PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PAEC)

Thursday 3 December 2020 at 2.15pm

via Microsoft Teams

Draft Note of the 50th meeting of the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held via Microsoft Teams, at 2.15pm on **Thursday 3 December 2020.**

Present:	**In attendance:**
Ms Cliona Curley, Interim CEO (Chairperson)	Ms Therese Masterson (Key Executive)
Ms Andrina Wafer	Ms Janet Cawley (Secretary)
Ms Angela Lambkin	Ms Carmel Kelly
Ms Barbara Kelly (Item 1 - item 5.5.1)	Mr Walter Balfe
Dr Bryan Maguire	Ms Liliana O'Reilly (Item 5.2.1)
Dr John O'Connor	Ms Alex Keys (Item 5.5 – item 15)
Ms Marie Gould	Dr Deirdre Stritch (Items 9 and 14)

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

   The Chairperson enquired and confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to any of the items of business before the Committee.

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 15 OCTOBER 2020**

   2.1 The Minutes of the PAEC Meeting held on 15 October 2020 were approved by the Committee.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

   Any matters arising were covered within agenda items and were discussed during the meeting.

4. **NOTE OF THE MEETING, REPORT FOR THE BOARD**

   4.1 Note of Meeting of 15 October 2020

   The Committee APPROVED the Note of the PAEC Meeting of 15 October 2020 for publication on the QQI website.

   4.2 Report for the Board on the Meeting of 15 October 2020

   The Committee NOTED the Report for the Board on the PAEC Meeting of 15 October 2020.

5. PROGRAMME VALIDATION APPLICATIONS

5.1 Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes

5.1.1 Cork Education and Training Board

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programme:

5.1.1.1 PG24380, Advanced Certificate in Music, Level 6, Major Award, 120 FET Credits, *CAS Award*

5.1.2 Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG)

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

5.1.2.1 PG24263, Certificate in Temporary Traffic Management Operations on High Speed (Level 3) Roads, Level 4, Special Purpose Award, 15 FET Credits
5.1.2.2 PG24264, Certificate in Temporary Traffic Management Design and Inspection, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 10 FET Credits

5.2 Higher Education and Training Programmes – Programme Validation

5.2.0 Validation of Microcredentials – An Overview

The executive provided an overview on microcredentials to the Committee.

There were seven novel HET applications for validation. They were novel in a number of ways:

- The application documentation is reduced, reflecting the fact that the programmes are 'modular' i.e. in each case, based on a module of an already validated programme.
- The evaluation method was desk audit rather than by panel meeting.
- The report template has been modified.

These applications were the product of a pilot entered into by QQI in conjunction with eight private HEIs. The purpose of the pilot was to establish and refine a method of validating microcredentials i.e. small (5 - 25 ECTS) programmes leading to special purpose awards, where the content of the programme has already been through a validation process.

This initiative is a response to a government funding initiative for microcredentials, launched as part of the July 2020 stimulus. Public and private HEIs are to be funded to offer short programmes to learners seeking upskilling or retraining. One criterion of the funding was that any such programme should be based on a module(s) from a programme validated by QQI or another Irish awarding body. There was no requirement that the modular programme itself should lead to an award.

The Committee NOTED that panel members and providers will be consulted on their experience of the pilot with a view to refinement.

5.2.1 Bridge Mills Galway Language Centre

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.1.1 PG24377, Certificate in Teaching English as a Second or Other Language, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 10 Credits

The Committee did not make a decision on the classification scheme proposed by the provider for the award. The Committee requested the executive to prepare a paper on this matter and consult with the English Language Education (ELE) sector before a decision is made.

5.2.2 **Dublin Business School**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.2.1 PG24321, Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits

5.2.3 **Griffith College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed reports presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.3.1 PG24273, Master of Science in Digital Transformation (Life Science), Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG24274, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Transformation (Life Science), Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits
PG24275, Certificate in Science in Operational Excellence and Data Analytics (Life Science), Level 9, Minor Award, 30 Credits
PG24276, Certificate in Science in Advanced Manufacturing Strategy (Life Science), Level 9, Minor Award, 30 Credits

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed reports presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for two years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.3.2 PG24440, Certificate in Quality and Regulatory Practice in the Pharmaceutical Industry, Level 9, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits, *Microcredential*

5.2.3.3 PG24441, Certificate in Digital Communications and Customer Engagement, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 10 Credits, *Microcredential*

5.2.4 **City Education Group**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.4.1 PG24319, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits

5.2.5 National College of Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.5.1 PG24392, Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 20 Credits

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for three years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.5.2 PG24438, Certificate in Software Development Fundamentals, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 10 Credits, *Microcredential*

5.2.6 IBAT College Dublin

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.6.1 PG24379, Bachelor of Business, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG24384, Higher Certificate in Business, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits (Exit Award)

5.2.7 Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for two years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.7.1 PG24439, Certificate in Special Education, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits, *Microcredential*

5.2.8 The Open Training College

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for two years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.8.1 PG24436, Certificate in Creative Problem Solving and Action Learning, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 10 Credits, *Microcredential*

5.2.9 Dorset College

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for one year subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.2.9.1 PG24448, Certificate in Project Management, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits, *Microcredential*

A Named Provider
The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee REFUSED the validation of one programme of a named provider.

The decision to refuse validation of the programme will be referred to the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC) for confirmation or referral back to the PAEC.

5.3 Devolution of Responsibility for Validation Sub-Processes
No Business

5.4 Validation of Research Degree Programmes
No Business

5.5 Apprenticeship Programmes

5.5.1 Griffith College

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for three years subject to the condition that the programme title is aligned with the proposed award title, any other special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

PG24262, Higher Certificate in Healthcare Support Practice, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits

5.5.2 Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for three years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.5.2.1 PG24431, Certificate in Scaffolding, Level 5, Major Award, 120 FET Credits

6. REVALIDATION

6.1 Application for Extension of Validation Period

6.1.1 **Kerry Education and Training Board**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

Due to the current pandemic, Kerry ETB indicated that they had to divert significant QA resources to manage the continuity arrangements for on and off the job delivery of the Advanced Certificate in Culinary Arts. An extension of validation would assist Kerry ETB to put in place additional arrangements to implement the process of programme review and revalidation and to ensure compatibility with remote communications.

Kerry ETB requested an extension of the validation period for the Advanced Certificate in Culinary Arts until December 2021 to allow for an active intake through the calendar year 2021. Kerry ETB will have the review completed and revalidation application submitted to QQI in the latter months of 2021.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date for the following programme for one year:

6.1.1.1 PG23401, Advanced Certificate in Culinary Arts, Level 6, Major Award, 240 FET Credits

6.1.2 **SOLAS**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

As a result of the pandemic, the delivery of the craft apprenticeship programmes has been severely interrupted since March 2020. Due to the current model of delivery of the craft apprenticeship programmes, 3,000+ apprentices had their off-the-job craft training interrupted. Therefore, work on the continuity of teaching, learning and assessment for the 25 craft programmes has been prioritised.

SOLAS has had to divert significant QA resources to manage the continuity arrangements for 25 craft apprenticeship programmes. SOLAS was planning to complete programme review, and stakeholder engagement during this time. With current resources, SOLAS will not be able to complete the necessary activities to review and update the five named programmes.

SOLAS requested an extension until December 2021. SOLAS expects to have the review completed and revalidation applications submitted to QQI in the latter months of 2021.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date for the following programmes for one year:

6.1.2.1 PG22046, Advanced Certificate Craft Electrical, Level 6, Major Award, 240 FET Credits
PG22036, Advanced Certificate Craft Carpentry and Joinery, Level 6, Major Award, 240 FET Credits
PG22025, Advanced Certificate Craft Heavy Vehicle Mechanics, Level 6, Major Award, 240 FET Credits
PG22050, Advanced Certificate Craft Metal Fabrication, Level 6, Major Award, 240 FET Credits
PG22022, Advanced Certificate Craft Plumbing, Level 6, Major Award, 240 FET Credits

6.1.3 **Hibernia College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Professional Master of Education in Primary Education and the Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education programmes are approved by the Teaching Council for the purposes of

teaching in primary and post-primary schools respectively. The timelines for approval of these programmes with the Teaching Council were synchronised with QQI validation and programme review periods i.e. they are approved for five years. Both programmes were due for review with QQI and the Teaching Council during 2019.

The Teaching Council is not in a position to accept applications for re-approval as yet. The Teaching Council published its revised criteria and guidelines for programme providers during the week commencing 9 November 2020 and have indicated that they will commence the next cycle of review and accreditation in September 2021 with a view to all revised programmes commencing delivery from September 2022. A one-year extension to the QQI validation period for these programmes will enable Hibernia College to synchronise its QQI review and revalidation processes in line with the Teaching Council's reaccreditation processes.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date for the following programmes for one year:

6.1.3.1 PG21507, Professional Master of Education in Primary Education, Level 9, Major Award, 120 Credits
PG21195, Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education, Level 9, Major Award, 120 Credits

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

Hibernia College requested that QQI facilitate the alignment of the professional recognition of the programme below with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and programme validation with QQI, by extending the first and last intake dates for the programme to January 2021 and January 2025, respectively. Hibernia intends to have its first intake to the programme in January 2022.

The Committee APPROVED the request to amend the enrolment interval for the programme as outlined above.

6.1.3.2 PG23195, BSc (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing, Level 8, Major Award, 240 Credits

6.2 Application for Modification of Validated Programme

6.2.1 Dorset College

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. Dorset College requested permission to increase enrolment in the programme below by 150 learners to an annual total of 350 learners over two intakes:

6.2.1.1 PG23993, Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits

The Committee APPROVED the additional enrolment numbers for one year i.e. January and September 2021 intakes, but a report will be required from Dorset College following surveys of September 2020 and January 2021 intake cohorts as to their experience of the programme. The report is also to examine the operation and effectiveness of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process for entry, based on comparative analysis of outcomes.

6.3 Applications for Revalidation

6.3.1 Dublin Business School

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programmes for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.3.1.1 PG24463, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing, Level 8, Major Award, 240 Credits
PG24464, Bachelor of Science in Computing, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits *(Exit Award)*
PG24461, Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits
PG24462, Certificate in Fundamentals of Data Analytics, Level 8, Minor Award, 15 Credits *(Exit Award)*

7. FOLLOW-UP ON PAEC RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS IN PANEL REPORTS

7.1 Update on the follow-up of conditions of validation

7.1.1 **Farm Ed Ltd**

QQI is required to follow up on any special conditions of validation identified by an evaluation panel. The special conditions of validation that require follow-up are any conditions that have yet to be met at the time of the PAEC meeting at which the relevant application for validation is being considered at, or those conditions that are ongoing in nature and will require explicit monitoring for the period for which the programme has been validated.

The Committee noted the documentation circulated.

In September 2019, QQI validated the following two programmes for one year, allowing Farm Ed Ltd four intakes to both programmes with a maximum of 30 learners per intake (120 learners in total) on condition that provider review the programmes after one year and report back to the PAEC to review.

PG23812, Agriculture, Level 5, Major Award, 120 FET Credits
PG23814, Farming, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 50 FET Credits

Due to the pandemic, it was agreed that the Farm Ed Ltd review of programme delivery would be postponed until Q4 2020.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to extend the validation of both programmes by one year until the end of December 2021. Farm Ed Ltd is approved for a maximum of four intakes to both programmes with a maximum of 30 learners per intake. The executive is to request the provider to submit detailed plans for programme delivery during 2021, including programme schedules and timetables.

8. QA FOR COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL PROVISION
No Business

9. APPROVAL OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR LEGACY PROVIDERS (RE-ENGAGEMENT)

9.1 Irish Times Training

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of Irish Times Training.

9.2 Gaelchultúr Teoranta

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of Gaelchultúr Teoranta.

9.3 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee REFUSED to approve with recommendations the quality assurance procedures of the named provider (pending mandatory changes being made). The named provider may submit revised procedures for approval within a six-month period of notification of this decision.

9.4 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee REFUSED to approve with recommendations the quality assurance procedures of the named provider (pending mandatory changes being made). The named provider may submit revised procedures for approval within a six-month period of notification of this decision.

9.5 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee REFUSED to approve with recommendations the quality assurance procedures of the named provider (pending mandatory changes being made). The named provider may submit revised procedures for approval within a six-month period of notification of this decision.

9.6 International School of Business

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of International School of Business.

9.7 Elevation Training

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of Elevation Training with conditions of QA approval. The Executive will liaise with Elevation Training regarding follow up for same.

The Committee NOTED that all mandatory changes confirmed by the PAEC at its meeting on 5 December 2019 had been satisfactorily addressed.

9.8 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee REFUSED the quality assurance procedures for blended learning of the named provider.

The Committee noted that the named provider did not seek approval of procedures for blended learning as part of its reengagement application. A bespoke process was put in place and a sub-panel of the original panel was appointed comprising the Chair, report writer and a blended leaning expert. The named provider has accepted the panel's findings.

9.9 SOLAS

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED SOLAS's interim quality assurance procedures for 27 craft apprenticeship programmes.

9.10 Martha McGinn Training and Consultants

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee NOTED the withdrawal of the application for reengagement by Martha McGinn Training and Consultants.

10. ROUTINE STANDARDS ACTIVITIES UPDATE

No Business

11. CHANGE OF STATUS OF LEGACY HET AND FET PROVIDERS

No Business

12. REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PAOC)

12.1 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. At its meeting on 10 November 2020, the PAOC reviewed the decisions of the PAEC meeting of 16 July and 15 October 2020 to refuse validation of two programmes.

The PAOC CONFIRMED the decisions of the PAEC to refuse validation of the two programmes.

13. OBSERVATIONS OF THE PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PAOC) REPRESENTATIVES AT THE PAEC

13.1 This item was deferred.

14. THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF PROVIDER REENGAGEMENT (QA APPROVAL)

14.1 Thematic Analysis of Provider Reengagement (QA Approval)

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED the proposed QQI response to the recommendations of the thematic analysis of reengagement (commissioned by QQI in February 2020) for publication.

15. SURVEY ON EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE SITE VISITS

15.1 This Item was deferred.