



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1 A

Provider name	Kerry ETB
Date of site visit	28 May 2021 and 1 June 2021 (Virtual)
Date of report	24 June 2021
Is this a re-validation report (Yes/No)	No

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care
	Award	Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care
	Credit ¹	120 FET credits
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions² OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to one proposed condition. The proposed condition is set out in Part 2B of this report.

Embedded programme ³	Title	Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care
	Award	Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care
	Exit award (Yes/No)	No
	Credit	120 FET credits

¹ Specify the credit units because more than one system of units is in use. E.g. 20 (ECTS).

² Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

Further, in exceptional cases the 'special conditions' may be used to identify parts of the application that are considered satisfactory on a stand-alone basis. For example, an application might propose a programme to be provided at two locations but the independent evaluation report may find the application satisfactory on condition that it be provided only at one specified location and not at the other. These conditions will not however be used to recommend that QQI can be satisfied with a programme conditional on a different QQI award (e.g. at a lower NFQ level or having a different CAS award title) being sought than the one identified in the application.

³ Copy this panel for each embedded programme.

	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR</i> <i>Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR</i> <i>Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to one proposed condition. The proposed condition is set out in Part 2B of this report.
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Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	Role	Principal occupation
Stephen McManus	Chair of Panel	Retired. Formerly Registrar of Dundalk IT
Kevin Devine	Report Writer	Retired. Formerly Deputy Principal of Ballyfermot FE College, CDET B
Winifred Jeffers	QA Expert	Independent Consultant
Martina Carter	Subject Matter Expert	Senior Early Years Inspector, Department of Education and Skills
Marlene McCormack	Subject Matter Expert	Senior Lecturer, Institute of Education, Dublin City University
Karen Cline	Industry Expert	CEO/Owner Tigers Childcare

Part 1 B

Principal Programme – Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Minimum number of learners (per centre)	Maximum number of learners	Minimum number of intakes (per centre)	Maximum number of intakes (per centre)
<u>Kerry ETB</u>				
Full Time				
Kerry College, Listowel Campus	12	18	1	1
Kerry College, Clash Campus	12	18	1	1
Kerry College, Denny Street Campus	12	18	1	1
Kerry College, Monavalley Campus	12	18	1	1
Kenmare FET Centre	12	12	1	1
An Tochar FET Centre	12	12	1	1
O'Connell FET Centre	12	12	1	1
Part Time				
Kerry College, Listowel Campus	8	10	1	1
Kerry College, Clash Campus	8	10	1	1
Kerry College, Denny Street Campus	8	10	1	1
Kerry College, Monavalley Campus	8	10	1	1
Kenmare FET Centre	8	10	1	1
An Tochar FET Centre	8	10	1	1
O'Connell FET Centre	8	10	1	1

Enrolment interval <i>(normally 5 years)</i>	Date of first intake	September 2021
	Date of last intake	August 2026
Maximum number of annual intakes	14	
Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)	Full time – Maximum of 108 learners over 7 centres	
	Part time – Maximum of 70 learners over 7 centres	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	Full time - 2 years – 18 - 22 months Part time – 4 years – 36 – 44 months	
Target learner groups	<p>The programme is intended for learners interested in a career in early childhood education and care (ECEC)* with children aged from 0 to six years, including those who may have an interest in working as room leaders or for those wishing to progress to higher education in this field.</p> <p>Target learners include school-leavers and mature learners returning to education. Full-time and part-time courses are intended to meet the needs of a range of learners, such as those already working in the sector who want to develop their skills and/or acquire qualification, people working in other areas or who are unemployed who want to move into the early learning and care (ELC)* sector, people with responsibilities that do not enable them to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time course.</p> <p>Learners will not be expected to have prior knowledge or experience of the early learning and care sector on entry to the programme but they will be expected to demonstrate an interest in the field. They will also be expected to have knowledge, skills and competences equivalent to NFQ level 4. A minimum English language and literacy competency of B2 in writing, reading, listening and speaking on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is required by the Professional Award Type Descriptor (section 2.1) at entry to the programme for speakers of English as a second or other language.</p> <p><i>*In this document the term ELC refers to the Early Learning and Care sector and settings therein, and the term ECEC refers to the relevant field of learning, namely Early Childhood Education and Care which aligns to level 7 and level 8 programmes.</i></p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time Part time	
The teaching and learning modalities	Classroom/Face to Face 74%-80%	
	Workplace/ professional practice placement 20%-26%	

	The proportions will vary within these bands depending on the delivery setting.
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	<p>The proposed two-stage (two-year full-time equivalent) programme leads to an Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care at NFQ level 6. This programme is designed to meet the QQI professional award standards for early learning and care at NFQ level 6.</p> <p>The programme comprises 12 mandatory modules, six at stage 1 and six at stage 2, enabling the learner to develop the knowledge, skills and competences required to work as an autonomous practitioner in an ELC setting and/or take responsibility for an area or room leading and coordinating the provision of a quality early learning and care environment. The focus is on promoting the holistic well-being, development and learning of children from 0 to six years across a range of ELC settings.</p> <p>The programme offers a balance of theory and practice, and professional practice placement is integral to the teaching and learning.</p> <p>Learners who successfully complete the programme will have opportunities to progress into the work place or into further and higher education.</p>
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	<p>Teaching and instructing staff will hold a relevant major award at NFQ level 7 or higher and either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a teaching/instruction qualification or • five or more years of teaching/instructing experience on programmes designed to prepare learners for practice in the ELC sector <p>The teaching team will include, at least, some members with qualifications in the field of early childhood education and care, or equivalent, and previous experience working in the ELC sector. The provider has committed to ensuring that, within 2 years of programme commencement, at least 25% of teaching staff will have specific qualifications in this field of learning (increasing to 50% after 5 years) and that at least 25% have appropriate experience.</p> <p>The detailed specifications for teaching and other staff are set out in the programme descriptor in detail and are included in Appendix 1 in this document.</p>
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	<p>1:24 maximum in classroom setting 1:1 in professional practice placements</p>
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.⁴	Approximately 1 WTE per cohort, a maximum of 1:24

⁴ This is the total wholetime equivalent number of staff dedicated exclusively to this programme divided by the maximum number of learners that can be enrolled with that complement of staff.

Programmes being replaced by the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)			Arrangement for enrolled learners	Date when replaced programme is planned to cease completely
Code	Title	Last enrolment date	Indicate whether "Teach out" or "Transfer to replacement programme"	
	This is a new programme and does not directly replace an existing programme but there is one programme that can be viewed as a legacy programme.			
PG23065 and PG23011	Early Childhood Care and Education (Level 6 6M2007).	Some centres will continue with legacy programmes into 2022 and some centres will run the new programme (Stage 1) on a pilot basis	Learners with a number of minor awards (components) will be facilitated to complete the programme before the award deactivation date.	2023

Embedded programme⁵ Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Minimum number of learners (per centre)	Maximum number of learners	Minimum number of intakes (per centre)	Maximum number of intakes (per centre)
<u>Kerry ETB</u>				
Full Time				
Kerry College Listowel Campus	6	9	1	1
Kerry College Clash Campus	6	9	1	1
Kerry College Denny Street Campus	6	9	1	1
Kerry College Monavalley Campus	6	9	1	1
Kenmare FET Centre	6	9	1	1
An Tochar FET Centre	6	9	1	1
O'Connell FET Centre	6	9	1	1
Part Time				
Kerry College Listowel Campus	4	5	1	1
Kerry College Clash Campus	4	5	1	1
Kerry College Denny Street Campus	4	5	1	1
Kerry College Monavalley Campus	4	5	1	1
Kenmare FET Centre	4	5	1	1
An Tochar FET Centre	4	5	1	1
O'Connell FET Centre	4	5	1	1

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	September 2021
	Date of last intake	August 2026
Maximum number of annual intakes	14	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	Full time – Maximum of 63 learners over 7 centres	
	Part time – Maximum of 35 learners over 7 centres	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	Part time – 2 years – 18 – 22 months	

⁵ This only needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards.

Target learner groups	<p>The programme is intended for learners interested in a career in early childhood education and care (ECEC) with children aged 0-6 years, including those who may have an interest in working as an early learning and care practitioner or for those wishing to progress to higher education in this field.</p> <p>Target learners include school-leavers and mature learners returning to education. Full-time and part-time courses are intended to meet the needs of a range of learners, such as those already working in the sector who want to develop their skills and/or acquire qualifications, people working in other areas or unemployed who want to move into the ELC sector, people with responsibilities that do not enable them to undertake full-time courses and people whose preference is to undertake a part-time course.</p> <p>Learners will not be expected to have prior knowledge or experience of the early learning and care sector on entry to the programme but they will be expected to demonstrate an interest in the field. They will also be expected to have knowledge, skills and competences equivalent to NFQ level 4. A minimum English language and literacy competency of B2 in writing, reading, listening and speaking on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) is required at entry to the programme for speakers of English as a second or other language, as specified in the PATD.</p>
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Part-time
The teaching and learning modalities	As outlined for the principal programme
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	
<p>The proposed one-year full-time equivalent programme leads to a Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care. The programme is designed to meet the QQI professional award standards for early learning and care at NFQ level 5.</p> <p>The programme comprises six mandatory modules encompassing the knowledge, skills and competences required to work at entry level across a range of early learning and care settings or to progress to stage 2 of the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care or to a relevant higher education programme. The focus is on providing for the holistic well-being, development and learning needs of children from 0 to six years across a range of ELC settings.</p> <p>The programme offers a balance of theory and practice, and professional practice placement is integral to the teaching and learning.</p> <p>Learners who successfully complete the programme will have opportunities to progress into the work place or into further and higher education.</p>	

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	As outlined for the principal programme
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	As outlined for the principal programme
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.	As outlined for the principal programme

Programmes being replaced by the Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)			Arrangement for enrolled learners	Date when replaced programme is planned to cease completely
Code	Title	Last enrolment date	Indicate whether "Teach out" or "Transfer to replacement programme"	
	This is a new programme and does not directly replace an existing programme but there is one programme that can be viewed as a legacy programme			
PG23013 and PG23077	Early Childhood Care and Education (Level 5 5M2009)	Some centres will continue with legacy programmes into 2022 and some centres will run the new programme (Stage 1) on a pilot basis	Learners with a number of minor awards (components) will be facilitated to complete the programme before the award deactivation date.	2023

Other noteworthy features of the application

Programme

- In November 2019, QQI published a Professional Award Type Descriptor (PATD) annotated for Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards, at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The standards described at levels 5 & 6 in the annotated PATD were intended to be used to replace the existing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) CAS awards, and they became the award standard for the new ELC programmes at levels 5 & 6.
- These programmes have been developed in response to this initiative and this is the first application for programme validation to be submitted using the PATD annotated for ELC standards.

Programme Development

- This validation application is one of 16 applications that were developed in a shared process, led by Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB on behalf of, and with the support of, all of the 16 Education and Training Boards.
- DDLETB was appointed as the ETB to lead the development process, with responsibility for assembling a Curriculum Development Group (CDG) and a Programme Board (PB).
- All of the ETBs will use the same curriculum but there will be differences in the ways that the programmes will be delivered in each of the ETBs depending on local circumstances.
- This report contains material relating to the shared curriculum and also material relating to the specific programme to be delivered in the Kerry ETB (KERRY ETB).

Legacy Programmes

- Although these are new programmes and do not directly replace existing programmes there are currently two programmes called Early Childhood Care and Education (Level 5 – 5M2009 and Level 6 – 6M2007) that can be viewed as legacy programmes. It is intended that the awards associated with these programmes will be de-activated in December 2023 and KERRY ETB are working towards this goal while acknowledging that some learners may have difficulty in completing by the deadline.
- KERRY ETB intends to introduce the new programme on a phased basis and some centres will continue with the legacy programmes until 2022. Learners with a number of minor awards on the legacy programmes will be facilitated to complete the old programmes before the award deactivation date. KERRY ETB have adopted a phased approach to introducing the new programme to allow time for preparation and training of teaching staff and monitors.

Professional Practice Placement (PPP)

- Learners must have access to professional practice placements with Túsla-registered ELC settings as specified in the PATD for ELC.
- Each (full-time equivalent) learner completes 150 hours of professional practice placement per stage in a minimum of two ELC settings: (1) working directly with children aged between 0 and two years 8 months, and (2) working with children aged between 2 years 8 months and six years, with an appropriate balance between settings.
- Learners must have the opportunity to carry out some activities in an outdoor area while on placement.
- The panel discussions and findings relating to the PPP are reported in the comments under Criterion 8 below.

Kerry ETB

- Kerry ETB participated in the programme development process, led by DDLETB, through participation in the stakeholder consultation phase of the project.
- KERRY ETB submitted a provider declaration/authorisation which confirms that the authorisation to apply to QQI for validation of the two programmes was granted by the KERRY ETB Programmes Committee.

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

N/A, no extension of scope of provision sought.

Part 2A Evaluation against the validation criteria

Criterion 1

The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme		
<p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.⁶</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>ETBs are nationally funded public further education providers and are legislatively required to apply to QQI for validation of their programmes of education and training.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the provider, Kerry ETB, is eligible to apply for validation of the two ELC programmes and has complied with section 44(7) of the 2012 Act. All ETBs have had their procedures for quality assurance agreed with QQI. As part of the application, the ETBs have submitted procedures for access, transfer and progression which are discussed under Criterion 4 in this report. All documentation demonstrates that criteria has been met and is compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements. The providers current scope of provision currently encompasses the field of learning subject areas.</p> <p>As lead provider, DDLETB submitted confirmation of authorisation from the Early Learning and Care Programme Board, stating that each programme/programme module has been evaluated in accordance with the QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2016) and each ETB.</p> <p>In addition, KERRY ETB submitted a provider declaration/authorisation which confirms that the authorisation to apply to QQI for validation of the two programmes was granted by the KERRY ETB Programmes Committee.</p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme

⁶This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

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.⁷
 - (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.⁸

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims and objectives of the programme are clearly expressed in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the programme descriptor. • As described earlier and as set out in Section 5.2.3 of the descriptor this programme has been developed using the new PATD standards for ELC awards, focussing on the statements for Level 5 for stage 1 and those of Level 6 for stage 2. • The minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) are explicitly specified as evidenced in Section 5.2.5 and are mapped to the relevant QQI standards.

⁷ Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

⁸ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

		The panel had some discussions with the lead provider and the project team on certain MIPLOs and these are reported on in the comments on Criterion 5 below.
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	The objectives and outcomes of the Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care are the same as those for Stage 1 of the Advanced Certificate above. Therefore, the panel recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the embedded programme meets this criterion.

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.⁹
- 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 evidence¹⁰ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant¹¹.
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.¹²
- 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.

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The provider sets out in Section 6.1 a clear rationale for the programme and demonstrates that there was a systematic process of programme development.</p> <p>In the descriptor the provider traces the development of the programme from the publication in 2019 of the First Five Whole-of-Government Strategy to improve the lives of babies, young children and families (First 5*). It is envisaged that up to 50% of the ELC workforce will hold qualifications at Level 7 on the NFQ (240 Higher Education credits) and the balance of the workforce will have qualifications at Levels 5 and 6 from programmes such as the one under evaluation.</p>

⁹ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

¹⁰ This might be predictive or indirect.

¹¹ It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

¹² There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

		<p>As described earlier this programme has been developed using the new PATD standards for ELC awards, published in November 2019, and is the first such application to be submitted to QQI for validation.</p> <p>The programme was developed in a shared process, led by Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB on behalf of, and with the support of, all of the 16 ETBs.</p> <p>The descriptor sets out the development steps undertaken including the establishment of a Curriculum Development Group (CDG) and the process of stakeholder consultation at every level. The CDG examined a number of comparable programmes as part of their work and their findings are set out in Section 6.1 of the descriptor.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the lead provider and the project team the development of occupational profiles by the CDG through extensive consultation and feedback with stakeholders.</p> <p>There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated and these are described in the comments under Criterion 12 below.</p> <p><i>*https://first5.gov.ie</i></p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme

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 satisfied¹³.
- 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 (CEFR¹⁴) 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.

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procedures for providing information to prospective learners are described in Section 8.1 of the programme descriptor. This comprehensive description is supplemented by further information in appendices to the descriptor. • The selection procedures and entry criteria are set out in Section 8.2 of the programme descriptor. The entry criteria are clear and well described. In KERRY ETB all learners are

¹³ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

¹⁴ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

		<p>interviewed before being accepted on programmes. All admission decisions are made in line with a published admissions policy supported by a published admissions appeal policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a detailed description in Section 8.2 of the process and criteria for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for entry. • In discussion with the panel the provider provided further information on access to the programme in the special case of applicants who have achieved minor awards associated with the programmes 5M2009 and 6M200 (both Early Childhood Care and Education). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the first instance, learners with a number of minor awards will be facilitated to complete these programmes before the award deactivation date currently scheduled for the end of 2023. ○ Learners may be granted automatic exemption from complete modules up to a limit of 30 credits on the ELC programme through credit transfer based on having attained specific legacy component awards. ○ The panel discussed with the lead provider and the project team the rationale for the limit of 30 credits and they described the detailed consultation process undertaken to arrive at this figure. The panel understands and accepts this approach. • The titles of the principal and embedded programmes reflect their intended learning outcomes and carry long-term meaning in society. <p>In discussions with the lead provider and the project team, it was noted that the target learner group included those who may have an interest in working as room leaders. The direction of national policy is such that by 2028 it is envisaged that room leaders will have a Level 7 qualification in Early Childhood Education and Care. It was agreed that further clarification for learners should be provided in this regard.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1 – The provider should ensure that programme information should reflect the evolving policy on the qualifications needed for room leaders. Prospective learners at Level 6 should be made aware of the planned introduction of Level 7 requirements.</i></p> <p>In discussions with the provider, it was noted that there are ongoing contacts with HE institutions at a national level to consider pathways for those successfully completing this programme. Many ETBs,</p>
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		<p>including KERRY ETB, have arrangements in place with local HEIs for progression.</p> <p>It was noted that KERRY ETB intend to adopt the DDLETB RPL handbook and to review the application of the policy at an early date.</p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>Prospective learners wishing to be accepted onto the Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care must meet the access criteria associated with Stage 1 of the principal programme above. The panel recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the embedded programme meets this criterion.</p>

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 principles¹⁵.
- 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.¹⁶

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The programme is well documented, well-structured, coherent and designed so that the learner can achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. This is evidenced in Section 7: Programme Curriculum</p> <p>The curriculum is presented in a logical manner and provides an incremental learning path for both knowledge and skills development and enables students to base learning on both skills' development and evidence-based theory.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the lead provider and the project team certain topics in the curriculum in some detail. The panel are making a number of recommendations based on these discussions. The panel considers that these recommendations can be implemented with relatively minor changes to the curriculum.</p> <p>These recommendations on curriculum are addressed to the Curriculum Development Group (CDG) acting for the project team.</p>

¹⁵ This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

¹⁶ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

		<p><i>Recommendation 2 – The provider should adopt any changes made to the curriculum arising from the panel’s recommendations to the Curriculum Development Group.</i></p> <p>The panel’s recommendations in respect of curriculum are included here for completeness.</p> <p><i>Recommendations to Curriculum Development Group (CDG)</i></p> <p>a) <i>The CDG should review the Stage 1 curriculum to ensure that learners have some introduction to the social context of ECEC and that there is an explicit introduction to social studies in Stage1.</i></p> <p>b) <i>The CDG should review the Stage 1 curriculum to ensure that learners have an explicit introduction to pedagogy in Stage1. Learners would benefit from considering the art of teaching before addressing the study of curriculum.</i></p> <p>c) <i>The CDG should review the curriculum to ensure there is some introduction to IT systems regularly used within the sector, such as funding software (the hive) and also management systems (Childpaths/little vista).</i></p> <p>d) <i>The CDG should change MIPLO 3 in Stage 1 to read “Engage in an inclusive, <u>ethical</u> and anti-bias approach”, that is adding the word “ethical”.</i></p> <p>e) <i>CDG should consider splitting MIPLO8 in Stage1 into two MIPLOs, one dealing with communications and the other dealing with teamwork.</i></p> <p>f) <i>The CDG should make a number of minor additions to strengthen the diversity element of the curriculum. These relate to the module Advanced Professional Practice Placement in Early Learning and Care.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Add “and inclusively” in Section 9.3 of the module– “...work effectively <u>and inclusively</u> with babies...”.</i> ○ <i>Include “embracing diversity” under “Concepts relating to professional practice” (9.7b Module content)</i> ○ <i>Include in the reading list for both PPP modules: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education</i>
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Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme
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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 staff¹⁷ (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 development¹⁸ opportunities¹⁹.
- 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.

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <p>The qualifications and experience required for teaching and other staff delivering the programme are set out in Section 3.1.21 of the programme descriptor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching staff will hold a relevant major award at NFQ level 7 or higher and either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a teaching qualification or

¹⁷ Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

¹⁸ Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

¹⁹ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ five or more years of teaching experience on programmes designed to prepare learners for practice in the ELC sector • In accordance with the PATD stipulation the teaching team will include some staff who have ELC qualifications*, or equivalent, and who have previous experience working in the ELC sector. • The provider has committed to ensuring that, within 2 years at least 25% of teaching staff have a qualification in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care (increasing to 50% after 5 years) and that at least 25% have appropriate experience. • The panel welcomes this strong commitment to staff development. It recognises that it will take time to ensure that existing staff are qualified to a minimum of Level 7. The panel welcomes the strategy to support staff with targeted and relevant CPD, pitched to a Level 7, within a reasonable timeframe as an interim measure to support the quality of teaching/learning. This process should be monitored with suitable flexibility exercised where difficulties arise. • Existing teachers who don't have a qualification in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care but are otherwise qualified may teach on the programme but are restricted to certain modules depending on their qualification. <p>The detailed specifications for teaching and other staff are set out in the programme descriptor in detail and are included in Appendix 1 in this document</p> <p>The panel notes with approval the development of a professional development course for FET staff. The course was developed in co-operation with and parallel to the programme development project. It was developed in response to an ELC PATD requirement that <i>“New staff members will be provided with an induction programme and all staff will have access to ongoing professional learning opportunities.”</i></p> <p>The panel notes with approval that there are discussions being held with HEIs with a view of supporting further CPD and continuing the professional development of staff.</p> <p>As noted earlier in Part 1B the professional practice placement (PPP) is an important part of the programme. During the placement the contact person between the learner and the centre is referred to as the monitor. Different ETBs may have different ways of organizing the monitoring function, according to circumstances, but the panel considers that it is vital that the monitors have the necessary competence to carry out their role.</p>
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		<p>It was noted in the discussion that the programme descriptor states that the placement monitor will be “<i>appointed by the provider, will be a staff member suitably qualified and experienced in ELC, Garda vetted and have experience in the assessment of learners.</i>” The panel considers that additional emphasis should be placed on the ability of the monitor to assess and evaluate in the specific area of ELC and the need for support in the role.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 3: The provider should ensure that monitors are competent to evaluate and assess knowledge, competencies and skills in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) discipline as outlined in the PATD and are supported in their role.</i></p> <p><i>* In this context the term ELC qualification means any qualification at Level 7 or above on a list published by The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)</i></p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme

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.

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>KERRY ETB, in common with other ETBs, has a long established track record in delivering ELC courses and the panel accepts that existing centres have the necessary physical resources to do so. Where new centres within an ETB apply to deliver the programmes the availability of resources will be a criterion in the internal ETB process of approval. This is explicitly set out in a list of criteria in Section 3.1.17.</p> <p>One of the key resources for providers delivering the programme is the availability of professional practice placements (PPP). KERRY ETB has an established relationship with many ELC providers in its area. In common with other ETBs KERRY ETB anticipate that locating placements with younger children (0 - 2years 9 months) will be more difficult than finding places with older children.</p> <p>KERRY ETB has committed to adopting the PPP policy document produced by the project team which is discussed further in the comments under Criterion 8.</p>

Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme
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Criterion 8

	The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	
Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets <u>sub criteria a) and b) fully.</u></p> <p>Based on a review of the programme documentation and the re-engagement panel report together with the discussions with the provider, the panel is satisfied that there is a well-established culture of supporting learners.</p> <p>The documentation includes many examples of policies, procedures, checklists and toolkits designed to help support and inform learners. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 5 – A checklist for a learner induction session. • Professional Practice Placements Handbook • Assessment Process Appeals Handbook <p>KERRY ETB already has a well-established portfolio of procedures and documentation as part of its QA system.</p> <p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to sub-criteria c) and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets <u>sub criteria c) partially.</u></p> <p>The lead provider and the project team has produced a handbook for the professional practice placement (PPP) setting out the roles of all the parties involved. The procedures for PPP set out in the handbook stipulate that the first formal contact between the learner and their ETB monitor is at a tri-partite meeting with the workplace supervisor.</p> <p>The panel considers that there should be an earlier and separate formal meeting between the monitor and learner to provide a safe space to discuss any issues that may have arisen for the learner.</p> <p>The panel considers there should be regular contact between the learner and monitor to encourage and facilitate reflective learning.</p>

		<p>Therefore</p> <p><u>It is a condition of validation that the procedures for professional practice placement are revised to</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>provide for a formal meeting between the learner and their ETB monitor in advance of any meeting which includes the workplace supervisor.</u> b) <u>provide for regular scheduled contact between the learner and the ETB monitor during the placement in addition to classroom de-briefings.</u> <p>The panel discussed with the lead provider and the project team the rationale for awarding 40% of the module marks to the work based assessment in the PPP module at each stage. They explained that although 40% of the module marks relied on one assessment, the workplace learning was assessed throughout the programme in 11 of the 12 modules. In this context the 40% weighting is less significant.</p> <p>In addition, the procedures outlined, including a tri-partite meeting, create a more formal structure than the traditional workplace supervisors' report which might lead to inflated marks.</p> <p>It is also noted and agreed that it is important for assessment purposes that the monitor links with the learner's direct supervisor rather than the setting manager (where applicable).</p> <p>It was noted in respect of the workplace supervisor that based on the most recent survey* of the ELC sector that 94% of those working directly with children had a Level 5 qualification or higher and included in the 94% were 67% who had Level 6 or higher. In that context, the panel accepts that it is reasonable to assume that in most cases supervisors will be available who have qualified at NFQ level above that of the learner being supervised for those at Stage 1.</p> <p>As qualification levels continue to increase it is anticipated that Stage 2 learners will in time benefit from supervision with a supervisor who is qualified at one NFQ level above the learner.</p> <p>* https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2019/12/Annual-Early-Years-Sector-Profile-Report-AEYSPR-2018-19.pdf</p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	<i>Partially</i>	As for the principal programme

Criterion 9

There are sound teaching and learning strategies		
<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support²⁰ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has adopted teaching strategies that are varied and authentic and they are appropriately applied to support the learner to meet the programme learning outcomes. The evidence for this conclusion is the programme documentation and also the presentation to and discussions with the panel by staff from the provider, the lead provider and the project team.</p> <p>In Section 7.5 of the programme descriptor the policies underlying the monitoring of learning and the use of feedback mechanisms are described. Learners are encouraged to engage in reflective practice and tutors are encouraged to provide feedback. Evidence that feedback has been given to learners is monitored.</p> <p>In Section 9.7a of the the individual module descriptors there are suggestions for providing formative assessments for learners.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the processes in place for collection and evaluation of learners feedback. There are a number of feedback mechanisms used in KERRY ETB including learner survey and learner representative meetings. Each centre is responsible for its own processes in accordance with KERRY ETB QA procedures and evaluation is carried out at centre level.</p> <p>There are mechanisms for relaying ETB level information to the national Programme Board and these are described in the comments on Criterion 12.</p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early	Yes	As for the principal programme

²⁰ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt, it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Learning and Care		
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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*²¹
- 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.²²
- 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.²³
- 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.²⁴

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>KERRY ETB's standard policies and procedures for assessment are based on the principles of fairness, consistency, authenticity and transparency and apply to the programme. There is an external examining system in place to ensure that assessments standards are met.</p> <p>The provider has established sound procedures for the moderation of assessment and the reliable certification of results. The provider confirmed that reasonable accommodations are made available to those learners who need them.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the moderation of assessment grades. Results are moderated in KERRY ETB as part of a results approval process which includes internal verification and external authentication. The programme descriptor (Section 7.6b) provides links to detailed policy documents including video guides for staff. In general results are reviewed at centre level and in KERRY ETB reports and summaries are provided at ETB level.</p>

²¹ See the section on transitional arrangements.

²² This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

²³ The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

²⁴ If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

		<p>The panel discussed with the lead provider and the project team the burden of assessment on learners. The provider stated that when devising the assessments, the curriculum development group was cognisant of the amount of assessment students have to undertake on the existing programmes and sought to rationalise the number of assessments on the proposed programmes.</p> <p>The lead provider and the project team confirmed that there was a relatively low level of assessment at the start of each stage of the programme.</p> <p>The provider encourages teaching staff to develop integrated assignments which reduces the volume of assessment although centres can choose the assessment methods that best suit their circumstances.</p> <p>The project team has developed a grid (Section 7.6b) that highlights opportunities for integrating assessment across modules and is currently developing a template to assist in creating integrated assessments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Recommendation 4 – The provider should complete the development of a template for the creation of integrated assignments building on the existing “integration grid”.</i></p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme

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 disabilities²⁵.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*²⁶ 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).

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has established policies and procedures to support learners. The evidence for this conclusion is the programme documentation and also the presentation to and discussions with the panel by provider staff.</p> <p>The KERRY ETB programme descriptor states in Section 7.8 that information to learners, post enrolment, is provided in induction sessions and Course or Learner handbooks.</p> <p>In discussions with the panels the provider stated that the Learner Handbook is currently being developed. Based on the evidence of these discussions and the quality of existing programme</p>

²⁵ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

²⁶ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

		<p>documentation the panel are satisfied that learners will be provided with the necessary information when the handbook is completed.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 5 – The provider should complete the Learner Handbook in advance of enrolling learners on the programme.</i></p> <p>In Section 7.8 of the programme descriptor the guidance and support available to learners is described. The support for learners includes the provision of reasonable accommodation for assessment, where necessary.</p> <p>This section (7.8) concludes with the following paragraph <i>Within each centre delivering this programme, the programme coordinator or other named person will be available to the learner to address any concerns the learner may have, and that person will have overall responsibility for the pastoral care of the learner.</i></p>
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme

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-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 assurance²⁷ 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.

Programme	Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Rationale/Evidence
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is the programme documentation and presentations to and discussions with the panel.</p> <p>The KERRY ETB programme descriptor (Section 4.1) states that KERRY ETB will have an ELC programme manager who will have responsibility for the overall management of the programme within that ETB. The responsibilities of the programme manager will include ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme reviews are undertaken at centre and ETB level • Feedback is returned through the QA Network to the ELC Programme Board for consideration • Any changes/recommendations made by the Programme Board are fed back to centres and approved by the relevant ETB. <p>In respect of the national Programme Board the programme descriptor (Section 4.1 and 4.2) states</p>

²⁷ See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme board has been established to maintain oversight of the shared curriculum, comprising of representatives of key stakeholders in the ELC sector. • DDLETB will convene the Programme Board at least once a year to ensure that these ELC programmes remain up-to-date and in line with evolving legislative, regulatory and best practice developments. • DDLETB, as convener of the Programme Board will have responsibility for forwarding ETB feedback to the Programme Board for consideration at its annual review of the programme. • DDLETB, as lead ETB, will follow through on recommendations made by the programme board. Each ETB is responsible for approving/implementing changes via their own governance structures. <p>The panel are making a number of recommendations relating to programme management and overview. These recommendations are addressed to the Programme Board.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 6 – The provider should continue to support the Programme Board in responding to the panel’s recommendations in respect of programme management and oversight.</i></p> <p>The panel’s recommendations to the Programme Board are included here for completeness</p> <p><i>Recommendations to the Programme Board</i></p> <p>a) <i>The Programme Board should specify the exact documentation it requires from each ETB to provide for the ongoing development of the programmes and specify the reports going back to the ETBs.</i></p> <p>b) <i>The Programme Board should undertake a review of the programme after two years of delivery to ascertain how the programme is progressing. The topics discussed should include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The role of monitors in PPP</i> • <i>Legacy programmes and RPL</i> • <i>Progression to HEIs</i>
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Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Yes	As for the principal programme
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Part 2B Overall recommendation to QQI

Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care

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 one proposed condition. The proposed condition is set out 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); ²⁸
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons²⁹ for the overall recommendation

- The provider is a well-established provider and the proposed programme is in a field where the provider has substantial experience.
- There is a need for such a programme arising from national policy changes in respect of staff qualifications (First 5) and standards (PATD for ELC)
- There is evidence of a target market and evidence of employment opportunities.
- The documentation submitted was of a very high standard and included a coherent curriculum, strong teaching, learning and assessment strategies and evidence of preparedness on behalf of the ETBs with regard to implementation of the proposed programme
- The programme has been developed through a logical and coherent process informed by feedback from stakeholders.
- The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI award.
- The panel considers that some changes are necessary in the procedures set out for monitoring the professional practice placement and this is a condition of validation.
- The panel has made a number of recommendations to further enhance the programme.

²⁸ Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

²⁹ Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

On that basis the panel is making an overall recommendation to QQI of satisfactory subject to one condition.

Commendations

General

The panel commends the programme board, the project leader, the project team and DDLETB on leading the development of this programme which builds upon and consolidates the work of a number of organisations to produce a programme that will benefit learners and ultimately will benefit children.

The panel commends the project leader and the entire project team for producing excellent programme documentation. The documentation is very well presented and is comprehensive providing a wealth of detail in linked back-up documents.

The panel commends the project team for carrying out this project under the difficult circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The panel also notes that representatives of other ETBs wish to formally record their appreciation of the exceptional work undertaken by DDLETB and the project team.

The panel particularly commends the programme design procedure which utilises the outcomes based approach to design. It recommends this as an exemplar to be followed by other design teams.

The panel commends KERRY ETB for the comprehensive documentation supplied in support of the programme validation and for the open way in which the panel process was conducted. The enthusiasm and support of KERRY ETB staff for the project which was evident in discussion with the panel is commendable.

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

It is a condition of validation that the procedures for professional practice placement are revised to

- c) **provide for a formal meeting between the learner and their ETB monitor in advance of any meeting which includes the workplace supervisor.**
- d) **provide for regular scheduled contact between the learner and the ETB monitor during the placement in addition to classroom de-briefings.** (Criterion 8)

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Recommendation 1 – The provider should ensure that programme information should reflect the evolving policy on the qualifications needed for room leaders. Prospective learners at Level 6 should be made aware of the planned introduction of Level 7 requirements (Criterion 4).

Recommendation 2 – The provider should adopt any changes made to the curriculum arising from the panel’s recommendations to the Curriculum Development Group (Criterion 5).

Recommendation 3: The provider should ensure that monitors are competent to evaluate and assess knowledge, competencies and skills in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) discipline as outlined in the PATD and are supported in their role (Criterion 6).

Recommendation 4 – The provider should complete the development of a template for the creation of integrated assignments building on the existing “integration grid” (Criterion 10).

Recommendation 5 – The provider should complete the Learner Handbook in advance of enrolling learners on the programme (Criterion 11).

Recommendation 6 – The provider should continue to support the Programme Board in responding to the panel’s recommendations in respect of programme management and oversight (Criterion 12).

Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care

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 one proposed condition. The proposed condition is set out above.	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); ³⁰
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons³¹ for the overall recommendation

As for the principal programme

Commendations

As for the principal programme

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

As for the principal programme

Summary of recommendations to the provider

As for the principal programme

³⁰ Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

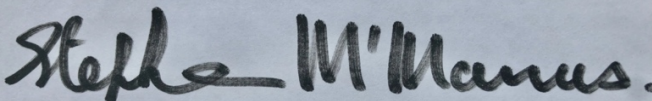
³¹ Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

All members of the panel have declared that they have no conflict of interest when evaluating this programme.

Kevin Devine also declared that he was an employee of City of Dublin ETB before retiring in 2017.

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



Chair: Stephen McManus
Date: 02/07/21

Signed:

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 schedules

Principal Programme: Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care

Principal Programme	Award Class	Award Level	Award Credits	Award Title					
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Major	6	120	Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care					
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O	Mode/s of delivery	Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)			Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due
				Directed	WBL / Placement*	Self-Directed	Technique	Weighting	
Award Stage					*Notional				
Advanced Professional Practice Placement in Early Learning and Care	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-Based	25	104-208	31	11-115	Continuous Assessment Skills Demonstration Work-Based Assessment	50% 10% 40%	Award Stage
Sociology and Social Policy in Early Learning and Care	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-based	15	63-125	19	6-68	Continuous Assessment Project	40% 60%	Award Stage
The Developing Child	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-based	20	83-167	25	8-92	Continuous Assessment	100%	Award Stage
Curriculum and Pedagogy	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-based	20	83-167	25	8-92	Continuous Assessment Project	60% 40%	Award Stage
Inclusive Early Learning and Care	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-based	15	63-125	19	6-68	Continuous Assessment Project	30% 70%	Award Stage
Supervision and Administration in Early Learning and Care	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-based	25	104-208	31	11-115	Continuous Assessment Project	60% 40%	Award Stage

Embedded Programme: Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care

Embedded Programme 1	Award Class	Award Level	Award Credits	Award Title					
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Major	5	120	Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care					
Programme Module Number and Title (add / delete rows as required)	M/O³²	Mode/s of delivery	Module credits	Total Learner Effort Module (hours)			Assessment Techniques and Weightings		Indicate when in the programme when assessment is due
				Directed	WBL / Placement * notional	Self-Directed	Technique	Weighting	
Award Stage									
Professional Practice Placement in Early Learning and Care	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-Based	25	104-208	36	6-110	Continuous Assessment Skills Demonstration Work-Based Assessment	50% 10% 40%	Award Stage
Children's Rights, Legislation and Regulation	M	Face-to-face/Classroom	15	63-125	0	25-87	Continuous Assessment	100%	Award Stage
Holistic Care of Children 0-6 Years	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-Based	15	63-125	21	4-66	Continuous Assessment Exam	100% 30%	Award Stage
Early Childhood Growth and Development	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-Based	25	104-208	36	6-110	Continuous Assessment Project	60% 40%	Award Stage
Curriculum, Play and Creative Studies	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-Based	25	104-208	36	6-110	Continuous Assessment	100%	Award Stage
Understanding and Assisting Children with Additional Needs	M	Face-to-face/Classroom Work-Based	15	63-125	21	4-66	Continuous Assessment Project	50% 50%	Award Stage

³² Mandatory or Optional

Part 4: Appendices

Appendix 1 - Staff Role Profile

3.1.21 Staff Role Profiles³³: Qualifications and Experience³⁴			
ETB level			
Note: Given the diversity in sizes of centres and colleges within the ETB and in operational structures, it is not possible to give a single definitive figure for each role. The following are indicative WTE figures.			
Role e.g. Tutor, Mentor etc	Qualifications & experience required:	# of Staff on the programme with this profile across all centres (WTEs ³⁵)	
		Per Centre	Per ETB
Programme management staff at ETB level	Experienced QA staff member	N/A	0.25
Programme management staff at centre/college-level	Centre/service managers, and college principals are responsible for the management of all programmes delivered by their centre/college.	1	7
Centre Course Coordinators	Experience coordinating similar programmes	0.25	1.75
Teaching staff	Teaching staff will hold a relevant major award at NFQ level 7 or higher and either a teaching qualification or five or more years of teaching experience on programmes designed to prepare learners for practice in the ELC sector The teaching team will include some with ELC qualifications, or equivalent, and previous experience working in the ELC sector. See section 3.1.21.1 below for further details	2	14

³³ Teaching staff and staff dedicated to the monitoring, development and administration of the programme should be included

³⁴ This should be a generic description of the profile of and not specific to any named person. Qualifications and experience should be explicitly stated. For example, it is not sufficient to simply state a level 8 qualification. The award type and discipline area(s) should also be included

³⁵ WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a fulltime person fully dedicated to the programme. 0.5 indicates a part-time person available to this programme half of the time.

Support staff	<p>Appropriately qualified/experienced in the area in which they are providing support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance/access support officers • Administration • IT support <p>E.g. Guidance/access support officers will have the appropriate <u>qualifications</u> to work in that role</p>	0.25 Guidance 0.25 Academic Learner Support 3.50	3.50
Work-based learning			
Professional Practice Placement Monitors	Suitably qualified and experienced in ELC, be Garda vetted and have experience in the assessment of learners.	0.25	3.50
Professional Practice Placement Supervisors	Suitably qualified at an NFQ level above that of the learner being supervised or will have appropriate experience/alternative qualifications.	N/A	N/A

3.1.21.1 Teaching Qualifications Criteria

The PATD specifies that teaching staff will hold:

- a relevant major award at NFQ level 7 or higher
- **and** either a teaching qualification or five or more years of teaching experience on programmes designed to prepare learners for practice in the ELC sector

*The PATD further specifies that the teaching team will include **some** with:*

- ELC qualifications, or equivalent (for details, see *Staged approach to gaining relevant qualifications* below)
- previous experience working in the ELC sector (for details, see *Member of teaching team with previous experience working in the ELC sector* below)

Relevant qualification to teach on ELC Programmes in general:

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) has published a list of recognised Early Years qualifications. Any qualifications on this list at level 7 or above will be recognised as a relevant qualification to teach on an Early Learning and Care programme. ETBs will be guided by the DCEDIY list of recognised Early Years qualifications when recruiting new staff to deliver the ELC programme.

Relevant qualifications to teach on specific modules

Existing teachers who don't have an ELC qualification but have another qualification may teach on the modules listed below. See guidelines on upskilling in the section on a *Staged approach to gaining relevant qualifications* below, in the event that teachers may wish to teach on other modules in the ELC programme.

Module name	Relevant award at level 7 or higher
Holistic Care of Children 0-6 years	Nursing or other related qualification
Children's Rights, Legislation and Regulation	Sociology, Social Studies, Social Care, Legal studies or other related qualification
Sociology and Social Policy	Sociology, Social Studies, Social Care or other related qualification
Early Childhood Growth and Development	Psychology (but the teacher must upskill to include Developmental Psychology if this was not included in their degree)
The Developing Child	Psychology (but the teacher must upskill to include Developmental Psychology if this was not included in their degree)
Understanding and Assisting Children with Additional Needs	Disability/inclusion studies or other related qualifications
Inclusive Early Learning and Care	Disability/inclusion studies or other related qualifications

Teaching qualification or five or more years of teaching experience on programmes

Existing teaching staff who do not have a teaching qualification must have 5 years or more teaching **core** childcare modules (as opposed to generic modules such as Communications or Work Experience). Teaching qualifications include all qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council as well as other qualifications such as Train the Trainer or recognised equivalent.

New teachers who have an ELC qualification but no teaching qualification may start to teach in order to build up their experience, but should commit to achieving a teaching qualification or equivalent (see paragraph above) as soon as possible.

Staged approach to gaining relevant qualifications

It is recognised that there are excellent teachers/trainers who have been working for many years in the sector who do not have an ELC qualification, and there are range of ongoing upskilling initiatives that teachers/trainers have been engaging in. Therefore, a staged approach to the requirements for relevant qualifications outlined above may be taken where this is not already the case.

- Centres should aim to have a minimum of **25%** of teachers/trainers with relevant qualifications **within 2 years of the programme commencing**
- This should rise to **50%** of the teaching/training team having the relevant qualification **within 5 years**
- ETBs may consider developing a Community of Practice for ELC teachers/trainers to share learning and knowledge and support centres that are in the process of upskilling their staff

Member of teaching team with previous experience working in the ELC sector

It is recognised that the requirement to have a team member with experience working in the ELC sector could raise operational challenges for some centres. Therefore:

- Centres should aim to have a minimum of **25%** of teachers/trainers with experience of working in the ELC sector **within 2 years of the programme commencing**
- As the key consideration is to have someone available who has an understanding of the operational realities in an ELC setting, ETBs may consider developing a Community of Practice for ELC teachers/trainers to share learning and knowledge regarding those operational realities.