



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards

Report of the Quality and Capacity Evaluation Panel

Stage 1

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of applicant provider and its proposed education and training provision

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Sport Ireland
Address:	Sport Ireland National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown
Date of Application:	November 2018
Date of resubmission of application:	N/A
Date of evaluation:	20 February 2019 Follow Up Meeting: 25 September 2019
Date of recommendation to the Approvals and Reviews Committee:	5 December 2019



1.2 Profile of applicant provider

Sport Ireland is the statutory agency that directs the development of sport in Ireland. Sport Ireland was established on the 1st October 2015 and brings together the following long-standing organisations: Irish Sports Council, National Sports Campus Development Authority, Irish Institute of Sport and Coaching Ireland into one streamlined body to drive the development of Irish sport. The new Agency, Sport Ireland, retained the broad functions of the former agencies while significantly strengthening the area of anti doping and child protections. There are currently 44 full time employees of Sport Ireland and a further 29 positions filled by agency staff.

There are 8 units within Sport Ireland: Coaching, Anti – Doping and Ethics, Participation (Outdoors & LSPs), Institute, NGB & High Performance, Research, National Sports Campus and Organisational Development & Change. The primary functions of Sport Ireland are defined within the Sport Ireland Act 2015 but include: the development of coaches and tutors, eliminating doping in sport, increasing participation in recreational sport, protecting children in sport and achieving excellence in competitive sport.

Sport Ireland Coaching is the Irish representative on various EU Expert Groups, since its establishment, from the original EU Expert Group on Education & Training in Sport to the current EU Expert Group on Skills & Human Resources in Sport. Part of the work within these EU Groups has allowed Sport Ireland Coaching benchmark itself against the rest of Europe in relation to national coaching systems and alignment to the respective National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF). This is partly due to how sport and sports coaching is organised in each European country; which is through a combination of the university system, the Government and the Olympic Federation.

Sport Ireland Coaching is currently involved in 4 EU Erasmus+ projects including PEAK (Policy, Evidence & Knowledge in Coaching) project and the Blueprint Project, a 3 year project for the active leisure sector.

1.3 Proposed education and training provision

NFQ Level	Award Class	QQI Award / Proposed Programme Title
Level 7	SPA	Sport Ireland Coach Developer



Part 2 The Quality and Capacity Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Jack O’Herlihy	Chair	Retired Head of Development, Letterkenny IT
Anne Mangan	QA and Programme SME	Institute of Physical Therapy & Applied Science
Myles Kelly	QA and Programme SME	Head of Department, Department of Sport, Media and Marketing, Carlow IT
Liam Hennessy	QA and Programme SME	Director at Setanta College
Jamie Dalton	Student	Sports Management programme -WIT
Noel McStay	Report Writer	Training & Quality Consultant

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

Following the initial site visit on 20th February 2019, the panel recognised the quality of the work that Sport Ireland has done to date in developing the quality systems and processes required for accreditation with QQI and the very professional way in which it put together its application.

However, the panel identified further developments that needed to be addressed before Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards could be recommended. These were identified as mandatory changes and are set out in Section 6.1 of this report.

Following a desk review, the panel reconvened on 25th September 2019 to evaluate evidence submitted by Sport Ireland in relation to these mandatory changes. Following that second panel meeting, the panel commends Sport Ireland on how it has responded in a most comprehensive manner to the findings within the initial panel report. This has involved a very detailed level of self analysis and demonstrates a willingness to undertake a critical self assessment in a most professional manner. The revised application portrays Sport Ireland as a forward looking organisation committed to continuous improvement. As a result of the second meeting with Sport Ireland and review of its resubmitted QA documentation, the panel recommends the approval of Sport Ireland’s draft QA procedures.



3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Approvals and Review Committee of QQI

	Tick <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve draft QA procedures	✓
Refuse approval of Sport Ireland’s draft QA procedures pending mandatory changes set out in Section 6.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
Refuse to approve draft QA procedures	



Part 4 Evaluation of the capacity of the applicant to provide quality education and training to learners

4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

- 4.1.1(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?*
- 4.1.2(a) **Criterion:** *Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?*
- 4.1.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?*
- 4.1.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?*
- 4.1.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?*
- 4.1.6(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.*

Findings

4.1.1(a) Sport Ireland is governed by the Sport Ireland Act which defines the functions of the agency and falls under the auspices of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Sport Ireland is a statutory agency with the remit to drive the promotion and growth of sport in Ireland including the development of quality assured coach and tutor education programmes and qualifications.

Sport Ireland Coaching is the main education and training unit in Sports Ireland, providing training to Coach Developers and working with National Governing Bodies (NGB's) to develop quality coach education programmes.

4.1.2 (a) Yes

4.1.3 (a) Sport Ireland Coaching provides training to Coach Developers, who deliver 130 NGB Coach Awards. Sports Ireland Coaching deliver, on average, two Coach Developer Awards per year and certify approximately 20 – 30 learners annually. The Coach Developer programme will be the first programme for which Sport Ireland will be seeking validation from QQI as a Level 7 Special Purpose Award.

4.1.4 (a) At its original site visit, the panel found that while documentation submitted to QQI states that Sport Ireland does not deliver programmes on a collaborative basis, there is a partnership between Sport Ireland Coaching and National Governing Bodies. A Memorandum of Understanding was in place, outlining the roles and responsibilities of both partners. It was the finding of the panel however that this Memorandum of Understanding needed to be further developed to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both organisations with particular focus on the quality assurance processes. Following the second meeting with Sport Ireland's representatives, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised in relation to the position and role of National Governing Bodies have been addressed and the Memorandum of



Understanding now clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of both organisations regarding the quality assurance processes.

4.1.5 , 4.1.6 Yes to both

4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

4.2.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?*

4.2.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?*

4.2.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?*

4.2.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?*

Findings

4.2.1(a) As a state agency, Sport Ireland's core funding is provided by the exchequer through the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. Sport Ireland also receives funding from other government departments such as the Department of Health for specific programmes either being run or developed on their behalf. Sport Ireland has documented policies and processes in place to govern, administer and monitor the budgetary process. There is also a documented Code of Governance and Business Conduct which provides clear guidance to Sport Ireland staff in relation to the governance of Sport Ireland but also the conduct of members and staff of Sport Ireland to ensure they meet or exceed the standards of public service performance required by law and best practice.

4.2.2 It is the view of the panel that Sport Ireland should be commended for the work they have done to date and they have made a strong business case for sustainable provision.

4.2.3 At its original site visit, the panel found that the academic governance, management and decision-making structures around Sport Ireland's delivery of higher education programmes needed to be further elaborated and developed to ensure they are fit for purpose. Following review of Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and the second meeting with the provider's representatives, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised in its original report pertaining to the academic governance structures have been addressed. The academic governance, management and decision-making processes are now much clearer and fit for purpose.

4.2.4 There are effective lines of communication in place to ensure the provision of required information to QQI.

**4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:**

- 4.3.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?*
- 4.3.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?*
- 4.3.3(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?*
- 4.3.4(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?*
- 4.3.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?*
- 4.3.6(a) **Criterion:** *Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?*
- 4.3.7(a) **Criterion:** *Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?*

Findings

4.3.1 Sport Ireland Coaching provides training to Coach Developers, who deliver the 130 NGB coach awards. Since the development of the Coach Developer Award 1994, 53 programmes have been delivered and 2000 people have qualified. Sport Ireland Coaching deliver, on average, two Coach Developer programmes per year and certify 20 – 30 learners annually. The Coach Developer programme will be the first programme Sport Ireland will seek validation for from QQI as a Level 7 Special Purpose Award.

4.3.2 (a) Yes, Sport Ireland has the capacity to meet current needs and to provide fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff to meet future needs. Sport Ireland has developed a database of certified coaches and tutors/ coach developers that have been certified through Sport Ireland Coaching and these will be drawn upon when required.

4.3.3 Yes, it is the view of the panel that Sport Ireland has the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation.

4.3.4 Sport Ireland has well-resourced facilities and premises to deliver the programme for which they are seeking validation.

4.3.5 At its original site visit, the panel found that, while there was a flow-chart identifying the process of RPL, arrangements for Access, Transfer & Progression, this needed to be further developed to meet with QQI criteria and needed to be included in the Learner Handbook. Having received additional material and following discussion at the second panel visit, the panel is satisfied QQI criteria have been met and appropriate information has been included in the Learner Handbook.

4.3.6 At the original site visit, the panel found that policies and procedures needed to be further developed to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners which are aligned to QQI Assessment



& Standards. Following receipt of additional material and further discussion, the panel is satisfied with additional work done.

4.3.7. Not Applicable.

4.4 Evaluation of capacity to provide the proposed education and training provision - Overall finding:

Following the original site visit in February 2019, it was the finding of the panel that it was not in a position to advance Sport Ireland's application for initial access to QQI awards to Stage 2 (the programme validation process) at that time. The panel felt that the following broad areas must be addressed in order for the provider's QA procedures to be approved:

- Academic governance structures need to be reviewed;
- Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures need further refinement to become more specific and fully aligned with QQI Guidelines;
- The Memorandum of Understanding between Sport Ireland and the National Governing Bodies requires further clarification regarding roles and responsibilities of both organisations.

Further details on these mandatory changes to be made in each area are set out in Section 6.1

Following an evaluation of revised documentation submitted by Sport Ireland, the panel recognise the developments that have been made by Sport Ireland since the first meeting and are satisfied that the above issues have been addressed.

Within Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and during the second meeting of the panel, the capacity within Sport Ireland to engage in a reflective process of self-evaluation and quality improvement was clearly demonstrated. Sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6 and 5.7 of this report discuss how Sport Ireland has addressed concerns regarding the governance and quality assurance of its programme.



Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Sport Ireland

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

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

Sport Ireland is led by a Board whose collective responsibility is to lead and direct activities such as reviewing and guiding strategic direction and major plans of action, risk management policies and procedures, annual budgets and business planning, set and monitor performance objectives and oversee major capital expenditure and investment decisions. The Chief Executive, appointed by the Board, has overall responsibility for managing and controlling the administration and business of Sport Ireland. Members of Sport Ireland meet regularly to exercise full and effective control over the activities of the agency and monitor executive management and performance including compliance with all applicable statutory obligations. The Director of Sport Ireland Coaching is responsible for the operational management of Sport Ireland Coaching on behalf of Sport Ireland. Coordination of QA policies and procedures with respect to the education and training functions across units is managed by the Education & Training Steering Group under the direction of the Education & Training Quality Officer. The Education and Training Steering Group coordinates the provision of all programmes across its different Units within Sport Ireland. Its objectives are to:

- Guide and support the development and delivery of programmes;
- Identify and publish details of programmes;
- Develop and share common cultures, themes, language and methodologies across the different units developing and delivering programmes;
- Identify and guide the acquisition and implementation of common resources necessary to support the development and delivery of programmes.

The Steering Group is made up of representatives from each unit that is developing or delivering programmes. The group meet four times a year and it is chaired by the Quality Officer who produces an annual report for consideration by Sport Ireland Committees and Sport Ireland Board. The Quality Officer is also responsible for overseeing, promoting and coordinating the implementation of QA procedures. This includes coordinating and applying programme validation and assessment procedures. The Quality Officer is also responsible for promoting and coordinating the QA activities at ground level, contributing to development, implementation and monitoring of QA systems. This includes collating the Annual Quality Improvement Plan.

Sport Ireland Education & Training Council oversees the implementation of quality assurance in the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI) by Sport Ireland Coaching, National Governing Bodies of Ireland (NGBs) and other education partners. Sport Ireland Education & Training Council's documented terms of reference includes approving all educational policies and procedures and making recommendations for the establishment of appropriate educational structures and appointment of personnel, such as programme approval panel and external examiners.



At the conclusion of the original site visit, the panel were of the view that although there are strong and robust organisational and governing structures in place, there was a disconnect between the current systems and the structures required to effectively manage and quality assure an academic programme of study. It was the finding of the panel that the academic governance and academic structures of Sport Ireland needed to be reviewed. There needed to be more clarity in the lines of communication and decision making regarding the management of the quality assurance processes. The panel felt that the use of academic terminologies would enable Sport Ireland to be better placed to develop more effective academic management structures to support the integrity of the academic processes.

Following the review of Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and the second meeting with the provider's representatives in September 2019, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised in its original report pertaining to Sport Ireland's Governance and Management of Quality have been met. The whole Academic Governance Structures have been clarified and greatly simplified with clear lines of reporting identified. The use of academic terminology has greatly helped understand the governance, management and decision making entities. The Overview of Quality Assurance Management diagram had been redesigned to identify the organisational roles and structures and provides clarity to the reporting/supporting relationships.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is clear that Sport Ireland is committed to embedding quality assurance and improvement across their organisation.

The Sport Ireland Coaching Quality Group's documented terms of reference include its purpose, composition/structure, duties and tenure.

The Sport Ireland Policies and Procedures for Quality Assurance of Programmes of Education and Training (November 2018) is well presented and easy to navigate. However, at the conclusion of the original site visit, the panel found that the document only provides a description of QA processes and who is responsible. The panel recommended that these policies and procedures be further refined and developed to become more specific and more fully aligned with QQI guidelines.

Excellent collaborative working relationships have been developed with the National Governing Bodies and this is evident in the resulting success rates in the Coach Developer Programme to date. There is an existing Memorandum of Agreement between Sport Ireland and the National Governing Bodies that defines the roles and responsibilities of both organisations. At its February meeting with the provider, the panel recommend however that the roles and responsibilities within this document be further developed to emphasise and clarify the quality assurance arrangements between both organisations.

Following the review of Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and the second meeting with the provider's representatives in September 2019, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised in its original report pertaining to Sport Ireland's Documented Approach to Quality Assurance have been met.



The QA document has been extensively modified with policies and procedures aligned with QQI guidelines and the Memorandum of Agreement between Sport Ireland and the National Governing Bodies clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of both organisations.

3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

The panel commended Sport Ireland on the work they have done to date in developing their programmes and the very high annual success rates of training up to 20,000 coaches across all the National Governing Bodies.

Sport Ireland have been actively involved in benchmarking their programme with similar provision in both the UK and within the EU and results have been very favourable and indeed Sport Ireland have been involved in supporting and guiding other countries in the development of their sport programmes.

The development and approval of their Coach Developer Programme is conducted systematically and includes the necessary internal and external consultation with stakeholders. Sport Ireland Coaching deliver the Coach Developer programme based on demand from National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and NGBs nominate participants for the programme. Sport Ireland carry out a needs analysis to ensure the viability and sustainability of a programme prior to its development.

Programme Monitoring and Review processes include: Trainer Self-evaluation, Learner Course Evaluation and subsequent action plans are put in place to address any areas for improvement highlighted through these processes.

Learner Access is agreed between Sport Ireland and the individual National Governing Body. Courses are advertised through the development of an Awards Directory but each unit within Sport Ireland also promote their own course through clubs, societies and local authorities and the individual National Governing Bodies also advertise their own courses. Achievement of a Sport Ireland Award may create a pathway to Further Education for some successful participants but there is also the potential to move into either paid or unpaid work within the sports sector on achievement of their qualification.

At its February meeting, the panel found that while Sport Ireland has documented processes in place in relation to the recognition of prior learning, these procedures need to be further developed and aligned to QQI requirements. Following the review of Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and the second meeting with the provider's representatives, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised pertaining to Sport Ireland's Programmes of Education and Training have been met. Policies and procedures, including, those pertaining the recognition of prior learning, are now fit for purpose and consistent with QQI guidelines.



4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

Sport Ireland have clearly defined processes in place regarding staff recruitment (full-time and part-time); staff induction; staff performance review; feedback on teaching staff; staff communication; and staff development.

Administrative procedures are well developed. There is an online database, which stores all Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (DCPI) certified coaches and tutors/coach developers. This information is then available to all NGB partners. Personal information is held and used in accordance with GDPR.

An ISC Staff Handbook provides a user-friendly reference for major queries on the terms, conditions, opportunities and developments relating to staff employment. It addresses all relevant issues and is aligned with all major initiatives in employment legislation at the time this document was developed in 2011.

The job description for Coach Education Development Officer suggests a strong training and QA function.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

The panel noted that Sport Ireland is a very learner centred organisation and this ethos is embedded and permeates throughout the organisation. They have developed a very flexible, tailored delivery model to meet the logistical demands of the different National Governing Bodies. Sport Ireland defines itself as an “enabler” and this is the fundamental principle on which its activities are based.

Sport Ireland’s Policy on Teaching & Learning is commendable. It is about adopting a novice-expert framework with emphasis on embedding the principles of how people learn. The policy states that the approach to Teaching & Learning is learner-centred. Programmes are learning outcome based and this influences the choice of Teaching & Learning methods. There is emphasis on staff development and continuous improvement.

Work Placement Learning processes are well established. These include selection of placements, assigning a mentor, assessment by Sport Ireland assessor, and learner feedback. Sport Ireland completes an annual review of their premises, equipment and facilities to ensure their continuing adequacy and effectiveness in relation to the programmes and services it delivers. Monitoring the learning experience occurs on an on-going basis. Feedback from learners and trainers at the end of the programme are reviewed by the Programme Delivery Team and a Programme Action Plan is developed. This is reviewed by the Quality Officer and used to inform the Quality Improvement Plan.



6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

Both formative and summative assessment methods are used. Learners create on-going self-reflection and assessment of natural performance in the workplace, which provides rigour and validity to the process. There is currently an internal verification/standardisation process in place whereby a different trainer will verify the assessment decisions made to ensure the reliability of the process.

At its meeting with the provider in February 2019, the panel found that while Sport Ireland are to be commended on the developments it has made in QA policies and procedures for assessment of learners, these processes needed to be aligned to those contained in QQI Assessment & Standards (Revised 2013). Additionally, at that time, the Results Approval panel was chaired by the Quality Officer or a CEO appointee. The panel felt that the QA Officer has responsibility to ensure QA standards are met and policies and procedures are implemented correctly and as such should be outside the actual awarding of results.

Following the review of Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and the second meeting with the provider's representatives, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised in its original report pertaining to Sport Ireland's assessment of learners have been met. The QA document has been extensively modified with policies and procedures aligned with QQI guidelines with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.

7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings

Support structures for learners are being developed at the moment by the Sport Ireland Education and Training Group with the view to providing an integrated and consistent approach across different units. Programme specific learner supports is the responsibility of The Programme Development Team. Review of adequacy of support services occurs through Final Learner Evaluation Forms.

Learner support includes the allocation of a mentor. Sport Ireland recognises the importance of this role and plans are developed to provide additional training for these mentors.

At its meeting with Sport Ireland in February 2019, the panel found that the Learner Handbook was not fit for purpose in its current form. It needed to articulate all relevant information relating to all aspects of the learner's programme including policies and procedures.

Learners are invited to nominate a Representative who will serve as a conduit for communication between learners and programme delivery team. The panel suggested in February that this representative participates across all formal structures to ensure the voice of the learner is heard at all levels.

Following the review of Sport Ireland's resubmitted QA documentation and the second meeting with the provider's representatives, the panel is satisfied that concerns raised in its original report pertaining to Sport Ireland's Support for Learners have been met. The Learner Handbook is now fit for purpose, well presented and easy to understand. It provides information on relevant policies and procedures with application forms included for Learner Appeals, Deferrals, Request for Extension, Compassionate Consideration and Reasonable Accommodation. The inclusion of a learner representative on the



Education and Training Council and Programme Boards and provides a voice for the learner which is welcomed by the panel.

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

Information and Data Management Systems are robust and adequately protect the confidentiality of learner information and assessment. Data protection processes are in place and Sport Ireland is currently developing a plan on how each Sport Ireland Unit will implement the new General Data Protection Regulations.

There is a description and flow chart on Responding to a Freedom of Information Request which articulates effective processes to deal with any circumstance appropriately.

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

Public and learner information will be available on Sport Ireland's website. This includes; Sport Ireland Awards Directory, policies and procedures for Education and Training, Learner Handbook, Programme brochure, Annual Quality Improvement Plan, and external evaluation report. Information will be monitored by the Quality Officer with support from the Education and Training Steering Group and relevant Unit Directors.

No specific procedures were available but there was a clear description. A brochure for its current programme was provided.

10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

Description and flow-chart of how Sport Ireland initiates and manages its relationships with external organisations within the education and training framework is in place and includes agreement through the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Description and flow-chart of how external experts are recruited for development and delivery of the programme were also available for scrutiny and articulate appropriate arrangements.

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

A robust account is provided of self-monitoring and evaluation through to the development of Quality Improvement Plans and their publication.

Learner and Tutor Evaluation Forms and Quarterly & Annual Report Templates are provided.



Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

Throughout this quality assurance evaluation process, Sport Ireland has shown a commitment to quality assurance and a drive towards quality improvement.

The panel recognises and commends the work Sport Ireland has done to date in progressing their QA systems and processes to meet the requirements of an academic programme. However, at the conclusion of the original evaluation in February 2019, the panel identified 3 broad areas in which mandatory changes were required, set out in section 6 below, to be addressed before QA procedures can be approved.

Sport Ireland submitted revised documentation addressing these mandatory changes, which was evaluated by the panel in September 2019. Following that second evaluation and site visit, the panel commends Sport Ireland on the substantial effort and developmental work that has taken place since the first meeting and the commitment it has demonstrated to addressing the mandatory changes detailed within the initial report. The panel is satisfied the mandatory changes have been addressed and is happy to recommend the approval of Sport Ireland's draft QA procedures to the Approvals and Review Committee of QQI.



Part 6

6.1 Mandatory Changes

Following the submission of comprehensive new material together with a second productive visit the Panel were satisfied with progress made and quality of additional work undertaken. The Panel is satisfied that each of the mandatory changes below has been adequately addressed. Details on how each mandatory change was addressed are set out in the body of the report.

1. Academic governance structures need to be reviewed

- a) The Academic governance structures need to be reviewed to create a transparent academic reporting structure within the organisation. This should include clarity around membership, quorum, terms of reference and reporting lines for these committees.
- b) The diagram depicting organisational roles and structures should clearly capture academic governance and its constituent bodies and their reporting/supporting relationships.
- c) In addition, the relationship between Academic structures and organisational governance need to be clearly defined within this chart. The position and role of National Governing Bodies also requires clarification in this overall organisational chart.

2. Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures need further refinement to become more specific and more fully aligned with QQI Guidelines.

- a) The language within the QA document should reflect terms commonly used in higher education to provide clarity and ease of understanding. For example, while formative and summative assessments are embedded within Sport Ireland's programme assessment approach, such terms need to be stated and followed with a clear description of what constitutes these assessment types.
- b) The Sport Ireland Quality Assurance Manual should align with and make reference to current QQI policies and QA guidelines. The QA manual should be a user-friendly document that allows users to navigate the QA processes in the organisation.
- c) The Student Handbook needs to be a functional guide to what students need to know about the organisation and their programme from registration to graduation. Sport Ireland needs to ensure that there is sufficient detail, either by providing all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines in the handbook or by providing a summary with a link to the more detailed QA manual. The handbook should also include specific programme details such as: submission of assignments, pass by compensation, re-check and review procedures, academic integrity, withholding of exam results, appeals etc.



3. The Memorandum of Understanding between Sport Ireland and the National Governing Bodies requires further clarification regarding roles and responsibilities of both organisations.

- a) Sport Ireland’s QA policies and procedures need to clearly articulate the role and involvement of the NGB’s in the development, delivery and assessment of their higher education programme.

6.2 Specific Advices

There are no additional specific advices.

Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
4 to 7	Special Purpose and Minor	Coaching, Sport and Physical Activity



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Part 8 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the Quality and Capacity Panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the recommendation to approve the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of provider and approve its progression to Stage 2 of the initial programme validation process.

Name:

Date: 14th October 2019



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

Document	Related to
Application form and Supporting Evidence	Organisational information and capacity
QA Documentation	QA Policies and Procedures
Reviewed QA Documentation	QA Policies and Procedures

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

Name	Role/Position
John Treacy	CEO
Michael McGeehin	Director of Coaching
Una May	Director of Participation and Ethics
Jason McLoughlin	Finance
Fiona Larkin	Quality Officer
Declan O'Leary	Coaching Unit
Tony Wright	Coaching Unit
Colm McGinty	Special Projects
Cian Spillane	Risk and Compliance
David Gash	Communications
Diarmuid Moloney	Information Technology



SPÓRT
ÉIREANN
CÓITSEÁIL

SPORT
IRELAND
CÓACHING

18 October 2019

Marie Cotter
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
26-27 Denzille Lane
Dublin 2
D02 P266
Ireland

Dear Marie

On behalf of Sport Ireland, I would like to acknowledge the receipt of the Initial Access to Validation Report completed by the Quality and Capacity Evaluation Panel chaired by Mr Jack O'Herlihy.

We would like to thank Mr O'Herlihy and all of the members of the Panel for the approachable, positive and supportive way in which they conducted the review. It has been an interesting journey for Sport Ireland thus far and we have learnt a huge amount along the way. The process has caused us to evaluate and revise many of our practices around the development and delivery of our programmes of education & training. This has been a positive process for our organisation.

We are obviously delighted with the outcome of this QQI validation process and look forward to working with QQI in the future.

Kind regards

Michael McGeehin
Director
Sport Ireland Coaching