Programme and Awards Approval and Review

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Contents

20% rule (QQI)	Up to 20% of programme content can be changed through the Programme Approval Committee, including the addition of further programme modules before the entire programme has to be revalidated by QQI.
Award	When a learner completes a course and achieves a recognised award from a recognised awarding body. For example QQI refer to their awards as Major/Minor/Special Purpose or Supplemental. City and Guilds refer to their awards as Qualifications for an entire award, or a Unit for a component award.
Award Specification (QQI)	QQI - Encompassing Certification Specification for Major, Special Purpose, Supplemental and Component awards.
Awarding Body	Organisations that make awards or award qualifications. For example QQI, City and Guilds, CIDESCO.
CAS (QQI)	"The Common Awards System (CAS) is a system of linked FET (Further Education and Training) awards specifications at NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Levels 1 to 6 inclusive". (QQI, 2015)
Certification Specification (QQI)	The QQI document containing the details of the certificate being awarded. Certification specification refers to a major award (as opposed to a component specification).
Collaborative Provision	Where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in a programme of education and training.
Component (QQI)	A part of a major, special purpose or supplemental award.
Credit Value (QQI)	Every certificate and component specification includes a credit value. Credit is quantified in multiples of 5 credits (equivalent to 50 hours of learner effort).
Component Specification (QQI)	Provides essential information in relation to the purpose of the award, the learning outcomes

	which must be achieved and the assessment techniques through which achievement of the learning outcomes must be demonstrated. An accumulation of credits for a component award will lead to a Major, Special Purpose or Supplemental award.
Differential Validation (QQI)	An application for validation from another provider that may require some modifications to the originally validated programme.
Learner effort (QQI)	Based on the time taken by typical learners at the level of the award to achieve the learning outcomes for the award.
Major Award (QQI)	A programme of learning where component awards are accumulated leading to a major award. Denoted by an "M" in the award code.
MIMLO (QQI)	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes.
MIPLO (QQI)	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes.
Minor Award (QQI)	Equivalent to a component award. Denoted by an "N" in the award code.
Module	A division of an award into chunks/themes/segments/subjects.
NL Code (PLSS)	National Programme Code (abbreviated to NL)
Non-CAS (QQI)	Programmes that are not part of the Common Award System
PG Code (QQI)	The QQI Programme Code used to categorise a programme of learning. Denoted by "PG".
PAC	The KCETB Programme and Awards Committee
Programme of learning	A learning package designed, developed and delivered by a provider. It describes how the award standard will be reached. It provides an insight into the learning experiences on offer that will enable the learner profiled to reach the knowledge, skill and competence required to achieve the award.
PVME	KCETB's Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation working group
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland

QQI PAEC	Quality and Qualifications Ireland Programmes and Awards Executive Committee.
Qualifications (City and Guilds)	A demonstration of achievement or competence based on learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
Special Purpose Award (QQI)	An award type developed for specific areas of learning that have a narrow scope. All special purpose awards comprise one or more components. (Denoted by an "S" in the award code).
Special Purpose Specification (QQI)	The QQI document containing the details of the Special Purpose Award being awarded.
Supplemental Award (QQI)	An award which recognises learning concerned with updating/up-skills and/or continuing education and training.
Supplemental Award Specification (QQI)	The QQI document containing the details of the Supplemental Award being awarded.
Units (City and Guilds)	A set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that make up a qualification.
Validated Programme (QQI)	A formal recognition that a provider is approved by QQI to deliver a programme of learning.
Validation (QQI)	The regulatory process that determines if a QQI award can be offered in respect of a provider's programme of education and training.

Centre looks to run an award

Centre manager or nominated person completes the Awards request form on MS forms and submits to qa.info@kilkennycarlowetb.ie

In the form the request type is categorised

1. Addition of a new module to existing in centre provision

The QA Office can add the module if it is part of an existing award that the centre is already validated to run. QA notifies QAOC

2. Add a new programme, that KCETB is validated to run, to a centre

The QA Office sends the Programme Approval form to the Centre. The Centre completes the form and returns it to QA Office.

Director of FET is notified and Approval form is presented at QAOC

Outcome of approval request is communicated to applicant Centre

3. Create a new award that is currently not accredited

The QA Office sends the Programme Approval to the Centre. The Centre completes the form and sends it to the QA Office.

Permission sought from relevant AEO and DFET to proceed with creating the award.

The Centre develops the award, creates a Programme Descriptor. The QA Office can provide support.

A KCETB PAC is convened to approve the award. QAOC are notified.

On PAC and QAOC approval - The Programme descriptor is submitted to the relevant awarding body.

Await the decision of the awarding body.

4. Review an existing award (Major/minor/special purpose/supplemental)

Following centre level review, required changes are communicated to QA.

Minor changes

Agreed minor changes can be made locally, within KCETB. Descriptors are updated. All centres are notified.

Major Changes

Brought to ETBI Quality Network

Work with other ETB SMEs to update modules.

Agree changes at KCETB PAC or at Programme Board.

Implement changes and update descriptors. Communicate to centres.

5. Add a new programme to your centre where that programme is being delivered by another ETB, not KCETB

The QA Office sends the Programme Approval form to the relevant centre. Form is completed and sent to QA Office.

QA Office liaises with other ETB to get access to descriptors.

QA Office supports the KCETB Centre with the application to the awarding body.

PAC convened to review application. Outcome communicated to QAOC.

Application sent to relevant awarding body.

Await the decision of the awarding body.

6. Add an existing award that is not being run by another ETB.

The QA Office sends the Programme Approval form to the relevant centre. The form is completed and returned to QA.

The QA Office can support with the application to the awarding body.

PAC convened to review the application. Outcome communicated to QAOC.

Application is sent to the relevant awarding body.

Await the decision of the awarding body.

7. Modify an AIS

The QA Office considers the request to change AIS and responds within 5 days.

If approved the requesting centre proceeds with the changes.

Modified AIS must be approved by QA before use.

The requesting centre must keep an AIS change log.

The AIS are used by the requesting centre and may be share to other centres.

2.   Introduction

This policy document outlines Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board's (KCETB) policy for Programmes and Awards Approval. This policy document (Version 1.0) and all associated forms and procedures are effective from xxth October 2021. Updated versions of this document will be available on the KCETB QA Website. Centres are advised to consult the website for the most up to date policy document as the policy may evolve over time. All awards approval related correspondence to the QA Office needs to come from the centre manager or designated person in your centre.
Quality Assurance Office contact details: qa.info@kilkennycarlowetb.ie or 056-7813098

3.   Purpose

KCETB is committed to providing quality assured programmes for learners in its various FET centres.
The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures that ensure that any programme delivered by KCETB FET is in line with the requirements of the relevant awarding body.
It also ensures that any KCETB centre delivering a programme of learning has the resources required to deliver the programme.
This document has been devised to ensure that KCETB has a robust governance procedure in place to deal with programme delivery, development and validation or programme approval and modification requests.

4.   Existing Programmes

As a recognised QQI programme provider KCETB is validated to deliver a range of QQI awards as part of its validated programmes. In turn each KCETB centre is validated to run a range of awards.
In addition, KCETB is approved to run a range of awards from several other awarding bodies.

5.   Types of Provision

KCETB FET offers a range of programmes from several awarding bodies. Programmes are offered on a full-time basis and a part time basis. Programmes are delivered via face-to-face teaching and learning, via blended learning[1] and online.

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[1] Please note that KCETB is not currently validated to run QQI awards in a blended or online learning format. COVID-19 emergency measures will expire in August 2022.

6.   Programme approval process

In recognition of the various types of provision KCETB is establishing a staged programme approval process.

Stage 1 requires completing the online [Awards Request and Review form](#) and submitting it to the QA Office.

Depending on the type of request submitted at **Stage 1** the requesting person or centre will be required to follow one of the following processes:

Process 1: Add a new module to existing in centre provision
Process 2: Add a new programme that KCETB is validated to run to our centre
Process 3: Create a new award that is currently not accredited
Process 4: Review an existing award (major/minor/special purpose/supplemental) and update it
Process 5: Add an existing award that is being delivered by another ETB but not KCETB
Process 6: Add an existing award that is not being run by another ETB
Process 7: Modify or develop an AIS (Assessment Instrument Specification)

Note:
Access to the QA Portal is controlled by the QA Office.

The Centre Manager or nominated person sends access requests to the module descriptor section of the QA Portal to the QA Office.

Process 1: Add a new module to existing in centre provision

If your centre has identified the need for the addition of a new module to existing provision, then you should do the following:

1. Go to the [KCETB QA Portal.](#)
2. Click on Module Descriptors.
3. Find your centre.
4. All your validated modules are listed by award level within your centre.
5. Search for the module descriptor
    a. If you find the module descriptor and if you can download it then your centre is validated to run that module **under the corresponding major award.**
    b. If you can find the module descriptor but you cannot download it then your centre is validated to run that module. Your centre manager or nominated person completes the [Programme and Module Descriptor request form](#).
    c. If you cannot find the module descriptor then your centre is not validated to run it and you fill in the [Awards request and review form](#). (Note for question 4 you will select Process 1).
6. You will receive a response from QA within 5 working days indicating the next steps.

Process 2: Add a new programme, that KCETB is validated or approved to deliver, to a centre

If your centre has identified the need for the addition of a new programme (e.g. a major award) to existing provision, then you should do the following:
1. Go to the KCETB QA Portal.
2. Click on Module Descriptors.
3. Find your centre.
4. All your validated programmes are listed by award level within your centre.
5. Search for the programme
   a. If you find the programme and if you can download it then your centre is validated to run that programme.
   b. If you can find the programme but you cannot download it then your centre is validated to run that programme. The centre manager or nominated person must complete the Programme and Module Descriptor request form.
   c. If you cannot find the programme then your centre is not validated to run it and you fill in the Awards review and request form. (Note for question 4 select Process 2).
6. The completed form is submitted automatically to the QA office for processing.
7. You will receive a response from QA within 5 working days indicating the next steps.
8. If the outcome of the request is that the centre needs to apply for a new programme then the QA Office will send the requesting centre an Application for Programme Approval form.

Process 3: Create a new award that is currently not accredited

There are cases where a centre may identify a gap in certification. For example, certification may be provided by a National Governing Body but not QQI or a centre may identify that there is no certification being provided at all in a newly emerging field of learning.
It is important to note that the creation of a new award (major, minor, special purpose) is a significant undertaking. For major awards, the **minimum** estimated timeframe for the creation and validation of a QQI award is 18 months. For minor or special purpose award the estimated **minimum** timeframe for the creation and validation of a QQI award is 6 months.

If the centre is confident that there is a demand for a new award, the following process should be followed:
1. The teacher/instructor identifies the need for the creation of a new award
   - Research should be carried out to ensure that no awarding body is providing certification in the field of learning.
2. The teacher/instructor meets with their Centre Manager and agreement is reached that there is a need for a new award in the field of learning.
   - Evidence will be required demonstrating sufficient demand for an award
3. The Centre Manager completes the Awards request and review form and submits if to the QA Office (Note for question 4 select Process 3).

4. The QA Office will seek permission from the relevant Adult Education Officer and the Director of FET to proceed with the creation of the new award.
    a) The Quality Assurance Oversight (QAOS) committee are made aware of this
5. A response (approval to proceed or not) is given to the requesting centre within 5 working days of the next QAOS meeting.
6. If permission is granted the requesting centre proceeds to the programme development stage.
    a) For QQI awards the requesting centre should be familiar with the information provided on the Validation section of the QQI website, in particular the Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training[2].
    b) For QQI awards; depending on the type of award that is being created the requesting centre completes a document called a Programme Descriptor Template. The requesting centre should clarify which QQI form should be completed. The QA Office can assist in identifying the correct form. Please see QQI Application for Validation.
    c) For non-QQI awards the requesting centre will work with the QA Office in identifying the appropriate course of action.
7. After the programme development stage the application is submitted to the KCETB PAC (Programme and Awards Committee); see this group's Terms of Reference.
8. If the programme is approved by the PAC the outcome is communicated to the KCETB QA Oversight Committee.
9. The application is submitted to the awarding body for approval
    a) For QQI awards see the meeting dates of their PAEC here.

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[2] Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf (qqi.ie)

Process 4: Review an existing award (major/minor/special purpose/supplemental)

KCETB is committed to ensuring that education and training awards remain up-to-date and relevant. To this end KCETB will endeavour to review the content of education and training programmes, identify awards for improvement and implement a process for improving the quality of our awards.

QQI have identified several programmes due for review. KCETB's PVME Group are currently reviewing these programmes (as of October 2021).

Aside from the programmes due for review, KCETB is identifying other awards that need to be updated.

If, via Internal Verification, External Authentication, or some other process a centre has identified a requirement to update an existing award then the following steps should be taken:

1. Report to your Centre Manager or nominated person, in writing, that an award needs to be updated
2. The Centre Manager or nominated person completes the [Awards request and review form](#)
   a. Making sure to select option 4 in question 4.
3. Submit the form to QA
4. QA will respond to the request within 5 working days

On receipt of a request to review an award QA will identify the next steps to be taken. In cases where there is a request to review an award that is being managed by another ETB then QA will:

1. Contact the relevant ETB with responsibility for the award
2. Liaise with the relevant ETB to agree on any recommended changes
3. If changes are required, QA will work with the relevant ETB to make the changes
4. Issue new module descriptor to centres for implementation

In cases where there is a request to review an award that is a National Programme or part of a National Programme then

1. QA will link with other ETBs via the Quality Network to discuss recommended changes and decide next steps to clarify if changes are necessary.
2. QA will contact QQI with the recommended changes to seek approval to amend the module descriptor.
3. If approval is granted a subject matter expert group is to be set up with other ETBs to work on updating the module descriptor in line with the recommended changes.
4. Present updated descriptor to QQI for revalidation.
5. Issue new module descriptor to centres for implementation.

Process 5: Add an existing award that is being delivered by another ETB but not KCETB

The centre manager completes the Awards request and review form
1. In question 4 select Process 5.
2. The Centre Manager will need to know what other ETB is currently running the award being requested; the QA Office can assist with this.
3. Submit to the QA office for processing.
4. QA will respond within 5 working days indicating the next steps.
5. If the outcome of the request is that the centre needs to apply for a new programme then the QA Office will send the requesting centre an Application for Programme Approval form.

If this initial request is approved then the QA Office will contact the ETB where the award is being run to access the award resources (descriptors, AIS, etc.) Upon receipt of the required resources the QA Office will forward them to the requesting centre. The requesting centre will need to demonstrate that their centre meets the requirements to deliver the award. Evidence for this will be provided to the KCETB PAC. Once approved by PAC the QA Office will seek validation from QQI or approval from whatever the awarding body is for the award that is being requested.
The expected timeframe from receipt of initial request to the end of the process is a minimum of 12 weeks.

Process 6: Add an existing award that is not being run by another ETB

The centre manager completes the Awards request and review form
1. In question 4 select Process 6.
2. The Centre Manager will need to be satisfied that the award being requested is not being run by any other ETB.
3. Submit to the QA office for processing
4. QA will respond within 5 working days indicating the next steps.
5. If the outcome of the request is that the centre needs to apply for a new programme then the QA Office will send the requesting centre an Application for Programme Approval form.

If this initial request is approved, then the QA Office will inform the requesting centre of the outcome of this initial request.
The requesting centre will need to provide evidence of demand for the award, the Application for Programme Approval form will be used for this.
The requesting centre will need to demonstrate that they have the required resources to run the award. To establish the resources that will be needed the requesting centre will need to source a descriptor or a qualification handbook from the awarding body. The QA Office can assist with this.
The requesting centre will need to demonstrate that their centre meets the requirements to deliver the award. Evidence for this will be provided to the KCETB PAC. Once approved by PAC the QA Office will seek validation from QQI or approval from whatever the awarding body is for the award that is being requested.

The expected timeframe from receipt of initial request to the end of the process is a minimum of 24 weeks.

Process 7: Modify or develop an AIS (Assessment Instrument Specification)

The centre manager or nominated person completes the [Awards request and review form](#)
1. In question 4 select Process 7.
2. Submit to the QA office for processing.
3. QA will respond within 5 working days indicating the next steps.
4. Changes to AIS will need to be approved by the QA Office.
5. The requesting centre will need to keep an AIS change log, please contact the QA Office for an example.

10. KCETB PAC (Programmes and Awards Committee)

The KCEBTB Programmes and Awards Committee (PAC) will review, approve and consider applications from centres for approval of programme and awards delivery.

The chairperson will be the Director of FET. There will also be a vice chairperson. One or both chairperson and vice chairperson will attend all PAC meetings. Decisions and recommendations from the PAC will be communicated to the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Once a programme or award is approved by the KCETB PAC and the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee further approval may be required by the relevant awarding body.

KCETB PAC Meeting Dates for 2021 / 2022:

Deadline for consideration at next PAC:	KCETB PAC Meeting Dates:
	31st August 2021
19th October 2021	2nd November 2021
23rd December 2021	11th January 2022
15th February 2022	1st March 2022
19th April 2022	3rd May 2022
21st June 2022	5th July 2022

11. QQI PAEC

Please see below the dates for the KCETB PAC meetings and the QQI PAEC meetings. For other awarding bodies the QA Office will indicate timelines and dates to the requesting centre.

Please click the link for information on the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) (qqi.ie)

Deadline for consideration at next PAC:	KCETB PAC Meeting Dates:	Schedule of meetings of QQI PAEC for 2021/2022:
		Thursday 4 February 2021
		Thursday 8 April 2021
		Thursday 24 June 2021
		Thursday 9 September 2021
		Tuesday 19 October 2021
	31st August 2021	Tuesday 7 December 2021
19th October 2021	2nd November 2021	To be decided
23rd December 2021	11th January 2022	To be decided
15th February 2022	1st March 2022	To be decided
19th April 2022	3rd May 2022	To be decided
21st June 2022	5th July 2022	To be decided