

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT:

This section of the Quality Assurance (QA) Manual outlines the policy and procedures for programme development in Kerry Education and Training Board (KETB). This policy and the associated procedures do not exist in isolation, so cross reference will be made to other related policies and procedures where appropriate.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that programmes are developed consistently and in accordance with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) requirements. It also ensures that programmes are developed with appropriate regard to the resources required to deliver them when validated by QQI.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all programmes developed and delivered by KETB. Programmes include those that lead to CAS Awards, non-CAS Awards and new Apprenticeship programmes.

Programmes may lead to major awards or minor awards or special purpose awards.

Programmes will be developed at levels 3 to 6 in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

POLICY:

All programmes will be developed with a view to their validation by QQI.

The steps in the approval process are designed to reinforce the separation of functions between the executive (Senior Management Team and Chief Executive) and the academic units of governance (Quality Council and its Programme Governance Subgroup), while also demonstrating the required interaction between them.

Programmes will be developed to ensure that successful learners will achieve the standard expected at the designated level. This will be measured in achievement of stated Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) appropriate to the level.

All programmes developed by KETB, in line with this policy, will be placed on the NFQ. All programmes are developed for validation in accordance with the quality assurance procedures outlined in this handbook.

Programmes will be designed to ensure that the National Policy on Access Transfer and Progression is adhered to and that there are articulation and progression routes within KETB or, alternatively, that arrangements can be made for such routes with named educational institutions and programmes.

In general, all programmes developed shall be in line with KETB's Strategic Plan, in place at the time of development. Programme development is informed by consultation with stakeholders such as sectoral interest groups, prospective employers, national policy makers and learners.

Programmes will be developed by Programme Development Groups, led by an appropriately qualified instructor/tutor with oversight from the Quality Assurance Officer.

Programmes leading to CAS awards shall be developed in accordance with QQI's '*CAS Compound Programme Descriptor Template*' and associated Guidelines, while programmes leading to non-CAS awards shall be developed in accordance with QQI's '*Non-CAS Compound Programme Descriptor Template*' and associated Guidelines. Apprenticeship programmes shall be developed having regard to QQI's Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Apprenticeship Programmes.

Programmes will be delivered and supported by appropriately qualified staff as outlined in the appropriate section of this Manual.

All programmes as validated by QQI, will fall to be reviewed at least every 5 years and re-validation sought if appropriate.

Project management of the programme development process is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance officer of KETB.

PROCEDURE:

Programme proposals may emerge from a range of sources within KETB. Proposed programmes will be developed over three stages:

1. Initial Programme Feasibility
2. Development to Stage of Pre-external Review
3. Development to Completion and Submission to QQI.

Initial Programme Feasibility

This stage of development is carried out by the programme proposer(s). It examines the feasibility of the programme, paying particular attention to its strategic fit and the education and training rationale for the proposed programme. This stage also checks that the proposed programme is viable, both academically and financially.

In this phase, outline programme learning outcomes are developed, and a benchmarking process undertaken. This information is captured in a New Programme Proposal Template shown in Appendix A.

The completed template is submitted to the Senior Management Team (SMT) together with an indicative timetable for development. The SMT shall consider the proposal and decide **either**:

- to approve it to be sent to the Quality Council Programme Governance Sub-group (QCPGS)
- or**
- refer it back to the proposer seeking further information/amendments
- or**
- decline to approve it.

Development to Stage of Pre-external Review

Following approval from the QCPRG, a Programme Development Group (PDG) is established by that body with advice from the Quality Assurance Officer. During this phase, the PDG will further develop the proposal in line with the appropriate QQI template and guidelines, referred to above. It

will include refined programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs), curriculum structure with module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) and teaching and learning and assessment strategy.

The programme team should consider the viability of all modes of study and of delivery at this point.

The programme at this stage should also have indicative costs associated with delivering the programme, in terms of equipment, materials and human resources.

The draft programme document, accompanied by a completed Template shown in Appendix B, is sent to the SMT for outline funding approval.

Following funding approval, the draft programme document and associated template is forwarded to the QCPGS for consideration.

Development to Completion and Submission to QQI

If the QCPGS approves the proposal at this point, it will commission a report from an external independent subject matter expert. This person will examine the proposal draft programme document and complete a report in accordance with the template shown in Appendix C.

The completed report will be sent to the PDG for its consideration and appropriate amendments to the programme shall be made by that group, in accordance with the recommendation in the report. A document showing how the SME's recommendations have been addressed should also be prepared and together with the SME's report, included as an appendix to the programme document.

The PDG will also refine the indicative costs estimated in the earlier stage of development.

The following documentation will be forwarded to the Quality Council (QC) for consideration and approval:

- Final revised programme document, including the report from the SME and the response of the PDG to this
- The final cost estimates

Following approval by the QC, the complete proposal, including all documentation, together with that body's recommendation that it be forwarded to QQI seeking validation, will be sent to the Chief Executive (CE) for decision.

Having reviewed the proposal, the CE will decide whether to send the proposal to QQI seeking validation. If this decision is positive, all required documentation will be sent to QQI following which that body's processes will be initiated and a validation event arranged.

Response to QQI Validation Report and Conditions/Recommendations

Following receipt of the QQI Validation Report, it shall be referred to the PDG for action. The PDG shall amend the Programme to comply with any conditions and shall consider any recommendations in the Report.

Following this, the amended programme document shall be forwarded to the Quality Council for consideration.

Following its review, the QC may forward the revised document to QQI and make a recommendation to the Chief executive whether to commence the programme.

The Chief Executive shall make such a decision.

APPENDIX A

New Programme Initial Proposal Template

1. Table of Contents
2. Programme details (NFQ Level, Credits and Standards Used)
3. Rationale for the Proposed Programme
4. Details of Benchmarking Exercise Conducted
5. Stakeholder Engagement
6. Teaching and Learning Strategy
7. Access, Transfer and Progression
8. Outline Programme Learning Outcomes

APPENDIX B

Interim Programme Development Template

1. Table of Contents
2. Programme details (NFQ Level, Credits, Standards Used and delivery mode)
3. Rationale for the Proposed Programme
4. Details of Benchmarking Exercise Conducted
5. Stakeholder Engagement
6. Teaching and Learning Strategy
7. Access, Transfer and Progression
8. Developed Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs)
9. Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)
10. MIPLOs mapped to particular level on NFQ
11. Reference to section of programme document where MIMLOs are mapped to MIPLOs
12. Module details and Syllabi
13. Assessment Strategy and Indicative Schedule
14. Indicative Costs including capital, materials and human resources.

APPENDIX C

External Subject Matter Expert's Report

Proposed Programme Title:

Name and Institution of the Subject Matter External Specialist:

Please provide detailed feedback under the following headings:

1. Demand from Employers and support from industry and other stakeholders
2. Demand from Learners
3. Appropriateness of the Award title/level
4. Overall Balance of Learner Workload
5. Appropriateness of Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
6. Appropriateness of Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes
7. Appropriateness of Teaching and Learning methodologies
8. Appropriateness of proposed delivery mode(s)
9. Appropriateness of the Assessment Strategies