Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training

1   Part 1

Provider name	National College of Ireland
Date of site visit	June 13th and June 14th
Date of report	

1.1   Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Higher Certificate in International Financial Services
	Award	Higher Certificate
	Credit	120
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	**Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions**

1.2 Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	**Role**	**Affiliation**
Tara Ryan	**Chair**	**Registrar, Hibernia College Ireland**
Stephen McManus	**Secretary**	**Former Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology**
Denis Bourne	**Learner representative**	**Department of Computing, Letterkenny Institute of Technology**
Pauline Weetman	**Subject Expert**	**Emeritus Professor of Accounting, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland**
Pat O Connor	**Subject Expert**	**Head of School of Humanities, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown**
Ruth O Doherty	**Subject Expert**	**Deputy Principal, Ballsbridge College of Further Education, CDETB**
Geraldine Bracken	**Industry Expert**	**Director, Elanova**
Mohand Kechadi	**Subject Expert**	**Professor of Computer Science, UCD.**

1.3 Consortium staff

National College of Ireland staff presenting the programme and the QA procedures		
Name	**Role**	**Affiliation**
Gina Quin	President	National College of Ireland
Marc Coleman	Chair of Consortium Steering Group	Financial Services Ireland
Prof Jimmy Hill	Vice President,	National College of Ireland
Mr John McGarrigle	Registrar	National College of Ireland
Sinéad O Sullivan	Director QASS	National College of Ireland
Deirdre Giblin	Head Professional Education & Training	National College of Ireland
Carol Kenna	Industry Partner	Financial Services Ireland
Dr Maurice FitzGerald	QASS officer	National College of Ireland
Jonathan Brittain	Programme Director Higher Certificate in IFS	National College of Ireland
Frances Sheridan	Programme Director, Higher Diploma in FS Analytics	National College of Ireland
Michael Bradford	Programme Director, Higher Diploma in FS Analytics	National College of Ireland
Dr Pramod Pathak	Dean School of Computing	National College of Ireland
Dr Paul Stynes	Vice Dean School of Computing	National College of Ireland
Rosa Callery	Manager Professional Education & Training	National College of Ireland
Rachel Doherty	Lecturer, School of Business	National College of Ireland
Dr Mike Goldrick	Learning & Teaching	National College of Ireland
Lisa Collier	Industry Partner	State Street
Cormac Bohan	Industry Partner	State Street
Stephen Kinch	Industry Partner	Citi
Sean McNally	Industry Partner	Mediolanum
Daragh Gibbons	Industry Partner	Allied Irish Banks

1.4 Lecturing and mentoring staff

Staff supporting the National Certificate in International Financial Services		
Name	Role	Module if appropriate
Dave Hurley	Associate Lecturer	Customer Services
Tony Delaney	Associate Lecturer	Financial Markets and Institutions; Introduction to Statistics for Finance
Joe Molumby (in place of Dermot Bradfield)	Associate Lecturer	ICT in International Financial Services
Tara Clements	Associate Lecturer	Fund Administration
Ruth O'Leary	Associate Lecturer	Financial Accounting & Reporting
Dr Paul Hanly	Lecturer	Economics for Financial Practitioners
Rachel Doherty	Lecturer	Continuing Professional Development 1; Continuing Professional Development 2 (On-the-job modules)
Jonathan Brittain	Programme Director / Developer / Lecturer	Management and Behaviour in Organisations; On-the job modules: Regulation and Compliance; Product and Service Proficiency; Client Communication and Relationships; Systems and Processes in International Financial Services; Apprentice Reflection; Work-Based Project.
Lisa Collier	Industry Partner: State Street	On-the-job modules
Cormac Boran	Industry Partner: State Street	On-the-job modules
Stephen Kinch	Industry Partner: Citi Bank	On-the-job modules

1.5   Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners
National College of Ireland	30	30

Enrolment interval *(normally 5 years)*	**Date of first intake**	2017
	Date of last intake	2022
Maximum number of annual intakes	1	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	150	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	24	
Target learner groups	School leavers and mature learners who wish to train for a career in the International Financial Services Industry.	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Apprenticeship mode.	
The teaching and learning modalities	Managed Work Experience, lectures, seminars, one to one coaching.	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	This programme is designed for entry level personnel in the International Financial Services Industry. It prepares associate level staff for positions in that industry.	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	Lecturing staff will have level 8 qualifications as a minimum. Mentors will be experienced staff in the partner enterprises.	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	1:30 for classroom based teaching 1:8 for Academic Supervision. Learners receive individual one-to-one support from Academic Supervisors.	

1.6 Other noteworthy features of the application

1.6.1 The Industry

This proposal to establish an apprenticeship in the area of International Financial Services is particularly welcome. The industry has a core of 430 companies providing internationally traded financial services and technologies. Half of these companies are Irish owned and half are foreign owned with operations in Ireland. These companies employ 35,000 people in Ireland. Government strategy for the industry is contained in the IFS2020 report. It is expected that there will be considerable growth in the industry in the immediate future. A target of an additional 10,000 jobs in the industry by 2020 has been set in this report.

1.6.2 The Consortium

In response to the IFS2020 report the industry representative group Financial Services Ireland (FSI) approached National College of Ireland with a view to establishing an apprenticeship programme for the industry.

A consortium was established that included NCI, FSI and key enterprises in the industry. The consortium proposed three apprenticeships to the Apprenticeship Council. These were based on an analysis of the needs of the industry. The proposed programmes were

An entry level IFS Associate apprenticeship leading to a Higher Certificate (NFQ level 6)

A mid-level IFS Specialist leading to a Higher Diploma (NFQ Level 8)

A senior level IFS Advanced Specialist leading to a NFQ Level 9 qualification.

An initial application for the entry level programme was not successful. The consortium was encouraged to reapply taking into account the evaluation report and the then recently published QQI Topic Specific Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Apprenticeship programmes.

The current evaluation panel was impressed by the active engagement of industry partners and by FSI in the development and presentation of the Higher Certificate programme. Their knowledge and understanding of the outcomes based approach to programme design was impressive. This gives the panel confidence that the consortium will be able to manage and develop the programme in line with the expectations of the QA guidelines.

1.6.3 The programme

The consortium steering group took into account the comments of the previous evaluation report. They developed a strong and coherent concept of what an apprenticeship should be. The taught modules were adapted to the particular needs of apprentices.

The On-the-Job elements of the programme were structured into thematic modules. These were assigned module outcomes. These outcomes were aligned with the programme outcomes. The integration of the On-the Job with Off-the-Job elements produces a rich experience for the learners. These aspects reflect the spirit as well as the wording of the QQI QA guidelines.

The research for the re-submission included examination of the practice in the United Kingdom. A group visited colleges that deliver similar apprentice programmes. This is an example of good practice in new programme development. It is evident that the programme team learned from this experience.

The admission process requires applicants to be chosen for their suitability for employment as well for the apprenticeship. The industry partners agreed to a common process that allowed ensured equivalent of experience for applicants and also gave the employer a final decision on hiring.

1.6.4   The Quality Assurance Processes

The comments above also apply to the development of the quality assurance processes. These are dealt with in a separate report.

1.7 Comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme.

The panel had a detailed discussion of the quality assurance procedures developed for this programme and for apprenticeship programmes in general. They found that the procedures followed the topic specific guidelines issued by QQI for Apprenticeship programmes. The panel will be issuing a separate report on the QA procedures. There will be conditions stated in that report.

The panel agrees that the scope of NCI provision should be extended to Apprenticeship programmes subject to the conditions in that report.

2 Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

QQI's validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey panels.

2.1 Criterion 1

The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme
a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.
b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.
c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	**Subject to the fulfilment of the conditions on the report on the QA procedures.**

2.2 Criterion 2

The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought
a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.*
e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
g) For each programme and embedded programme
(i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.
(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.
For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	The aims and objectives of the programme are clearly stated. The Occupational Profile determines the detail of the programme. The choice of a professional award at level 6 is appropriate for this programme. The access requirements and the level of the learning, both On-the-Job and Off-the Job, ensure that the learning constitutes 120 ECTS credits. This makes the award of Higher Certificate an appropriate one. Programme outcomes are clearly stated and are aligned to the Professional Award Type Descriptors for Level 6. Module Outcomes are stated and support the achievement of the programme outcomes.

	Some module outcomes need to be adjusted as they do not fully reflect the level of achievement reached by the learners. These include outcomes in the ICT module, the Financial Accounting and Reporting modules and the CPD modules. In addition, the in-house learning, including company induction and skills training should, where possible, be included as contributing to the overall programme outcomes. *It would be helpful to provide a table cross-referencing each module learning outcome to the relevant programme learning outcomes. There is a table giving examples of MIMLOs that meet the relevant MIPLOs, but there is not a full table mapping all MIMLOs to MIPLOs, although the information is provided with each module.*

2.3 Criterion 3

The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)

  a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.
  b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
   (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
   (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
   (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
   (iv) There is evidence of learner demand for the programme.
   (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[1].
   (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[2]
  c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
  d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
  e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	The programme was developed in conjunction with the consortium representing significant employers and the industry Representative body (FSI). The team noted the report of the evaluation panel in 2016 and developed the MIPLOs to match the Professional Award-Type

	Descriptors (PATDs). This also involved a careful consideration and structuring of the On-the-Job phases.
	Importantly the consortium researched the implementation of similar programmes in the United Kingdom. This was an important input that strengthened the programme considerably.
	As there are no learners as yet, the development team questioned recent recruits into the industry. This exercise gave an immediate view of concerns of industry entrants.
	The close involvement of industry partners and their commitment to the programme ensures that the graduates will be candidates capable of pursuing careers in the industry.
	The feedback mechanisms from stakeholders to the programme board and the consortium allow for timely amendments to the programme.
	It would be useful if the cycle of feedback events from stakeholders to the programme board were indicated on a table.

2.4   Criterion 4

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

a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied.

b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.

c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL[3]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.

d) 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).

e) 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.

f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
   (i) 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(as).
   (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
   (iii) Has long-lasting significance.

g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Satisfactory	Comment
YES	**ACCESS:** The minimum academic entry requirement is set at Leaving Certificate or level 5 equivalent. An additional requirement is a H7/O6 in mathematics. This mathematics requirement could be reconsidered in the light of the experience of the recent new recruits.

	The access processes are designed to ensure that the new recruits are suitable for the industry. This requires both interviews and aptitude determining processes. It is expected that there will be high demand for these places. It is recommended that those applicants who are eligible but who fail to be offered a place be given feedback on their application. The process is sophisticated and could be a model for those apprenticeships where the employer does not have an opportunity to employ the applicant prior to registration. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes of the College will be applied to those without the requisite academic qualifications. **TRANSFER:** Learners leaving the programme will have their academic achievements and work experience fully documented. They may apply for exemptions from elements of level 6 programmes in Business studies. **PROGESSION:** There are progression arrangements into Higher Certificate (HC) programmes in Business in NCI. Exemptions from stage 1 are granted to graduates of the apprentice programme. The level and type of award should allow transfer to HC in Business Studies and to the early stages of Bachelor of Business programmes. **PROGRAMME TITLE** The programme title clearly refers to the occupation and the industry served by the programme.

2.5   Criterion 5

The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose
   a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
   b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
   c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
   d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.
   e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[4].
   f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
   g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
   h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
   i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
   j) 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.[5]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	This is an innovative programme combining structured and assessed work experience and taught elements. Both On- and Off- the Job elements are integrated to achieve the overall intended programme learning outcomes. The modules all contribute to a coherent set of programme outcomes. The credit allocated to the work experience depends on the extent to which it is structured and assessed. There are sound assessment procedures with the enterprise and the college working in partnership.
	The time available to achieve the learning seems to the panel to be constrained. The college should analyse this and present a schedule of learner workload distributed over time. There should be particular care taken to ensure that the student effort hours required for each module, whether on- or off-the job, are protected within the overall working time available to the programme. Where necessary the academic terms could be extended to ensure that the learners are not overloaded at particular times.

2.6 Criterion 6

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

a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also unit (**Error! Reference source not found.**c).

b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[6] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.

c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners' achievements as required.

d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development opportunities.

e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.

f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	The Academic staff of the College have the requisite qualifications and experience to deliver the taught modules. There are also associate staff with direct work experience in the industry. Enterprise-based mentors will typically be line managers for the apprentices. These will be given suitable training in assessment to complement their enterprise-based training and experience in coaching and supervising. Supervision of mentors and tutors will be achieved by the normal enterprise and college procedures. *Due to the possibility that mentors may change or be unavailable at times the college should indicate how the new mentors can be trained when required.*

2.7 Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also (**Error! Reference source not found.**d).

b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:
   (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)
   (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
   (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
   (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
   (v) technical support
   (vi) administrative support
   (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable

c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).

d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
   (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
   (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.

e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	The College has suitable teaching and learning facilities for the Off-the-Job phases. The partner companies supply the work experience and access to the industry software. The extension of the programme to other centres will be done using partner providers. Local programme committees will oversee operational matters on a day-to-day basis. The MOA with enterprises ensures that access to facilities for staff is allowed and that the conditions under which data can be used are agreed. *The college should produce a more detailed document indicating the five-year plan for the programme. This should include costs, staffing and management arrangements as the programme is expanded, indicating the main assumptions for cost patterns in relation to increasing scale. The cost allocation should indicate how the expected fees will cover the costs that will be borne by the College and those that will be borne by partner providers, Indicate the availability of physical resources in the workplace and the work based resources e.g. software, training and induction sessions that contribute to the programme outcomes.*

2.8   Criterion 8

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners
a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes. b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors. c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Apprentices on this programme will have all of the rights of full time students of the college. In addition, as they will be meeting weekly during term there will be adequate opportunities for supportive interaction with their supervisors and peers. The dual role of mentor and line manager will ensure adequate supervision in the workplace.

2.9   Criterion 9

There are sound teaching and learning strategies
a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes. b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload). d) Learning is monitored/supervised. e) Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially.	The learning strategies are appropriate and will support this industry focused programme. The learning opportunities are authentic and well supervised. *The college should indicate on the modules' descriptors the actual time the learner will have with their supervisor on a one-to-one basis, as distinct from group meetings, particularly where students are meeting mentors or academic supervisors.*

2.10 Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies
a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with ***Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards***[7] b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme. d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning. e) 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. f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable. g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results. h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	Assessment processes for the taught elements are consistent with the college's normal practices and with the agreed QA procedures. Assessment on-the-job will be by trained mentors, supervised by academic staff for the college. E-Portfolios will be used to supplement assessment events and will allow for the capture of experiential learning in a structured way. *In some cases where the number of summative assessment are limited the college should reconsider the assessment methodologies.*

2.11 Criterion 11

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

   a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.
   b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
   c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
   d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.
   e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.
   f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.
   g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	The applicants will be briefed on the programme and its requirements during the recruitment process. This includes access to additional supports available in the college. Students with disabilities will receive the appropriate support from the employers and from the colleges. Appeal mechanisms are not specified in the current documentation for those who fail to gain a place on the programme. *Complaint, disciplinary and Academic appeal procedures should clearly separate issues to be dealt with by the employer alone and those to be dealt with by the programme board or the college. These procedures should be outlined in the MOA between the college and the employer and should acknowledge the overall responsibility of the college as co-ordinating provider for academic quality control.*

2.12 Criterion 12

The programme is well managed
a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures.
b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.
c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.
d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.
e) Quality assurance[8] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.
f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.
g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.
h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

	. **Comment**
Partially	The QA procedures follow the topic specific guidelines for apprenticeship programmes and complement the Colleges approved QA procedures. These procedures include governance arrangements, staff and consortium issues as well as periodic revisions of the programme. Some of these are subject to recommendations and conditions of the evaluation panel.

3   Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1   Principal programme

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
Satisfactory subject to the special conditions specified below.	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

3.2   Reasons for the overall recommendation

The reasons for overall recommendation are outlined in the comments on the individual criteria. Criteria 1,3,4,6,7,8, and 10 were found to be satisfactory. In some cases the panel has made recommendations, (see below) in respect of these. Criteria 5, 9, 11 and 12 were found to be partially satisfactory.

3.3   Summary of recommended special conditions of validation
The provider should

   a) Provide detailed information with the relevant module descriptors on the actual time that a learner has on a one-to-one basis with their academic supervisor.
   b) Clarify an appeal mechanism for applicants.
   c) Provide a schedule of learner workload distributed over time to illustrate that learners will have a reasonable workload.

These conditions should be fulfilled prior to the recruitment and registration of any learners. Amended documentation should be sent to QQI for approval.

3.4   Summary of recommendations to the provider
   a) Reconsider the assessment methodologies whereby the number of summative assessments are limited.
   b) Indicate the availability of physical resources in the workplace and the work based resources e.g. software, training and induction sessions, that contribute to the programme outcomes
   c) Establish a model by which additional mentors can receive training when they are appointed out of the standard time sequencing. The academic supervisor may have a role in this.
   d) Provide a document to clarify the nature of the costs/income and how this will change as the programme expands. This should include academic staffing requirements and necessary management resources and structures.
   e) Create a table in which the module learning outcomes are mapped to the programme learning outcomes.
   f) Consider whether the requirement for Leaving Certificate mathematics could be removed from the entry requirements.
   g) Re-examine the module outcomes as mentioned in section 2.2 Criterion 2 above.
   h) Ensure that disappointed applicants receive feedback on their application.

i) That programme board examine whether cross module assessments could reduce the burden of assessments on learners.

4   Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

4.1   Conflicts of Interests

The evaluators' affiliations are listed above. They have not indicated any conflict of interest.

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

Panel chairperson: Date:

Signed:

4.2   Disclaimer

The Report of the External Review Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.

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

5   Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

6

Name of Provider:			National College of Ireland
Programme Title			Higher Certificate in International Financial Services
Award Title			Under discussion at national level and subject to direction of QQI
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):			Full-time
Teaching and learning modalities			Direct contact via lectures and demonstrations, Blended e-learning

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]			Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Professional/Major	6	5	1	6			5	60	September 2017	0412

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number[5]	Total Student Effort Module (hours)								Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
		Status	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units ECTS	Total	Class (or equiv)	Work-Based	Directed e-learning	Independent Learning	Academic Supervisor	Work-based	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstra	Proctored written exam %	
Financial Institutions and Markets	S1	M	6	10	250	39		20	166		25	50			50	
Customer Service	S1	M	6	5	125	26		13	66		20	100				
Management and Behaviour in Organisations	S2	M	6	10	250	39		24	161		26	70			30	
ICT for International Financial Services	S2	M	6	5	125	26		20	45		34	70	30			
Continuing Professional Development 1	S1 & 2	M	6	5	125	26*	10	20	25	2	42	100				
Regulation and Compliance	S1 & 2	M	6	10	250	26*	15	50	40	2	117	100				
Product and Service Proficiency	S1 & 2	M	6	5	125	26*	10	26	20	2	41	100				
Client Communication and Relationships	S1 & 2	M	6	10	250	26*	20	15	50	2	137	100				

		Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)
		*Class Contact Hours for Work-Based Modules are based on a weekly Portfolio Building Tutorial throughout the academic year. This tutorial will not be exclusive to an individual work-based module, but will focus on the preparation and collection of evidence for all first stage work-based modules.

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]			Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Professional/Major	6	5	Award	6			5	60	September 2017	0412

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 3 or Semester 4)	Status	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units ECTS	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Work-Based Mentoring	Directed e-learning	Independent Learning Hours	Academic Supervisor Visits	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Financial Accounting and Reporting	S3	M	6	10	250	39		28	155		28	40			60
Introduction to Statistics for Finance	S3	M	6	5	125	26		14	65		20	50			50
Fund Administration	S4	M	6	10	250	39		14	137		60	40			60
Economics for Financial Practitioners	S4	M	6	5	125	26		28	56		15		50		50
Continuing Professional Development 2	S3 & 4	M	6	5	125	26*	10	20	25	2	42	100			
Systems and Processes in International Financial Services	S3 & 4	M	6	10	250	26*	20	30	50	2	122	100			
Apprentice Reflection	S3 & 4	M	6	5	125	26*	10		57	2	30	100			
Work Based Project	S3 & 4	M	6	10	250	26*	20		101	2	101	100			

Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)

*Class Contact Hours for work-based modules are based on a weekly Portfolio Building Tutorial throughout the academic year. This tutorial will not be exclusive to an individual work-based module, but will focus on the preparation and collection of evidence for all award stage work-based modules.