why the strand is not relevant.

Here as in all other parts of the application, the application must present the evidence that the applicant wishes QQI (specifically the validation panel) to consider. Evidence that is not included with the application cannot be considered. The onus is on the provider to make a complete application.

All assertions made in the alignment exercise must be supported by evidence. For example, representative sample examination materials (e.g. papers, marking schemes and such like) should be included. The applicant should use the evidence in presenting its case. It is not sufficient to just present it. The provider must not expect the panel to have to trawl the supporting material to assemble the evidence and make the case for itself.

There are two points here (i) information needs to be made available upfront rather than the panel having to seek additional material during the process (ii) evidence needs to be systematically presented in support of the case rather than delivered in bulk assuming the panel will delve into supporting material to find evidence that supports the application.

It is important to link the expected learning outcomes statements from the QQI standards elements to the MIPLOs and to the curriculum and assessment. There should be a clear trail in evidence between these.

Note that in a multi-year programme not all of the expected learning outcomes will be at the level of the final award**. If a major award is sought, then at least 120 FET credits or 60 ETCS (that is 1500-1800 hours of learner effort[[37]](#footnote-37)) must result in outcomes at the NFQ level of the major award.** This must be demonstrated.

Note that a QQI validation panel will not recommend validation at a lower NFQ level if it cannot recommend recognition at the level sought. It is important therefore for the applicant to be satisfied that sufficient evidence has been provided in support of the award sought in respect of the programme.

## Comparing the MIPLOs with those of comparable programmes

Compare the proposed programme’s MIPLOs with those of existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find. **Where it proves difficult to obtain this information in Ireland because details are not published and where there may be competition between providers, it is sufficient to make international comparisons.**

## Mapping the MIMLOs against the QQI awards standards

This must be done for any module for which a QQI minor award is to be made OR an NFQ level is to be assigned.

If this mapping is presented with module descriptors, then cross-reference here.

## Other matters

# Programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards

Address 17.3(a, b, c, d)

## Rationale for providing the programme

## Profile of learners that would be enrolled (target learners)

Section 4 will deal with formal access requirements and such like. This section should provide a broader perspective to help explain whom the programme is for.

## Education and training needs met by the programme

## Alignment of the programme with the professional/occupational profile if the programme is a professional one

This applies to professional programmes at all levels including apprenticeship programmes.

## How the programme and its intended programme learning outcomes were conceived, researched and developed

Address 17.3(a) in particular here.

## Interpretation of the awards standards and research supporting the programme’s aims, objectives and the MIPLOs

QQI awards standards for apprenticeship programmes are generic (the Professional Award-type Descriptors (PATDs)) and require interpretation in the context of particular occupations. The MIPLOs are the result of that interpretation. These along with the programme aims and objectives must be adequately researched. This should be addressed here.

Awards standards for HET programmes while not always generic are broad and also require interpretation. They should be similarly addressed.

**There must be evidence of well-informed interpretation of the QQI awards standards**

Note that QQI awards standards even when they are very detailed are not written to function as MIPLOs! It is never appropriate to just copy the QQI award standard and call it the MIPLO.

## Involvement of employers and practitioners in the design of a vocationally oriented programme: process and outcomes

## Comparison with other programmes (of other providers)

The purpose of this comparison is to place the programme in the context of other programmes indicating what it has in common with them and whether it has any distinguishing features. Providing this information will help demonstrate that the development of the programme has been well researched.

The comparisons should cover teaching, learning and assessment strategy as well as outcomes (addressed in section 2), the profile of target learners, and if the programme is professional the professional context.

Compare the proposed programme (not just MIPLOs as above) with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.

## Evidence of support for the introduction of the programme

## Evidence of learner demand for the programme

## Evidence of employment opportunities for graduates

## Planned intake

This should include numbers to be recruited per intake over five years.

## Five-year plan for the proposed programme

This **outline plan** must address criterion 17.7(d**) including costs and income based on the planned intake.**

## Other matters

# Access, transfer and progression procedures, criteria and arrangements for the programme

Address 17.3(a, b, c, d, e, f, g).

## Information to be made available to learners about the programme

This information should explain what the programme expects of learners and what they can expect of it and the awards to which it leads. Cite and make available documents and promotional material that will be provided to learners including material that will be used in prospectuses and a (draft) programme (student) handbook.

## Entry procedures and criteria for the programme including procedures recognition of prior learning

This should provide programme-specific procedures for entry and how they interface with the institutional procedures (the institutional procedures should be made available e.g. online).

Provide details of the procedures and criteria for determining whether or not any of the applicant’s qualifications help them to meet the entry requirements or to qualify them for entry to an advanced stage or other exemptions from parts of the programme.

Among other things, details should also be provided about the processes in place for the assessment of learners entering the programme on the basis of being mature learners, or through recognition of prior learning or assessment of prior experiential learning (see Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training NQAI 2005).

### Entry procedures

Under each heading provided provide details of the minimum prerequisite learning (knowledge, skill and competence) required to access the programme. Explain how this is assessed in each case.

Similar details should also be provided about perquisite learning for access (or transfer) to higher stages of the programme.

State the minimum English language competence required for participation in the programme.

Indicate the kinds of qualifications which would demonstrate the achievement of the access requirements above.

If the programme is designed for learners who have completed the leaving certificate (or equivalent) indicate the minimum access requirements in terms of leaving certificate performance (or equivalent) including any subject requirements.

If candidates are interviewed before being granted access state and explain the criteria used to determine whether a person passes the interview stage and explain how the interview is conducted.

### Minimum requirements for general learning

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

### Minimum requirements for discipline-specific learning

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

### Minimum experiential requirements (if applicable)

### Minimum language proficiency requirements

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

### Minimum mathematical proficiency requirements

State the knowledge, skill and competence. State also any qualifications that will be accepted as indicating that these requirements have been met.

### Minimum criteria for passing the access interview (if applicable)

State the knowledge, skill and competence.

### Detail any other criteria for selecting learners

Include anything that is likely to be relevant to the implementation of the programme. For example, whether the programme caters for international learners, whether it caters for children, whether it caters for mature learners, whether learners are required to be working in a particular role and context…

### Programme-specific RPL criteria, and arrangements for entry, exemptions from modules, advanced entry and direct access to the award

Module specific exemption criteria may be provided within the module descriptors if not here.

## Programme-specific transfer (outward) procedures and criteria

Details of the processes for the transfer of learners from the programme at other than the commencement stage should also be provided.

## Identified transfer and progression destinations

Indicate at least two programmes of education and training that graduates of the proposed programme will be entitled to progress to, following successful completion of the programme.

Indicate any specific transfer destinations that are already known.

## Professional accreditation of the programme

Indicate whether the programme has been professionally accredited (recognised by a professional body as meeting its educational requirements).

Indicate whether or not it is planned that the programme would be professionally accredited.

Give details.

## Detail the credit system used for the programme

Note that ECTS credit requires 25 to 30 hours of learner effort per credit. 25 hours is a minimum for one credit.

60 hours is 2 ECTS.

26 hours is 1 ECTS.

Carefully, explain how credits are calculated.

## Other matters

**General guidance for sections 5-8.**

The following is general guidance that applies to all of the sub headings in units 5, 6, 7 and 8. Additional guidance is provided under some of the sub-headings.

Each descriptor must

* Specify the aims and objectives for each module and explain how it is included in the programme and how it relates to the minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
* Specify the MIPLOs and MISLOs and MIMLOs
* Detail the indicative content for each module. A module is a process by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence. This process should be described in detail here. A teaching plan listing lectures, tutorials, practical work and continuous assessment tasks should be included giving sufficient detail to enable the evaluators to satisfy themselves that the curriculum is appropriate to the intended module learning outcomes.
* Identify reading lists and other prescribed learning materials: a list of core textbooks, lecture notes, e-learning resources and other teaching and learning materials should be included. Copies of these should be available for examination by the expert panel at the site visit. Any supplementary learning materials should be listed.
* Specify minimum staff-learner ratios.
* Specify the staffing requirements (including the particular requirements for each module).
* Describe and explain the assessment strategies: Programme assessment strategies should be produced for each programme, and module assessment strategies for each of its constituent modules. The programme assessment strategy should make particular reference to the role of the capstone modules. Stage assessment strategies should be integrated into the programme assessment strategy.
* Provide sample assessment tasks (e.g. examination papers) with rubrics. Representative samples of examination paper questions and continuous assessment tasks should be provided for each module whose grade contributes to the overall grade/classification for the major award. These should be accompanied by criterion referenced grading schemes (see Assessment and Standards HET) illustrating how learner’s responses to assessment tasks will be graded.
* Describe and explain the teaching and learning strategies. Full details should be provided on the intended teaching and learning strategies for each module. These should address the opportunities for learning in the context of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the module’s prerequisite learning. Cross-reference this with the module assessment strategy particularly regarding the role of assessment in the promotion of learning. In the case of capstone modules explain how learning acquired in other modules is integrated. If the module involves the use of e-learning tools or laboratory facilities or such like this should be noted and the quantity and availability of the relevant resources should be addressed under physical resources.
* Characterise the intended learning environments and explain how they are created (note the relevant validation criteria)
* Precisely specify the physical resource **requirements** (required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) for the **programme** and where applicable **for each module**. Please don’t drop in unspecific information such as the entire library holdings. These include educational and training and other resources e.g.
  + Library holdings for this programme
  + Information and communication technology resources (dedicated to this programme e.g. if there is a software package that is provided how many licences and how many workstations are available for the programme and how are they timetabled for this programme).
  + Laboratories, workshops and studios (quantifying availability for this programme)
  + E-learning resources (quantifying availability)
  + Study facilities (quantifying availability for this programme)
  + Lecture theatres (quantifying availability for this programme)
  + Facilities for learners with special education and training needs (quantifying availability for this programme)
  + Common Room (how much room is available,
  + Health and Welfare Facilities
  + Facilities for International Students
* Identify the supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) **that are currently available** to this programme.
* Specify minimum resource-learner ratios.
* Describe and explain the arrangements for learners with special education and training needs (detailing any distinct arrangements for modules).
* Identify the required prior learning for the programme and for modules and co-requisite modules (where applicable).

# Written curriculum

This will be a substantial part of the programme documentation. It must address the overall programme and each of its modules in turn. It must include indicative content for each module (it is never sufficient just to include the intended module learning outcomes).

It must provide sufficient information about the programme for it to be evaluated against the QQI validation criteria.

**It must detail what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and in which modes it is taught, by whom is it taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, what are the minimum intended learning outcomes, how learning is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom.**

It should also address the intellectual advancement of the learner and the evolution of the learning experience intended with particular reference to the progression journey (beginning–middle-end)

Note that where a programme involves work-based learning this must be treated as rigorously as other parts i.e. all the foregoing need to be addressed.

In all of this it must be explained how the programme, stages and modules enables a learner meeting the prior learning requirements to achieve and demonstrate the minimum intended learning outcomes for the respective programme, modules and stages.

The provider is free to format the written curriculum as it chooses provided that it can be evaluated against QQI’s validation criteria. The forms provided in this guideline (including the proposed programme schedule) must always be completed as they provided important headline information about the programme that might, for example, be included on the certificate of validation.

If the work-placement is integrated into one or more modules cite the modules here and provide the details in the relevant module descriptors.

Honours bachelor’s degree and master’s degree programmes will always include a major (capstone) dissertation or project at the award stage and possibly at other stages. Other programmes may also include such elements. This section should cite the relevant modules.

The structure of the programme must be summarised in a **proposed programme schedule**. A template for the programme schedule is provided in unit 14.

## Outline of the curriculum

### Stage level outline

The synopses should address the purpose of the stage in the contact of the overall programme.

If the programme has multiple streams, then the stage synopses will normally need to be differentiated for each stream.

### Rules for electives and their rationale

Electives allow intended programme learning outcomes to be tailored to the needs of learners.

### Module-level outline

## Rationale for the curriculum structure

## Rationale for the programme’s duration, credit allocation

In justifying the learner effort and credit allocation, it is necessary to address the effort required by a learner to progress from the minimum entry standard for the programme (prior learning) to at least the MIPLOs.

If the programme duration is atypical the rationale for the atypical duration should be carefully set out.

## Indicative timetable and its rationale

Explain how the learner’s time is employed in the programme’s activities, this must include, for example, lectures (exact number of hours of learning effort so 45 minutes is 0.75 hours), laboratory demonstrations, time in work placement, time in work (if apprenticeship or traineeship), and such like.

In all cases the distribution of activity over the weeks, months, semesters and years should also be set out clearly. So, for example, if there are 9 hours of laboratory demonstrations per week, indicate how this is distributed over the days of the week. **There should be clear evidence to justify how achievable the programme is.**

## Integrated learning opportunities and assessment in light of the MIPLOs

Explain what opportunities are provided for integration of learning. For example, an assigned project through which the learner draws on a wide range of their knowledge and skills to demonstrate competence.

## Programme teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

Here formative assessment means assessment for learning. Formative and summative assessment may overlap.

Teaching should be understood in its most general sense; to include, for example, workplace training in the context of apprenticeships.

When presenting strategy, set out the objectives, approach and explain how they are achieved.

Ensure that the strategy for interacting with learners is carefully explained not just in terms of inputs (e.g. lectures and tutorials) but also how individual learner progress is continually inferred and how timely interventions are made to support learning (e.g. feedback).

For longer programmes it is important to explain how learners build up to the programme learning outcomes. The strategy should address the academic, professional, intellectual and broader personal development of learners (as appropriate) as they progress through the programme. It is expected that in such programmes, the stage-strategies will evolve with learners’ increasing competence.

For apprenticeship programmes take care to address the work-based formation and learning strategy systematically in detail.

Explain the teaching and learning strategy for the programme as a whole. Pay particular attention to the integration of learning within the modules to enable learners to achieve the **intended programme learning outcomes**. The formative assessment strategy should be addressed here—i.e. how assessment is used to guide and support learning.

Teaching should be understood to include all kinds of formational interventions involved in the education or training of learners.

Much information about the teaching and learning strategies will be provided in the module descriptors. This need not be repeated here.

Note that all accredited teaching and learning effort should be addressed with equal rigour including on-the-job learning in traineeship or apprenticeship programmes.

## Integration, organisation and oversight of work-based learning

For apprenticeship programmes, for example, it is particularly important to explain how the formation apprentices receive in the workplace is integrated with the formation they receive in college to form a coherent whole.

## Programme learning environment

The scope includes:

* Physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment
* The learner experience
* The work-based learning environments

For apprenticeship programmes note in particular section 5 of the - Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

## Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners

Note criteria 17.11 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, I, j).

For apprenticeship programmes note in particular section 5 of the - Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

## Programme summative assessment strategy

Explain the assessment strategy for the programme as a whole. Pay particular attention to explaining how the achievement of MIPLOs is assessed reliably and validly.

Outline the arrangements for the oversight and coordination of learner assessment.

For apprenticeship programmes note in particular section 4.3 of the - Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes.

QQI will be developing new guidelines for assessment in the context of FET programmes. Parts of the current guidelines that are contingent on CAS only apply to programmes leading to CAS awards (i.e. not to apprenticeship programmes). QQI should be consulted if there are any questions about this.

## Proposed programme and stage schedules

A per-stage template for this and guidelines are provided in Part 2.

# Module Documentation

A module is an element of a programme that is a programme but is not necessarily validated on a stand-alone basis. Modules in higher education programmes are not normally validated on a stand-alone basis.

In an apprenticeship and traineeship programmes the work-based learning phases should be reported as modules.

## Module 1

### Headline information about the module

The table MUST be used to provided headline information about each module.

Some repetition of material presented earlier is called for in the following sections here to aid presentation.

### Module aims and objectives

### Minimum intended module learning outcomes

### Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall IPLOs

### Information provided to learners about the module

Explain how the module is presented to learners e.g. in promotional material and in learner handbooks.

This must, among other things, be consistent with information to be included on the Europass Certificate or Diploma Supplement.

### Module content, organisation and structure

This will be a substantial part of the module description.

The presentation should be sufficiently detailed for evaluation of the suitability of the content in light of the MIMLOs and the entry requirements.

It must systematically describe how learners are formed. All applicable modes of teaching and learning should be addressed (including any on-the-job training e.g. in apprenticeship programmes).

It must also be sufficiently detailed to ensure that any two suitably qualified staff who are assigned to teach the module will deliver it reasonably consistently.

### Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

Modules are programmes within programmes and should be approached strategically. This section should set out the strategy.

The strategy should, among other things, justify the staff/learner ratios and modes of teaching and learning.

### Work-based learning and practice-placement

### E-learning

If applicable describe the e-learning approach and ensure to provide access to the e-learning content and resources.

### Module physical resource requirements

Supported physical resource requirements expressed as a ratio of learners participating (meaning the module will only be offered when these are in place. Refer to criterion 17.7.

Address resource-learner ratio.

### Reading lists and other information resources

### Specifications for module staffing requirements

Having regard to the information already provided in 6.1.1, specify any further details on qualifications (professional, pedagogical[[38]](#footnote-38) and academic) and experience requirements refer to criterion 17.6.

This also applies to employer-based personnel who have a formal role in the formation of apprentices or trainees.

Address staff-learner ratio.

### Module summative assessment strategy

Note the definition of assessment strategy. Explain the strategy.

In setting out the strategy include an explanation of how assessment tasks that form part of the strategy are classified using the following standard categories as used in the programme schedule and module summary.

* Continuous assessment
* Supervised project
* Proctored practical examination
* Proctored written examination

### Sample assessment materials

## Module [2]

Use the same headings as above and repeat as necessary.

# Programme Staff

Much information about the specifications for programme staff will be provided in the module descriptors. This need not be repeated here.

## Programme director and board

Each programme should have a programme director and board. These people are expected to meet the independent evaluation group during a validation site visit.

Note that for apprenticeship programmes the make-up of the programme board is addressed by the Statutory QA Guidelines.

Provide the terms of reference for the Programme Board for the particular programme.

## Complement of staff (or potential staff)

Refer top 17.6(b, c) in particular.

Identify staff (or potential staff if not in post already) meeting the requirements. Provide curricula vitae for these:

* Name
* Qualifications (with date and awarding body)
* Employment history
* Educational and training qualifications, experience and history
* Current teaching load without the proposed programme
* Specialisation
* Publications
* Professional memberships
* Affiliations

## Arrangements for the interface for work placement of employer-based personnel involved in apprenticeship or traineeship programmes

**If the provider is doing the assessment this is not required**

## Programme-specific staff performance management arrangements

Outline the programme-specific performance management and development arrangements.

## Arrangements for approval of staff who will have a formal role in this programme

Can reference section 1.1

## CVs for the programme’s key staff (e.g. the programme leadership) and for the identified complement of staff

There must always be an identified complement of staff to run an instance of the programme.

## Recruitment plan for staff not already in post

# Physical resources

Much information about the programme’s physical resources will be provided in the module descriptors. This need not be repeated here.

See 17.7 (a, b, c, d, e).

## Specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements

## Complement of supported physical resources (or potential ones)

### Premises

Describe the main premises where the programme is to be provided.

Include a signed declaration by the chief executive or equivalent that the premises would meet all applicable legal requirements if the programme were to be provided considering the number of learners planned to be enrolled on this programme in addition to all other persons using the premises.

If the programme is to be provided at multiple unspecified centres and the provider has approved QA procedures that govern this, then set out the minimum requirements that must be met by such a centre.

### Informational technology resources

### Materials for teaching, learning and assessment (software and printed)

### Specialised equipment

### Technical and administrative support services

## Company placement resources

Note 17.7(b)(vii).

## Criteria for approving a new centre where the programme may be provided (only if applicable)

Note 17.7(c).

## Entitlements to use the property required

Note 17.7(e).

# Programme management

Note criteria 17.12 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).

## Documented procedures for the operation and management of the programme

Cite the document which should accompany the application. Explain how the procedures meet the criteria. Note criteria 17.12 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).

## Supplementary QA procedures for the programme

Cite the document which should accompany the application. Explain how the procedures meet the criteria. Note criteria 17.12 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).

Supplementary QA procedures for the programme must be consistent with the applicants QQI approved QA procedures. A link should be provided to the approved QA procedures and the date when these were approved by QQI should be stated.

Reference section 1.1 - additional supplementary QA procedures can include for example a reference to handbooks on website, and a short summary to indicate what procedures are in place

## Mechanisms to keep the programme updated and how it will be updated in consultation with stakeholders

## Compliance with special validation criteria or requirements attached to the applicable awards standards

## Membership and terms of reference for the programme board

## Collaborative provision

If the programme involves collaborative provision see QQI’s Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards for special requirements. The partner providers should be identified and consulted and involved in the application for validation. They should also be consulted and be involved in the application for validation. The relevant consortium agreement must be established and should also be provided with the application. It should be made clear which partner provider is responsible for what. Collaborative provision should also be addressed under the section on quality assurance.

## Apprenticeship coordinating provider role

Memoranda of understanding/agreement with employers and collaborating providers must be included (see apprenticeship QA guidelines) see also Section 7. If they are not finalised include draft versions and explain what must be done to finalise and identify any critical issues.

## Transnational provision

If the programme involves transnational provision see QQI’s Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards for special requirements. Transnational provision should also be addressed under the section on quality assurance

Reference QA, show Terms of Reference, outline who is on the Programme Board

# Proposed Programme Schedule

Template provided in Part 2.

## Introduction

This is a guideline on preparing a *proposed programme schedule*.

A programme schedule is a summary of the information about the programme.

Following a decision to validate or revalidate a programme, QQI issues a certificate of validation. The proposed programme schedule following any modifications required for validation becomes the *approved programme schedule*. It is integrated into the certificate of validation.

The provider, upon receipt of the certificate of validation, is required to check that it is accurate in all respects. If there are any discrepancies or inconsistencies the provider should notify QQI immediately in writing.

## Programme-level information

Programmes are normally divided into *stages* and *modules*. *Stages* and modules are sub-programmes within programmes.

The programme’s *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* together with its *minimum prerequisite learning requirements* and its total *credit* (FET or HET Credit[[39]](#footnote-39)) influence the determination of the:

* Programme Title
* Award Title (including Award Type)
* Award Class (Major, Minor, Special purpose, Supplemental and Professional)
* Award-type including the NFQ Level of the Award (and any minor awards or embedded awards)

The programme schedule is but a summary. The detail underpinning the proposed programme schedule must be elaborated in any application for validation.

**HET Note:** The *Principles and operational guidelines for the implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training* (NQAI 2006) requires that there be at least 60 credits (ECTS) of new learning at the NFQ level of a major award before that award can be made.

**HET Note: *Sectoral Convention 5*** *(Assessment and Standards* 2013) *on the Post-award Achievement* *required for an additional HET major award at the same level.*

### Award title

Award titles must be consistent with the *QQI* [*Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Making%20Awards.pdf). (pay particular attention to 3.1.b). Standards determinations are addressed by QQI’s [Policy for Determining Awards Standards](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Policy%20for%20Determining%20Awards.pdf).

In practical terms the specification of a named award consists of a stem and a specialisation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Named Award Stem** | **Specialisation** |
| Honours Bachelor of Science | in Nursing in General Nursing |
| Advanced Certificate | ... |

**Note:** The approach to the consistent titling of the specialisation part of apprenticeship award titles is still under consultation with stakeholders—working titles should be proposed in the meantime.

### Programme title

The *programme title* consists at least of the award title including the *specialisatio*n. In many cases, additional information will be required e.g. “Part-time programme leading to [Named Award Title]”.

When choosing the proposed programme title, or changing the title of an existing programme, it is important to ensure that it accurately and concisely reflects the programme and its intended learning outcomes. Programme titles should be formal and complete. Abbreviations should be avoided.

### Award class

There are five classes of award types available (award class), namely, Major, Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental and Professional. The following material is from that document which should be consulted for a more complete distinction of the classes of award-types.

Award-types which fulfil a broader range of purposes are labelled major award-types. Other, more limited or specialised needs are met by minor, supplemental and special-purpose award-types.

*Major awards:*Major award-types are the principal class of awards made at each level. At most levels, such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the level. They include outcomes from many of the sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence appropriate to the level. An example of this at level 8 is the honours bachelor’s degree.All major awards are listed on the *QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.

*Minor awards:* Minor award-types provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, without achieving the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. The range of learning outcomes will have relevance in their own right. The minor award will also be a means of identifying the knowledge, skill or competence previously acquired by the learner. All minor awards must be linked to a specified approved major award.

*Special-purpose awards:* Special-purpose award-types are made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes. They may comprise learning outcomes that also form part of major awards. However, where there is a need for separate certification of a set of outcomes, there should be a separate award. For example, there is a statutory obligation for construction workers to have certification of their competence in health and safety (Safe Pass). Special–purpose awards need not be linked to a major award.

*Supplemental awards:* Supplemental award-types are for learning which is additional to a previous award. Programmes leading to such awards may be described as refresher, updating or continuing education and training. In some cases, there may be regulatory requirements for such awards in order for learners to retain a licence to practice granted in respect of the initial award. Such supplemental awards are not at a higher level than the initial award.

An award of a *professional class* may also have another class (e.g. major or supplemental). The expected learning outcomes for awards of professional class (independent of any other class that applies) are governed by the Professional Award-type Descriptor.

### Award NFQ Level

The NFQ Levels for major award types are indicated in the [*Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Making%20Awards.pdf) (Appendix 1, page7). For example, Level 6 for a Higher Certificate, Level 9 for a Master’s Degree.

### Main Modes of Delivery (full-time and part-time)

For the purpose of the Approved Programme Schedule, two modes of delivery can be recorded. These are: full-time (FT) and part-time (PT).

### Work-based learning

Work-based learning takes many forms. Here the focus is on goal-oriented, quality assured assessed learning in the work place. This learning must be intrinsic to the programme. Unfocussed work experience is not relevant.

Some examples are:

* Apprenticeship (statutory)
* Traineeship
* Practice-placement
* Work-based case-study
* Training in the workplace

### Teaching and learning modalities

Programmes may involve more than one teaching and learning modality.

Some examples are:

* Direct contact via lectures and demonstrations
* Blended e-learning
* E-learning
* Problem-based learning

## Stage information

Programmes are organised in *stages* (see *Assessment and Standards* 2013 for HET programmes).

Typically, a stage is an academic year (60 HET credits for HET). In smaller programmes a stage may be a *semester* (30 HET credits) or some other appropriate division. However, it is quite common for a small programme to consist of just one stage.

All programmes must include an *award stage*. This is the final stage of a programme. Successful completion of the award stage entitles a learner to the award assuming he or she has achieved the prerequisite learning and met any other requirements.

Stages other than the award stage should be labelled on the proposed programme schedule by numbers in the sequence 1,2,3, etc., the final stage being labelled as the ‘Award Stage’. The semester should be indicated if appropriate: Semester 1 or Semester 2. Many programmes are not divided into semesters.

### Stage Credit

The total credit for each stage should be displayed clearly in the programme schedule.

### Calculation of the Award Classification (HET) or Grade (FET)

Explain how the award classification/grade is calculated. For HET programmes refer to Assessment and Standards 2013.

## Module Information

All modules in a programme should have a unique and meaningful *module title*.  The following should be borne in mind when choosing module titles:

* Module titles (individually and collectively) are most effective when they are clear, concise, coherent and consistent.
* The title should clearly and unambiguously reflect the module content.
* Module titles should be as future-proofed as possible.
* Normally, the module title should not exceed 70 characters (including spaces).
* In each stage the mandatory modules should appear first followed by elective modules.
* Where a subject spreads over two semesters or stages, the module titles should be differentiated. If, for example ‘Chemistry’ spreads over two semesters the module titles ‘Chemistry 1’ and ‘Chemistry 2’ should be used.
* The information in the Approved Programme Schedule must correspond exactly with the HET *broadsheet of results* (see *Assessment and Standards* 2013) which must be submitted to QQI before any HET awards will be made. Similar arrangements must be made for FET apprenticeship progarmmes (QQI should be consulted about this).

### Semesters number and module reference/number

In the case of semesterised programmes, the approved programme schedule should also indicate the semester number (1 or 2).

The proposed programme schedule does not require a module reference number but nevertheless modules should be appropriately labelled.

### Module status

The status of each subject should be indicated in accordance with the following:

* Mandatory (M): each learner must present and pass in all mandatory modules.
* Elective (E): in addition to the above a candidate must present and pass in the number of Elective Examination Modules to achieve the quota of credits for the stage.

### Hours of HET learning effort

The ECTS User’s Guide should be used to inform the calculation of learning effort for programmes of HET.

The learner effort (measured in hours) required to complete a module should be estimated in terms of the total contact hours and the total independent effort hours. The examples in the following table explains the difference between contact hours and independent effort.

**Examples**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact hours (instructor/tutor/trainer-led)** | **Independent learning effort** |
| Lecture  Practical demonstration  Seminars  Small-group tutoring  Project supervision meeting  Mentoring | Assignments  Self-directed independent work (including e-learning)  Assigned reading  Project work |
| **Directed e-learning** | **Work-based learning** |
|  | Supervised practice placements  On-the-job training in an apprenticeship or traineeship |

### Allocation of marks within modules

The *grade* for a particular module will normally be made up of contributions from more than one of the following elements:

* Proctored Written Examination (Final)
* Supervised Project Work (Proj.)
* Proctored Practical Demonstration (Prac.)
* Continuous Assessment (CA)

The four percentage values listed above indicate the *weighting* to be given in the overall grade/mark to the various assessment elements. These weightings are applied to the percentage point values achieved for each of the elements in the percentage grading system or the grade point values if the alphabetic grading system is used. In this way an overall percentage-point or grade point result may be obtained for the module.

The weightings reported must be taken from the module assessment strategy.

### Number of credits for the module

Each module is allocated a certain number of credits (whole numbers only). Credits, in general, should be assigned in multiples of 5. The total number of credits for each stage of a programme which equates with one academic year’s full time learning should equal 60 and 120 for HET and FET respectively.

Credits are allocated to each module. The ‘quantum’ for each module is defined as the amount of total effort a student must devote to achieving the intended learning outcomes of that module. This effort might include attendance at lectures, practical work, participating in tutorials, completing projects, and independent study, including time spent researching etc.

Under ECTS convention, each credit represents 25-30 hours of student effort derived from the notion that 60 credits represent the workload of an average full-time student during one academic year.  It is worth noting that in this context, workload refers to the notional time/effort within which the average learner may expect to complete the required learning outcomes for a given module. Credit is not directly related to time put in by a student, for example, the learning effort for work placement may only be a fraction of the hours spent working.

### Other information

Other information that should be recorded for each module includes:

* The NFQ-Level of the module’s *minimum intended learning outcomes* this is not mandatory and must be confirmed at validation.
* Prerequisites for the module (this does not appear on the programme schedule) can be expressed as knowledge, skill and competence, or where appropriate by listing other modules that must be passed prior to starting a module).

## Progression

The programme schedules assume that a learner successfully completed all prior stages before being entitled to start a new stage (the prior stages are the prerequisites). Any deviation from this should be recorded under Special Regulationsin the schedule.

## Special regulations

Special regulations provide for the inclusion of special rules which pertain to the programme. They are included on an approved programme schedule in exceptional circumstances. They require the same level of approval as all other entries on the approved programme schedule. These rules are exceptional. An example of a special regulation is the exclusion of a particular module from pass-by-compensation.

The text of a special regulation must be concise (not exceeding a maximum of 280 characters).

The special regulations should indicate the modules which contribute to the award classification if these come from a stage other than the Award Stage. This material must be taken from the *Programme Assessment Strategy*.

**Supporting Templates**

# Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

Note that minor and embedded award programmes each require separate schedules.

Please see the accompanying notes (next page) on the use of the *Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage*.

**Further notes on completing the Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage**

1. *This level may only be defined if the intended module learning outcomes have been independently assessed (at validation) as being at a particular NFQ framework level.*
2. *This level may only be defined if the intended stage learning outcomes have been specified explicitly and independently assessed (at validation) as being at a particular NFQ framework level.*
3. *A stage exit award may only be established if the intended programme learning outcomes have been specified explicitly for an* ***embedded programme*** *leading to that award and culminating with that stage and that programme has been validated using the relevant awards standards.*
4. *Award class is either Major or Minor or Special-purpose or Supplemental and it may be Professional (because a professional class award may be in two classes)*
5. *Student learning effort is represented by HET or FET Credit for HET and FET programmes respectively. If ECTS is used learner effort must be at least 25 hours of learner effort per credit.*

# Evaluation against the validation criteria

**Prior to making an application for validation of a programme, a provider is required to conduct, and prepare a report on, an evaluation of the relevant programme against the applicable validation policies and criteria. This process is expected to be conducted in accordance with the applicant’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures and not to be confused with the independent evaluation defined in unit (6).**

QQI’s validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey panels. The evaluation by the applicant against these criteria is a particularly important part of the application.

**The programme documentation and provider’s evaluation report must address the applicable validation criteria. QQI may refuse validation on the grounds that the application does not address the applicable validation criteria. The onus is on the applicant to present a complete case.**

**Applicants should note that validation may be refused if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.**

The evaluation of the programme against the criteria must explain how the application meets the criteria. ***A mere assertion that a programme meets the criterion is not sufficient. This is not just a check-list!***

In explaining how the proposed programme meets a particular validation criterion the evaluation report should outline the pain points of the argument and where necessary provide more detailed analysis in supporting documentation to be provided with the application.

Evaluation against some criteria may require significantly more effort than others.

# Mapping MIPLOs against QQI awards standards

This page is A3 to accommodate the large table. Please note that each thread must be addressed for all awards, where there is no outcome for a thread this should be justified

## Professional award-type descriptor (currently this is only for apprenticeship programmes)

The descriptors are available here: [http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional\_Award-types\_PS3\_2014.pdf](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf)

## QQI awards standards for programmes of higher education and training

[https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx)

## Other QQI awards standards

The template in unit 2 may be used changing what needs to be changed.

1. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-isced> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ignore this for the principal programme. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Defined later in this document. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Teaching staff and staff dedicated to the monitoring, development and administration of the programme should be included. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a fulltime person fully dedicated to the programme. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Qualifications and experience should be explicitly stated. For example, it is not sufficient to simply state a level 8 qualification. The award type and discipline area(s) should also be included. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Total WTE academic staff exclusively dedicated to the programme divided by maximum number of learners that can be enrolled. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 1 ECTS unit is at least 25 hours’ learner effort. I FET Credit is at least 10 hours learning effort. The number of hours of work-based learning effort may only be a small fraction of the number of hours spent in the workplace as an intern or apprentice or trainee. The fraction varies depending on the nature of the work and the opportunities for learning it affords. Credit allocation must be carefully justified in the relevant module description. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Mandatory (m) or elective (E) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. This might be predictive or indirect. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 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 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (accessed 26/09/2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See the section on transitional arrangements. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 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). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. 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). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See also [QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)](https://publicadmin.qqi.ie/Pages/Policy-on-Monitoring.aspx) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. These are required for the purpose of illustration. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. This needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. This only needs to be completed where modules may be offered independently. Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Learner effort for ETCS should be calculated in accordance with the ECTS Users’ Guide (2015) <http://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Etymology notwithstanding this is taken to apply to the theory and practice of education and training. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. HET Credit is based on the concept that the average workload of a fulltime student in a typical programme of higher education and training is 60 HET Credits per academic year. Note that ECTS stands for the European Credit Transfer System. It is described in detail by the *ECTS User’s Guide* (see references). Credit is related to learner effort not of any particular learner but rather in an average sense. 1 ECTS credit is 25-30 hours learner effort.

    FET Credit is also based on learner effort in acquiring knowledge, skill and competence. 1 fulltime FET programme involves 120 FET credits. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)