Circular

Reference:	2015-02 QQI CL
Title:	Key Timelines for HET Validation Processes
Issued by:	Validation and Delegation Unit, QA Directorate
Subject:	Implications for providers seeking validation of their programmes from QQI
Recipients:	Higher education and training providers registered with QQI
Of interest to:	Providers of programmes validated by QQI; Providers who are seeking initial access to programme validation following successful agreement of quality assurance procedures in Stage 1 of Provider Access to Initial Programme Validation, 2013
Effective from:	2 November 2015
Date:	2 November 2015
Further information:	www.QQI.ie Provider section of QHelp.

To help enhance efficiency within the validation unit for the benefit of all providers, please note the following arrangements for **validation / programmatic review** which will apply with immediate effect:

1.   **ALL general queries** relating to these processes will be dealt with in rotation through QHelp. We will endeavour to respond within 5 working days.

2. In planning your activity for the year, bear in mind that QQI advises a period of **up to 25 weeks** following receipt of payment for the completion of the validation / programmatic review process on a programme application. All processes must be complete with final documentation in place at least 6 weeks in advance to be considered for referral to a Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) meeting. Please note that validation fees are non-refundable.

3. Applications must be made through QHelp. Select '**Programme Validation'** and then '**I wish to make an application for HE Programme Validation**' or '**I wish to initiate a HE Programmatic Review**' as appropriate.

    All relevant documentation for a validation application as per the HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria must be included. A unique tracking number is issued automatically by QHelp. Queries relating to a particular application can be made by using this unique number, thus correspondence is stored in one place. Applications are made separately so that each programme is assigned a unique tracking number. A single invoice will be raised where more than one application is received on a certain day from the same provider.

Thus, providers who may avail of a single validation fee where an application comprises one or more programmes in the same field of learning must make each of the relevant applications within one working day. Please see Note 1 in QQI's [Schedule of Fees July 2014](). QHelp will accept up to five documents of 5MB each.

For programmatic review of a suite of programmes in a single discipline, one application may be made (where the size does not exceed the QHelp limit). Again, a single invoice will be raised.

4. When an application is made, it must include a **cover page** indicating the fee that is considered due to QQI. Please see QQI's [Schedule of Fees July 2014](). A template cover page is available on the QQI [website]().

   An initial screening occurs (please allow up to **10 days** for screening. This screening is a cursory view of the documents with a view towards verifying the appropriate fee and does not constitute an evaluation). An invoice will then be issued by QQI. Applications or agreement on Terms of Reference (ToR) and panels will not proceed until the fee has been paid. Providers have **30 days** to pay following the date of invoice or the application will lapse and be withdrawn. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that an acceptable application is made. Validation fees are non-refundable.

   In the case of providers with devolved responsibility (DR) for Validation Sub-processes, all relevant application documentation must be received by QQI with the appropriate fee at least <u>6 weeks</u> before any validation or review event occurs. Key stages are outlined in Sections 2 and 5 of [HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria](). Specific arrangements are noted in the required Memorandum of Agreement between a provider and QQI.

5. <u>No</u> application will be brought to the PAEC in the absence of an appropriate Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL) arrangement being in place. Where PEL is required, the details must be clearly communicated to QQI using the *pro forma* template documents available on the QQI website, along with all necessary additional documentation. The proposed PEL arrangements must be submitted to QQI upon initial application and accepted by QQI at least **30 days** in advance of a PAEC meeting. For further information on PEL please visit the relevant page on the QQI corporate [website]().

6. All panel reports (both positive and negative) will be published after the appeal window closes.

7. QQI will cease recording the subject structure of programmes submitted for validation from this point. This has implications for providers of those programmes validated through the PAEC meeting on 02 December 2015 and beyond such as:
   a. No entry of subject results. The overall outcome and grade is all that will be required.
   b. QBS will not produce an approved course schedule
   c. QBS will not produce a broadsheet or results transcripts
   d. QBS will not produce single subject certificates

8. The next PAEC meeting is 02 December 2015. Committee meetings are planned for February, April, June, July, September and December 2016. Exact dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.

9. Hard copy material for QQI can be addressed to 'Validation Team'.

10. A White Paper in respect of QQI's new draft validation policy is expected to be published for consultation in December 2015. Please note that current policies and criteria will apply for this academic year. Adequate notice will be given of any changes to be implemented.

11. It should be noted that programmes in process and still subject to validation should only be advertised to prospective students accompanied by an explicit note to that effect.