

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

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

## Part 1

<b>Provider name</b>	National College of Ireland
<b>Date of site visit</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> February 2020
<b>Date of report</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> June 2020

## Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care
	<b>Award</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
	<b>Credit</b>	240 ECTS
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

<b>Embedded programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care
	<b>Award</b>	Bachelor of Arts
	<b>Credit</b>	180 ECTS
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

<b>Embedded programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care
	<b>Award</b>	Higher Certificate
	<b>Credit</b>	120 Credits

	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory
--	---	--------------

<b>Embedded programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care
	<b>Award</b>	Certificate
	<b>Credit</b>	60 Credits
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

### Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	Role	Affiliation
David Denieffe	Chair	IT Carlow
Roisin McGlone	Subject Matter Expert	IT Sligo
Sheila Garrity	Subject Matter Expert	NUI Galway
Marian Quinn	Industry Expert	The Association of Childhood Educators
Graham Geraghty	Learner Representative	St. Angela's College, Sligo
Sam Whelan	Secretary	Griffith College

### 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, IFSC Campus	120	10

<b>Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)</b>	<b>Date of first intake</b>	September 2020
	<b>Date of last intake</b>	September 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	Two (daytime and evening)	
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake</b>	60	
<b>Programme duration (months from start to completion)</b>	48 months	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	School leavers, mature learners returning to education, and/or international students. The minimum entry requirements for the current version of the programme is a Level 5 qualification in any discipline. The minimum entry requirements for the	

	programme are 5 Pass Grades at Ordinary Level in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent, which must include English and Mathematics. Applicants who successfully complete a Major QQI Award at Level 5 may apply through the CAO's Higher Education and Links Scheme (HELS). As indicated earlier, students with a major award in Early Learning and Care/Early Childhood Education and Care at NFQ level 6 will be eligible for an advanced entry into year 2 of the programme.	
<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Republic of Ireland	
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full time (weekdays and some Saturdays) - day and evening delivery and placement	
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	A broad range of teaching and learning approaches, combining strategies such as blended learning, traditional classroom lectures, tutorials and seminars, flipped classroom, problem and project-based learning, teamwork, work-based supervised learning and professional placement practice. An overview of the Programme Teaching and Learning Strategy and individual module descriptors are available in section 5.6.	
<b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	<p>This programme is a four-year honours degree in Early Childhood Education and Care, which is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in early childhood education and care. With a focus on pedagogical approaches and strategies, the programme aims to provides a holistic emphasis on developing the early childhood educator to work in a range of diverse early childhood environments which cater to children from birth to 6-8 years of age.</p> <p>The Level 8 award is specifically designed to meet the requirements of the Professional Awards Criteria Guidelines accreditation enabling graduates to pursue a career in teaching and learning as well as progress to a Post Graduate level programme.</p>	
<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Qualifications and experience</b>
	7*	Lecturing staff which should normally hold a PhD in Education or at least a level 9 with relevant experience. *This figure is based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in student intake indicated in this document.
	40*	Placement supervisors will have expertise in the professional practice of ECEC
	1	Programme Coordinator
	1	Placement Co-ordinator

	1	Placement Director with a minimum level 9 degree and experienced in Early Childhood Education and Care.
	*These figures are based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in learner intake indicated in this document.	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	<b>Staff to learner ratio</b>	<b>Learning activity type</b>
	1:45	Classroom teaching
	1:6	Placement supervision
	1:10	Capstone project supervision
<b>Overall WTE staff/learner ration</b>	1:20	
<b>Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Last enrolment date</b>
<b>PG21787</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education	Sept 2019

### Embedded programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners ( <i>per centre</i> )	Minimum number of learners
Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care	120	10

Enrolment interval ( <i>normally 5 years</i> )	Date of first intake	Sept. 2020
	Date of last intake	Sept. 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	Two (daytime and evening)	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	60	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	36 months	
Target learner groups	As an Exit Award for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care, this programme is for students who have completed Stage 3 but do not wish to progress to the Award Stage of the principal programme. The same minimum entry requirements as the principal programme's apply here.	
Approved countries for provision	Republic of Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time (weekdays and some Saturdays) - day and evening delivery and placement	
The teaching and learning modalities	A broad range of teaching and learning approaches, combining strategies such as blended learning, traditional classroom lectures, tutorials and seminars,	

	<p>flipped classroom, problem and project-based learning, teamwork, work-based supervised learning and professional placement practice. An overview of the Programme Teaching and Learning Strategy and individual module descriptors are available in section 5.6.</p>	
<p><b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b></p>	<p>This programme is a Stage 3 Exit Award embedded within the principal programme, i.e. Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care. As such, it is designed to allow students who have completed Stage 3 but do not wish to progress to the Award Stage to exit the programme with a Level 7 qualification. Students who are awarded the Bachelor of Arts (Ordinary) in Early Childhood Education and Care can return to study at a later date to obtain the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) qualification based on advanced standing and RPL procedures.</p> <p>This embedded Exit Award is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in early childhood education and care commensurate with Level 7 Professional Award Type Descriptors, enabling graduates to pursue a career in teaching and learning with the this sector.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b></p>	<p><b>WTE</b></p>	<p><b>Qualifications and experience</b></p>
	<p>7*</p>	<p>Lecturing staff which should normally hold a PhD in Education or at least a level 9 with relevant experience. *This figure is based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in student intake indicated in this document.</p>
	<p>40*</p>	<p>Placement supervisors will have expertise in the professional practice of ECEC</p>
	<p>1</p>	<p>Programme Coordinator</p>
	<p>1</p>	<p>Placement Co-ordinator</p>
	<p>1</p>	<p>Placement Director with a minimum level 9 degree and experienced in Early Childhood Education and Care.</p>
	<p>*These figures are based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in learner intake indicated in this document.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b></p>	<p><b>Staff to learner ratio</b></p>	<p><b>Learning activity type</b></p>
	<p>1:45</p>	<p>Classroom teaching</p>
	<p>1:6</p>	<p>Placement supervision</p>

<b>Overall WTE staff/learner ration</b>	1:20
---	------

<b>Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Last enrolment date</b>
<b>PG21786</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education	Sept. 2019

### Embedded programme

<b>Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided</b>	<b>Maximum number of learners (per centre)</b>	<b>Minimum number of learners</b>
Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care	120	10

<b>Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)</b>	<b>Date of first intake</b>	Sept. 2020
	<b>Date of last intake</b>	Sept. 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	Two (daytime and evening)	
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake</b>	60	
<b>Programme duration (months from start to completion)</b>	24 months	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	As an Exit Award for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care, this programme is for students who have completed Stage 2 but do not wish to progress to Stage 3 of the principal programme. The same minimum entry requirements as the principal programme's apply here.	
<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Republic of Ireland	
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full time (weekdays and some Saturdays) - day and evening delivery and placement	
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	A broad range of teaching and learning approaches, combining strategies such as blended learning, traditional classroom lectures, tutorials and seminars, flipped classroom, problem and project-based learning, teamwork, work-based supervised learning and professional placement practice. An overview of the Programme Teaching and Learning Strategy and individual module descriptors are available in section 5.6.	
<b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	This programme is a Stage 2 Exit Award embedded within the principal programme, i.e. Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care. As such, it is designed to allow students who have completed Stage 2 but do not wish to progress to Stage 3 to exit the programme with a Level 6	

	<p>qualification. Students who are awarded the Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care can return to study at a later date to obtain the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) qualification based on advanced standing and RPL procedures.</p> <p>This embedded Exit Award is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in early childhood education and care commensurate with Level 6 Professional Award Type Descriptors, enabling graduates to pursue a career in teaching and learning with the this sector.</p>	
<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Qualifications and experience</b>
	7*	Lecturing staff which should normally hold a PhD in Education or at least a level 9 with relevant experience. *This figure is based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in student intake indicated in this document.
	40*	Placement supervisors will have expertise in the professional practice of ECEC
	1	Programme Coordinator
	1	Placement Co-ordinator
	1	Placement Director with a minimum level 9 degree and experienced in Early Childhood Education and Care.
	*These figures are based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in learner intake indicated in this document.	
<b>Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b>	<b>Staff to learner ratio</b>	<b>Learning activity type</b>
	1:45	Classroom teaching
	1:6	Placement supervision
<b>Overall WTE staff/learner ration</b>	1:20	

<b>Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Last enrolment date</b>
<b>PG21784</b>	Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Sept. 2019

## Embedded programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners ( <i>per centre</i> )	Minimum number of learners
Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care	120	10

<b>Enrolment interval (<i>normally 5 years</i>)</b>	<b>Date of first intake</b>	Sept. 2020
	<b>Date of last intake</b>	Sept. 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	Two (daytime and evening)	
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake</b>	60	
<b>Programme duration (months from start to completion)</b>	12 months	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	As an Exit Award for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care, this programme is for students who have completed Stage 1 but do not wish to progress to Stage 2 of the principal programme. The same minimum entry requirements as the principal programme's apply here.	
<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Republic of Ireland	
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full time (weekdays and some Saturdays) - day and evening delivery and placement	
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	A broad range of teaching and learning approaches, combining strategies such as blended learning, traditional classroom lectures, tutorials and seminars, flipped classroom, problem and project-based learning, teamwork, work-based supervised learning and professional placement practice. An overview of the Programme Teaching and Learning Strategy and individual module descriptors are available in section 5.6.	
<b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	<p>This programme is a Stage 1 Exit Award embedded within the principal programme, i.e. Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care. As such, it is designed to allow students who have completed Stage 1 but do not wish to progress to Stage 2 to exit the programme with a Level 6 qualification. Students who are awarded the Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care can return to study at a later date to obtain the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) qualification based on advanced standing and RPL procedures.</p> <p>This embedded Exit Award is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in early childhood</p>	



	education and care commensurate with Level 6 Professional Award Type Descriptors, enabling graduates to pursue a career in teaching and learning with the this sector.	
<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Qualifications and experience</b>
	7*	Lecturing staff which should normally hold a PhD in Education or at least a level 9 with relevant experience. *This figure is based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in student intake indicated in this document.
	40*	Placement supervisors will have expertise in the professional practice of ECEC
	1	Programme Coordinator
	1	Placement Co-ordinator
	1	Placement Director with a minimum level 9 degree and experienced in Early Childhood Education and Care.
	*These figures are based on anticipated staffing requirements consistent with the growth in learner intake indicated in this document.	
<b>Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b>	<b>Staff to learner ratio</b>	<b>Learning activity type</b>
	1:45	Classroom teaching
	1:6	Placement supervision
<b>Overall WTE staff/learner ration</b>	1:20	

<b>Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Last enrolment date</b>
<b>PG21785</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Sept. 2019

Other noteworthy features of the application

Not Applicable

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).

Not Applicable

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

Not Applicable

## Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

### Criterion 1

<b>The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme</b>	
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.	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Yes</b>	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 1, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The panel is satisfied that the National College of Ireland meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. NCI has declared that the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Education and Care programme complies with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The application for validation was signed by Gina Quin, President of National College of Ireland.

### Embedded programmes

The panel is satisfied that the National College of Ireland meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. NCI has declared that the BA Early Childhood Education and Care programme complies with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The application for validation was signed by Gina Quin, President of National College of Ireland.

## 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 panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 2, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The programme aims and objectives as expressed in the documentation provided to the panel for the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Education and Care were presented using clear, concise language. It is made explicit that learners who complete the programme will obtain a Level 8 BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care.

The choice of QQI award for the Bachelor of Arts was justified by the MIPLOs being mapped against the Level 8 Professional Award standards. The Professional Awards Criteria guidelines for Initial Professional Education Degree programmes (Level 8) in Early Learning and Care were also employed. The length of the award title is less than 43 characters and comply with QQI's Named Award Stems. The award title is legitimate as it clearly communicates the topic being studied and complies with the applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

The programme title, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care, is consistent with the programme learning outcomes, and the specific name – Early Childhood Education and Care – reflects accepted OECD reports and current European nomenclature.

The MIPLOs for the primary programme are explicitly specified. These are mapped on to the QQI awards and annotated Professional Award Type Descriptors (PATD) for Early Learning and Care. The panel considers the MIPLOs to be consistent with the standards of the QQI award being sought. The provider has also explicitly specified the MIMLOs for each of the programme's modules.

### Embedded programmes

The programme aims and objectives as expressed in the documentation provided to the panel for the BA in Early Childhood Education and Care, the Higher Certificate in Childhood Education and Care and the Certificate in Childhood Education and Care were presented using clear, concise language. It is made explicit that learners who complete the programme will obtain a Level 7 Bachelor of Arts, a Level 6 Higher Certificate or a Level 6 Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, respectively.

The choice of QQI award for the Bachelor of Arts, Higher Certificate and Certificate was justified by the MIPLOs being mapped against the Level 6 and Level 7. The Professional Awards Criteria guidelines for Initial Professional Education Degree programmes (Level 6 and 7) in Early Learning and Care were also employed. The length of the award title is less than 43 characters and comply with QQI's Named Award Stems. The award title is legitimate as it clearly communicates the topic being studied and complies with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

The programme titles, Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care, Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, and Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, is consistent with the programme learning outcomes, and the specific name – Early Childhood Education and Care – reflects accepted OECD reports and current European nomenclature.

The MIPLOs for the primary programme are explicitly specified. These are mapped on to the QQI awards and annotated Professional Award Type Descriptors (PATD) for Early Learning and Care. The panel considers the MIPLOs to be consistent with the standards of the QQI award being sought. The provider has also explicitly specified the MIMLOs for each of the programme's modules.

## 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.
  - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.
- 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 panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 3, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The programme revalidation document clearly describes MIPLOs. The MIPLOs were developed taking into consideration the views of all the necessary stakeholders and incorporated their opinions when making modifications to the programme and updating its minimum learning outcomes.

The interpretation of the award standards was made in light of research in the ECEC environments and is reflected in the mapping of MIPLOs to the QQI Professional Award Standards. There is a satisfactory rationale for the provision of the programme as outlined in Section 2.4 of the Self-Evaluation Report. The proposed programme compares favourably with comparable Level 8 programmes in Ireland as described in Section 4.8 of the Revalidation Document. Consistently healthy application and enrolment data supports the case for the programme's continued provision.

The year on year increase in enrolled numbers and applicants coupled with the success of graduates professionally indicates strong interest in the programme. The programme also meets the Government's *First Five* strategy which emphasises the need for professionalising the Early Learning and Care sector, so as to be graduate-led by 2028.

The programme is updated and will continue to be updated based on its academic structures for receiving feedback from learners, faculty and employers. Section 4.12 of the revalidation document evidences this. The programme revalidation development has been informed by stakeholders from ECEC environments, such as policy makers, service providers, graduates, academic staff, DES, TUSLA and parents.

The panel is in agreement that the programme satisfies any revalidation related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

### Embedded programmes

The programme revalidation document clearly describes MIPLOs. The MIPLOs were developed taking into consideration the views of all the necessary stakeholders and incorporated their opinions when making modifications to the programme and updating its minimum learning outcomes.

The interpretation of the award standards was made in light of research in the ECEC environments and is reflected in the mapping of MIPLOs to the QQI Professional Award Standards. There is a satisfactory rationale for the provision of the programmes as outlined in Section 2.4 of the Self-Evaluation Report. The proposed programmes compare favourably with other programmes in Ireland as described in Section 4.8 of the Revalidation Document. Consistently healthy application and enrolment data supports the case for the programme's continued provision.

The year on year increase in enrolled numbers and applicants coupled with the success of graduates professionally indicates strong interest in the programme. The programmes also meet the Government's *First Five* strategy which emphasises the need for professionalising the Early Learning and Care sector, so as to be graduate-led by 2028.

The programmes have been updated and will continue to be updated based on its academic structures for receiving feedback from learners, faculty and employers. Section 4.12 of the revalidation document evidences this. The programmes' revalidation development has been informed by stakeholders from ECEC environments, such as policy makers, service providers, graduates, academic staff, DES, TUSLA and parents.

The panel is in agreement that the programmes satisfy any revalidation related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

## 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 (CEFR) 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(es).
  - (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 (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 4, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

Entry procedures and criteria for the programme are explicitly stated in Section 5 as are procedures for advanced entry and recognition of prior learning. Programme specific transfer (inward) procedures and criteria are clearly specified. Section 1.2.1 provides details of arrangements with colleges of further education involving advanced entry into the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Programme information for learners and prospective learners is available in the programme handbook, information is also published on NCI's website and specific requirements can be facilitated by the Disability Support service of NCI. Learners are expected to be proficient in English, with an IELTS score of 6.0 for non-native speakers. The programme specifies the learning that target learners are expected to have achieved in Sections 1.2.1 and 4.2 (assumption regarding enrolled learners are also outlined).

NCI operates on a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme – details of which are outlined in Section 5.2.9 in the Revalidation Document. The panel is satisfied that the title of the programme communicates the core intended learning outcomes and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI award to that it leads to; the title clearly indicates the scope and nature of the



programme to learners; and the title has long lasting significance as it is based on national and international nomenclature (OECD).

The programme title is legitimate and complies with statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

### Embedded programmes

Entry procedures and criteria for the programmes are explicitly stated in Section 5 as are procedures for advanced entry and recognition of prior learning. Programme specific transfer (inward) procedures and criteria are clearly specified.

Programme information for learners and prospective learners is available in the programme handbook, information is also published on NCI's website and specific requirements can be facilitated by the Disability Support service of NCI. Learners are expected to be proficient in English, with an IELTS score of 6.0 for non-native speakers. The programme specifies the learning that target learners are expected to have achieved in Sections 1.2.1 and 4.2 (assumption regarding enrolled learners are also outlined).

NCI operates on a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme – details of which are outlined in Section 5.2.9 in the Revalidation Document. The panel is satisfied that the title of the programmes communicate the core intended learning outcomes and are consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI award to that it leads to; the title clearly indicates the scope and nature of the programme to learners; and the title has long lasting significance as it is based on national and international nomenclature (OECD).

The programmes' titles is legitimate and complies with statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

## Criterion 5

<b>The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</li> <li>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.</li> <li>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles.</li> <li>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</li> <li>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</li> <li>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</li> <li>i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</li> <li>j) The programme <b>duration</b> (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its <b>fulltime equivalent contact time</b> (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.</li> </ul>
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 5, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The programme team has clearly outlined the structure of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care, providing both a stage and module-level outline of the programme, the rationale for the programme structure, and an indicative timetable of teaching hours for both the daytime and evening learners. The panel is satisfied, therefore, that each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended programme learning outcomes, and that their respective objectives and purposes are coherently expressed in Sections 2 and 6 respectively.

The programme structure has been reviewed and validated by the programme team. Discussions were held around workload for learners across the programme, based on feedback from graduates and other stakeholders. The 240 credits allocated to the programme is consistent with most other programmes at NFQ Level 8.

The programme has an important component of supervised professional practice placement. All modules feed into the placement and vice versa. The honours programme is four calendar years, which is consistent with the duration of an NFQ Level 8 undergraduate professional programme. The required hours of contact time are also compliant with the ECTS credit system.

## Embedded programmes

The programme team has clearly outlined the structure of the BA in Early Childhood Education and Care, the Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, and the Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, providing both a stage and module-level outline of the programme, the rationale for the programme structure, and an indicative timetable of teaching hours for both the daytime and evening learners. The panel is satisfied, therefore, that each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended programme learning outcomes, and that their respective objectives and purposes are coherently expressed in Sections 2 and 6 respectively.

The programme structure has been reviewed and validated by the programme team. Discussions were held around workload for learners across the programme, based on feedback from graduates and other stakeholders. The 180 credits, 120 credits and 60 credits allocated to the respective programmes are consistent with most other programmes at NFQ Levels 6 and 7.

The programmes have an important component of supervised professional practice placement. All modules feed into the placement and vice versa. The ordinary-level programme is three calendar years, the higher certificate is two calendar years and the certificate is one calendar year, which is consistent with the duration of an NFQ Level 6 and Level 7 undergraduate professional programme. The required hours of contact time are also compliant with the ECTS credit system.

## 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 criterion 12 c).
- b) The programme has an identified complement of staff (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 panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 6, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

NCI reviews the workload of Faculty and Associate Faculty and the complement of staff. Additional recruitment for the revalidated version of the programme will be made in accordance with NCI's budget and policies. Staff CVs are included in Appendix 4 of the revalidation submission. The panel is satisfied that the complement of staff are competent to teach and assess, or to provide other learner support services relevant to the learner achievement.

Arrangements for the performance management of programme staff is described in the programme revalidation document. The associate faculty staffing model particularly lends itself to satisfying this criterion, as many of the Associate Faculty members are employed in other ECEC environments. All faculty engaged on the programme can avail of NCI's professional development supports. There is a strong emphasis on Learning and Teaching in NCI and faculty are provided with ongoing workshops and mentors to support their teaching practice.

As outlined in Section 8.6 of the Revalidation Document, NCI intends to recruit staff including academic teaching staff and placement tutors in line with the staff-learner ratios as follows: teaching staff 1:45 and placement tutors 1:6.

### Embedded programmes

NCI reviews the workload of Faculty and Associate Faculty and the complement of staff. Additional recruitment for the revalidated version of the programme will be made in accordance with NCI's

budget and policies. Staff CVs are included in Appendix 4 of the revalidation submission. The panel is satisfied that the complement of staff are competent to teach and assess, or to provide other learner support services relevant to the learner achievement.

Arrangements for the performance management of programme staff is described in the programme revalidation document. The associate faculty staffing model particularly lends itself to satisfying this criterion, as many of the Associate Faculty members are employed in other ECEC environments. All faculty engaged on the programme can avail of NCI's professional development supports. There is a strong emphasis on Learning and Teaching in NCI and faculty are provided with ongoing workshops and mentors to support their teaching practice.

As outlined in Section 8.6 of the Revalidation Document, NCI intends to recruit staff including academic teaching staff and placement tutors in line with the staff-learner ratios as follows: teaching staff 1:45 and placement tutors 1:6.

## 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 criterion 12 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
Partially	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 7, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The panel is satisfied that the physical resources provided by NCI partially meets the requirements of the programme. The accompanying Appendix 2: NCI Facilities and Services outlines the college’s core services and supports to learners.

Learners have access to personal study spaces and quiet spaces on campus. Recreation and dining spaces are also available on NCI’s site in the IFSC, Dublin. Learners have access to all IT services which include email, library and administrative system services online, and Moodle.

NCI promise to provide any specialist materials such as manipulative and constructive materials for ECEC and suitable technical support, as required. A dedicated placement coordinator has been proposed to provide administrative support alongside the Student Support and Exams offices.

The panel is satisfied that all of the professional practice placement settings are subject to the quality assurance procedures for ECEC in NCI policies. During the site visit, the programme team discussed the five-year plan for the programme as outlined in 4.12 of the Revalidation Document. Ongoing

communication and alignment with the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) at the DES will ensure that criteria for accreditation are met and the programme remains compliant.

An outline of total costs and income was not included in the Revalidation Document but with perceived growth NCI is committed to additional investment in terms of greater access to physical resources and creations of early childhood learning environments.

### Embedded programmes

The panel is satisfied that the physical resources provided by NCI partially meets the requirements of the programme. The accompanying Appendix 2: NCI Facilities and Services outlines the college's core services and supports to learners.

Learners have access to personal study spaces and quiet spaces on campus. Recreation and dining spaces are also available on NCI's site in the IFSC, Dublin. Learners have access to all IT services which include email, library and administrative system services online, and Moodle.

NCI promise to provide any specialist materials such as manipulative and constructive materials for ECEC and suitable technical support, as required. A dedicated placement coordinator has been proposed to provide administrative support alongside the Student Support and Exams offices.

The panel is satisfied that all of the professional practice placement settings are subject to the quality assurance procedures for ECEC in NCI policies. During the site visit, the programme team discussed the five-year plan for the programme as outlined in 4.12 of the Revalidation Document. Ongoing communication and alignment with the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) at the DES will ensure that criteria for accreditation are met and the programme remains compliant.

An outline of total costs and income was not included in the Revalidation Document but with perceived growth NCI is committed to additional investment in terms of greater access to physical resources and creations of early childhood learning environments.

## 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	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 8, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The learning environment includes NCI premises as well as the practice placement settings. The panel is satisfied that within the College, learners have equal access to all physical, organisational, social and cultural facilities. Sections 6.8 and 8 of the Revalidation Document satisfactorily cover the environment in more detail.

The programme team has also investigated the possibility of some of the modules being delivered in a blended learning mode using synchronous online delivery.

The programme has a supervised professional practice placement component, which takes place in ECEC settings. All ECEC settings are TUSLA approved and supervised by NCI placement tutors, in conjunction with the workplace staff.

### Embedded programmes

The learning environment includes NCI premises as well as the practice placement settings. The panel is satisfied that within the College, learners have equal access to all physical, organisational, social and cultural facilities. Sections 5.8 and 8 of the Revalidation Document satisfactorily cover the environment in more detail.

The programme team has also investigated the possibility of some of the modules being delivered in a blended learning mode using synchronous online delivery.

The programmes have a supervised professional practice placement component, which takes place in ECEC settings. All ECEC settings are TUSLA approved and supervised by NCI placement tutors, in conjunction with the workplace staff.



## Criterion 9

<b>There are sound teaching and learning strategies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</li> <li>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</li> <li>e) Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</li> </ul>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Yes</b>	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 9, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The panel is satisfied that the programme as documented is supported by a teaching and learning strategy that supports achievement of its intended learning outcomes. Each module learning strategy is tailored to support the learners in achieving the module learning outcomes.

As outline in Section 6.10 of the Revalidation Document, the teaching and learning strategy emphasises authentic assessment, including performance simulation and work-based learning (centred on work placement in ECEC settings), which supports the development of complex understanding and skill through the integration of learning across modules in a manner that prepares learners for professional application. The BA (Honours) Early Childhood Education and Care has an overall value of 240 ECTS credits (60 credits per annum). This design balances learner workload in terms of achieving the intended programme learning outcomes.

Learning is supervised and programme specific arrangements are in place for monitoring progress and supervising learners. All learning is monitored and supervised in a number of ways such as NCI policy for all learners electronically record their presence at all scheduled learning events. At the professional practice placements learners are monitored as per setting policies. Both settings and NCI supervisors share information.

Learning is monitored at the modular level through assessment strategies that involve formative feedback provided in an incremental manner in advance of summative assessments. Each module makes use of formative assessment feedback to aid learning throughout the programme.

### Embedded programmes

The panel is satisfied that the programmes as documented are supported by a teaching and learning strategy that supports achievement of its intended learning outcomes. Each module learning strategy is tailored to support the learners in achieving the module learning outcomes.

As outline in Section 6.10 of the Revalidation Document, the teaching and learning strategy emphasises authentic assessment, including performance simulation and work-based learning

(centred on work placement in ECEC settings), which supports the development of complex understanding and skill through the integration of learning across modules in a manner that prepares learners for professional application.

The BA (Ord) Early Childhood Education and Care, the Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, and the Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care have an overall value of 180 ECTS credits, 120 ECTS credits and 60 ECTS credits (60 credits per annum), respectively. This design balances learner workload in terms of achieving the intended programme learning outcomes.

Learning is supervised and programme specific arrangements are in place for monitoring progress and supervising learners. All learning is monitored and supervised in a number of ways such as NCI policy for all learners electronically record their presence at all scheduled learning events. At the professional practice placements learners are monitored as per setting policies. Both settings and NCI supervisors share information.

Learning is monitored at the modular level through assessment strategies that involve formative feedback provided in an incremental manner in advance of summative assessments. Each module makes use of formative assessment feedback to aid learning throughout the programmes.

## 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*
- 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	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 10, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

All assessments conducted as part of the programme are undertaken in accordance with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*. Assessments, whether for examination or other summative assessments are governed by NCI's Quality Assurance Procedures.

Assessment strategies are fair and consistent and designed to demonstrate learner achievement of MIMLOs and MIPLOs. They are governed by NCI's Quality Assurance Procedures. The mapping of MIMLOs to MIPLOs, as outlined in Section 2 of the Revalidation Document demonstrate that the MIPLOs and MIMLOs are acquired by learners. The indicative assessment provided in the module descriptors describes the formative assessment for each module.

Following feedback from learners and staff, the proposed revalidation aims to strengthen opportunities for developing transferable skills such as communication, dependability, teamwork, advocacy and organisation etc. through using specific assessment strategies within modules which meet the overall MIPLOs.

Sample assessments for modules are included in Appendix 5 submitted along with this Revalidation proposal. All assessments are moderated within the guidelines and procedures set out by QA at NCI, and as required by QQI. Assessments are subject to 2<sup>nd</sup> marking and peer review, standardisation and external examining as outlined in the QA guidelines. In relation to Sub-Criteria H, this is standard procedure at NCI and is managed via the Examinations Office.

## Embedded programmes

All assessments conducted as part of the programmes are undertaken in accordance with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*. Assessments, whether for examination or other summative assessments are governed by NCI's Quality Assurance Procedures.

Assessment strategies are fair and consistent and designed to demonstrate learner achievement of MIMLOs and MIPLOs. They are governed by NCI's Quality Assurance Procedures. The mapping of MIMLOs to MIPLOs, as outlined in Section 2 of the Revalidation Document demonstrate that the MIPLOs and MIMLOs are acquired by learners. The indicative assessment provided in the module descriptors describes the formative assessment for each module.

Following feedback from learners and staff, the proposed revalidation aims to strengthen opportunities for developing transferable skills such as communication, dependability, teamwork, advocacy and organisation etc. through using specific assessment strategies within modules which meet the overall MIPLOs.

Sample assessments for modules are included in Appendix 5 submitted along with this Revalidation proposal. All assessments are moderated within the guidelines and procedures set out by QA at NCI, and as required by QQI. Assessments are subject to 2<sup>nd</sup> marking and peer review, standardisation and external examining as outlined in the QA guidelines. In relation to Sub-Criteria H, this is standard procedure at NCI and is managed via the Examinations Office.

## 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.
- h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international learners it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Learners* 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.
- j) 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).

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 11, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

A Moodle page with all related programme information is made available to learners. Learner information is provided in the Programme Handbook and on the NCI website (under Student Services), and includes learner supports, resources, disciplinary and complaints procedures and programme structure.

NCI's Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy is learner centric and all teaching modes are designed to accommodate individual differences between enrolled learners. This may be ensured in the normal classroom activities, or through specific learner-support provisions. All enrolled NCI learners are provided with the option of individualised learning supports such as needs assessment, assistive technology, academic support and library support. Learners with special education needs are assessed and required accommodations determined.

The enrolment of international learners is dealt with by NCI's International Office, who coordinate and guide learners towards the appropriate services, including language and ICT skills. Details on scholarships, fees and finance are also dealt with by the International Office.

Learners are well cared for and safe while participating in the programme. At NCI, the normal provisions and supports are available to all learners. While learners are on their professional practice placements, the placements must consent to the responsibility of the learner.

### Embedded programmes

A Moodle page with all related programme information is made available to learners. Learner information is provided in the Programme Handbook and on the NCI website (under Student Services), and includes learner supports, resources, disciplinary and complaints procedures and programme structure.

NCI's Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy is learner centric and all teaching modes are designed to accommodate individual differences between enrolled learners. This may be ensured in the normal classroom activities, or through specific learner-support provisions. All enrolled NCI learners are provided with the option of individualised learning supports such as needs assessment, assistive technology, academic support and library support. Learners with special education needs are assessed and required accommodations determined.

The enrolment of international learners is dealt with by NCI's International Office, who coordinate and guide learners towards the appropriate services, including language and ICT skills. Details on scholarships, fees and finance are also dealt with by the International Office.

Learners are well cared for and safe while participating in the programmes. At NCI, the normal provisions and supports are available to all learners. While learners are on their professional practice placements, the placements must consent to the responsibility of the learner.

## 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 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The panel evaluated the programmes in regard to Criterion 12, and its sub-criteria, and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that both programmes are in compliance.

### Principal programme

The panel is satisfied that the programme will be managed in accordance with the provider's quality assurance policies and procedures as approved by QQI. Programme documentation details the intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's own procedures.

This programme will be managed according to the QA procedures of NCI. Any incremental changes are developed keeping in mind QQI's guidelines. The programme committee is responsible for seeking approval to any changes through the programme committee meeting. QA looks into compliance checks.

All persons added to the programme's staff will be appointed in accordance with NCI's HR procedures for recruitment and selection, and interview and other checks that will specify any programme-specific requirements. Existing staff may be allocated to the programme in accordance with the Centre for Education and Life-Long Learning.

Annual planning and resourcing is undertaken at an Executive level in NCI. This includes all physical and IT resources, licensing agreements and manpower planning.

The panel is satisfied that quality assurance is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. The programme along with any other

programmes run by NCI will be subject to NCI's existing QA procedures which are based on QQI's statutory QA guidelines. As evidenced in the programme review, the provider actively monitors completion rates, and learner attainment at the module and programme level as part of its programme development and management procedures.

The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable, and are available in the Revalidation Document (Section 10). Learner, programme and module data are held on NCI's learner record system. Data structures have been tailored to interface with QQI systems. This is managed via the Examinations and Registrar's offices.

### Embedded programmes

The panel is satisfied that the programmes will be managed in accordance with the provider's quality assurance policies and procedures as approved by QQI. Programme documentation details the intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's own procedures.

This programmes will be managed according to the QA procedures of NCI. Any incremental changes are developed keeping in mind QQI's guidelines. The programme committee is responsible for seeking approval to any changes through the programme committee meeting. QA looks into compliance checks.

All persons added to the programmes' staff will be appointed in accordance with NCI's HR procedures for recruitment and selection, and interview and other checks that will specify any programme-specific requirements. Existing staff may be allocated to the programmes in accordance with the Centre for Education and Life-Long Learning.

Annual planning and resourcing is undertaken at an Executive level in NCI. This includes all physical and IT resources, licensing agreements and manpower planning.

The panel is satisfied that quality assurance is intrinsic to the programmes' maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. The programme' along with any other programmes run by NCI will be subject to NCI's existing QA procedures which are based on QQI's statutory QA guidelines. As evidenced in the programme review, the provider actively monitors completion rates, and learner attainment at the module and programme level as part of its programme development and management procedures.

The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable, and are available in the Revalidation Document (Section 10). Learner, programme and module data are held on NCI's learner record system. Data structures have been tailored to interface with QQI systems. This is managed via the Examinations and Registrar's offices.



## Overall recommendation to QQI

### Principal programme

Select one	
<b>x</b>	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 proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care, as presented to the panel, is in compliance with all twelve criteria of validation as outlined in specific detail above.

### Embedded programmes

Select one	
<b>x</b>	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 proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

The Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care, the Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, and the Certificate in Childhood Education and Care, as presented to the panel, are in compliance with all twelve criteria of validation as outlined in specific detail above.

## Summary of Commendations

**Commendation 1:** The panel commends the engagement of the programme team with the panel on the day of the revalidation. It was evident from the day that all members of the team had thoroughly engaged with the revalidation process and their openness when discussing areas for improvement in the programme was notable – especially in terms of dedicated indoor and outdoor learning spaces and materials.

**Commendation 2:** The panel commends the quality of the documentation prepared for the revalidation. The Dropbox folder was easy to navigate and the main documents (Programme Document; Self-Evaluation Report; and Self-Evaluation against Criteria for Validation) were meticulously formatted and well written.

**Commendation 3:** The panel commends the learner-centredness of the programme and NCI as a whole. Having taken a tour of the NCI campus in the IFSC, and spoken with the programme team, the sense of belonging for learners was palpable. The panel was impressed with the equal access to all supports for learners, the faculties' awareness of learner welfare and the wrap-around supports, which clearly illustrated why retention was so high on the programmes under review.

**Commendation 4:** The panel commends the strong sense of a learner voice on the programme. With the wealth of ECEC knowledge and experience among learners and teaching staff alike, the programme is in a privileged position. As alluded to by the learner representatives on the day of the panel visit, two of the best aspects of the ECEC programmes were: the routine discussions among learner and staff on best practice and informal sense of community because everybody could share experiences. The active participation of learners is evident with multiple opportunities for them to interact and discuss topics with their peers and lecturers.

## Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

All special conditions of validation made during the revalidation panel visit were subsequently addressed by the programme team and evidenced by modifications to the programme documentation.

## Summary of recommendations to the provider

All recommendations to the provider made during the revalidation panel visit were subsequently addressed by the programme team and evidenced by modifications to the programme documentation.

## Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

No interests have been declared by members of the revalidation panel that would affect the impartiality of the panel and its ability to make a recommendation to QQI regarding the revalidation of the primary programme and the two embedded programmes.

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

Panel chairperson:

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Dunne", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

## 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.

## Part 3: Proposed programme schedule

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		National College of Ireland											
<b>Programme Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care											
<b>Award Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care											
<b>Stage Exit Award Title</b>		Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care											
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		FT											
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		Blended learning including face to face and online instruction.											
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level	Stage EQF Level	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code					
Major	8	6	1	6	5	60	14/09/2020	0112					
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number <sup>5</sup>	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv)	Directed e-learning	Independent Learning	Work-based learning	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstrati	Proctored written exam %
Holistic Child Learning and Development	1	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50		50	
Foundations of Early Childhood Education and Care	1	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
Music, Movement, Art & Drama	1 & 2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	100			
Academic Foundations and Scholarship	1 & 2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	100			
Essential Legislation and Regulation in ECEC	2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
Child Health Nutrition and Wellbeing	2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
Field Visits to diverse Early Childhood settings will be integrated with the theory modules and CW assessments (6 visits- 3 per semester)													
<b>Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)</b>													
Field visits must be completed.													

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		National College of Ireland											
<b>Programme Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care											
<b>Award Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care											
<b>Stage Exit Award Title</b>		Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care											
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		FT											
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		Blended learning including face to face and online instruction.											
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level	Stage EQF Level	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code					
Major	8	6	2	6	5	60	14/09/2020	0112					
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact	Directed e-learning	Independent Learning	Hours of learning effort	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstratio
Core Pedagogies and Curriculum in ECEC	1	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
Dispositions and Dynamics of Behaviour in children	1	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
Managing your learning and academic practice	1 & 2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50		50	
Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice	1 & 2	M	6	10	250	36		114	100	100			
Play and Creativity in ECEC	2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
Diversity and pluralism in learning language and literacies	2	M	6	10	250	36		178	36	50			50
<b>Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)</b>													
Placement must be passed. Students will be in placement two days a week or in a block, depending on the setting.													

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		National College of Ireland												
<b>Programme Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care												
<b>Award Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care												
<b>Stage Exit Award Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care												
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		FT												
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		Blended learning including face to face and online instruction.												
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level	Stage EQF Level	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code						
Major	8	6	3	7	6	60	14/09/2020	0112						
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number	Total Student Effort Module (hours)				Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
			Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration	Proctored written exam %
Quality Assurance in ECEC Environments		1	M	7	10	250	36		178	36	100			
Early Learning in a digital world		1	M	7	5	125	24		77	24	100			
Inquiry Learning - Design and Evaluation of Curriculum in ECEC		1 & 2	M	7	15	375	60		215	100	100			
Placement: Application of Strategies in Learning Environments in ECEC Practice		1 & 2	M	7	10	250	36		114	100	100			
The Child Family and Society – Stakeholders in ECEC		2	M	7	10	250	36		178	36	100			
Leadership and Governance in ECEC environments		2	M	7	10	250	36		178	36	100			
<b>Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)</b>														
Placement must be passed. Students will be in placement two days a week or in a block, depending on the setting.														

<b>Programme Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care										
<b>Award Title</b>		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care										
<b>Stage Exit Award Title</b>		N/A										
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		FT										
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		Blended learning including face to face and online instruction.										
<b>Award Class</b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>	<b>Stage NFQ Level</b>	<b>Stage EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>ISCED Subject code</b>				
Major	8	6	4	8	6	60	14/09/2020	0112				
<b>Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)</b>	<b>Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)</b>	<b>Module</b>		<b>Credit Number</b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>				<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>			
		<b>Status</b>	<b>NFQ Level where specified</b>	<b>Credit Units</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Class (or equiv) Contact Hours</b>	<b>Directed e-learning</b>	<b>Hours of Independent Learning</b>	<b>Work-based learning effort</b>	<b>C.A. %</b>	<b>Supervised Project %</b>	<b>Proctored practical demonstration</b>
ECEC Inquiry and Research Methods	1 & 2	M	8	10	250	36		178	36	100		
Social, Political and Cultural Contexts of ECEC	1	M	8	10	250	36		214		100		
Working in Multi Professional Contexts	1	M	8	10	250	36		178	36	100		
Personal and Professional Identity	1	M	8	5	125	24		101		100		
Capstone ECEC Practice based Project	2	M	8	25	625	60		315	250		100	
<b>Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)</b>												
Capstone ECEC Practice based Project must be passed.												

