# Tool to support the evaluation of a programme by the provider against the QQI validation criteria

"Prior to making an application for validation of a programme, a provider is required to conduct and prepare a report on, an evaluation of the relevant programme against the applicable validation policies and criteria. The process is expected to be conducted in accordance with the applicant's QQI approved quality assurance procedures", *QQI policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, 2016, page 13.* The provider's evaluation process is not to be confused with the independent evaluation defined in section 6 of the QQI policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, 2016 (page 15).

This tool lists QQI's core validation criteria, sub-criteria and additional criteria for programmes leading to CAS awards. It assumes familiarity with the following:

1. QQI Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training
2. Guidelines for Completing the Programme Descriptor Template (pilot document)
3. The programme descriptor template (pilot document)

The headings from the programme descriptor template are mapped to the most relevant core validation criteria and/or sub-criteria and/or CAS criteria. This is to aid those undertaking the self-evaluation exercise. Please note, the evaluation (self-evaluation) by the applicant against these criteria is a <u>particularly important</u> part of the validation application. The evaluation of the programme against the criteria must explain how the application meets the criteria. *<u>A mere assertion that a programme meets the criterion is not sufficient.</u>*

After completing this tool, the provider must complete a high level self-evaluation report indicating how the 12 core validation criteria are met. In explaining how the proposed programme meets a particular validation criterion the evaluation report should outline the main points of the argument and where necessary provide more detailed analysis in supporting documentation to be provided with the application. Evaluation against some criteria may require significantly more effort than others.

**The programme documentation and provider's evaluation report must address the applicable validation criteria. QQI may refuse validation on the grounds that the application does not address the applicable validation criteria. The onus is on the applicant to present a complete case. Applicants should note that validation may be refused if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria is not demonstrated to be satisfied.**

| Criterion 1 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **17.1 The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme** | Elements of Section 1 and Section 8 will address this criterion | |
| a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. | 1.1 Provider | |
| 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. | 8.1 Provider declaration | |
| c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[1] | 8.1 Provider declaration | |

| Criterion 2 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **17.2 The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought** | Elements of Section 2, Section 4, Section 6 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. | 6.2 Programme aim and programme objectives | |
| b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. | 2.1.1 Programme title<br><br>7.2 QQI component title(s), code(s) and NFQ Level | |
| (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme. | 2.2 Embedded programme | |
| c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s). | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.* | 2.1.1 Programme title<br><br>7.2 QQI component title(s), code(s) and NFQ Level | |
| e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | 2.1.1 Programme title<br><br>7.2 QQI component title(s), code(s) and NFQ Level | |
| f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are | | |

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[1] This 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.

| | | Relevant heading | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought. | 2.1.1 Programme title<br><br>7.1 Module title | |
| | (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. | 2.1.1 Programme title<br><br>7.1 Module title | |
| 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.[2] | 6.6 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs)<br><br>6.9 Minimum intended stage learning outcomes (MISLOs), if applicable | |
| | (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards. | 6.6 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs)<br><br>6.9 Minimum intended stage learning outcomes (MISLOs), if applicable | |
| h) | Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules. | 7.9 Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) | |
| i) | Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable. | 7.9 Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) | |
| | (i) For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[3] | 7.9 Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) | |

| **Criterion 3** | **Relevant heading from programme descriptor template** | **Evaluation** |
|---|---|---|
| **17.3 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)** | Elements of Section 3, Section 4, Section 6 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| 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 | 4.1 Programme concept | |

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

[3] 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.

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| | 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.[4] | | |
| 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. | 4.1 Programme concept<br><br>6.6 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs)<br><br>6.7 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency<br><br>6.9 Minimum intended stage learning outcomes (MISLOs), if applicable<br><br>7.9 Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) | |
| (i) | There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme. | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| (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. | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| (iii) | There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies). | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| (iv) | There is evidence[5] of learner demand for the programme. | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| (v) | There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[6]. | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| (vi) | The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[7] | 4.1 Programme concept | |
| c) | There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. | 3.1 Programme management | |
| d) | Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have | 4.1 Programme concept | |

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[4] 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.

[5] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

[7] 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.

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| | 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. | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |

| Criterion 4 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **17.4 The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory** | Elements of Section 2, Section 5 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied[8]. | 2.1.11 Detail any articulation arrangements involving advanced entry<br><br>5.1 Information to be made available to a learner<br><br>5.2 Entry procedures<br><br>5.3 Programme specific transfer and progression (outward) procedures and criteria<br><br>5.4 Identified transfer and progression destinations<br><br>7.7c Entry/Access requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence) | |
| 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. | 5.1 Information to be made available to a learner | |
| 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 | N/A | |

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[8] 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

| | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL[9]) 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). | 2.1.16 Target learner group<br><br>5.2 Entry procedures<br><br>7.7c Entry/Access requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence) | |
| 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. | 2.1.11 Detail any articulation arrangements involving advanced entry<br><br>5.2 Entry procedures<br><br>7.7c Entry/Access requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence) | |
| 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). | 2.1.1 Programme title | |
| (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; | 2.1.1 Programme title | |
| (iii) Has long-lasting significance. | 2.1.1 Programme title | |
| g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | 2.1.1 Programme title | |

| Criterion 5 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **17.5 The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose** | Elements of Section 2, Section3, Section 6 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| 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. | 6.3 Outline and rationale for the curriculum structure<br><br>6.7 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency<br><br>6.8 Integrated learning opportunities and assessment in light of the MIPLOs | |

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

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| | | 6.14 Provider programme structure | |
| 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. | 6.3 Outline and rationale for the curriculum structure<br><br>6.14 Provider programme structure | |
| c) | Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes. | 7.7d Pre-requisite module titles, if applicable<br><br>7.7e Co-requisite module titles, if applicable<br><br>7.10a Teaching and learning strategy, including delivery modes, teaching and learning methodologies and suggestions for formative assessment<br><br>7.10b Module content<br><br>7.10c Teaching resources (reading lists etc.)<br><br>7.11 Module summative assessment strategy | |
| d) | The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff. | 6.2 Programme aim and programme objectives<br><br>7.8 Purpose statement for this module | |
| e) | The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[10]. | 6.3 Outline and rationale for the curriculum structure<br><br>6.14 Provider programme structure<br><br>7.7d Pre-requisite module titles, if applicable<br><br>7.7e Co-requisite module titles, if applicable | |
| f) | The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented. | 6.1 Programme curriculum | |
| g) | The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes. | 2.1.1 Programme title | |
| h) | The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes. | 7.5 Credit value | |
| i) | Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the | 3.2 Programme staffing | |

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[10] 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.

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| same rigour and attentiveness as other elements. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy<br><br>6.11 Integration, organisation and oversight of work-based learning | |
| 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.[11] | 2.1.3 Duration *(years, months, weeks)*<br><br>6.4 Typical learning effort and credit allocation for the programme<br><br>6.5 Indicative timetable and its rationale<br><br>6.14 Provider programme structure<br><br>7.6 Minimum typical learner effort in hours | |

| Criterion 6 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **17.6 There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned** | Elements of Section 3 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| 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)). | 3.2  Programme staffing<br><br>7.7a Specifications for module staffing requirements | |
| b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[12] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments. | 3.2 Programme staffing | |
| 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. | 3.2 Programme staffing | |
| d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to | 3.2 Programme staffing | |

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[11] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified.

[12] 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.

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| | be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development[13] opportunities[14]. | | |
| e) | There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance. | 3.2 Programme staffing | |
| 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. | 3.2 Programme staffing | |

| Criterion 7 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **17.7 There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned** | Elements of Section 2, Section 3, Section 7 and Section 8 will address this criterion | |
| 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)). | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| 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: | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| (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) | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources | |

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[13] 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.

[14] 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.

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| technology and any virtual learning environments provided) | 7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements<br><br>7.10c Teaching resources (reading lists etc.) | |
| (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| (v) technical support | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| (vi) administrative support | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| 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) | 2.1.13 Name of centre(s) where the programme is to be provided<br><br>2.1.14 Criteria for selecting locations for programme delivery | |
| d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address | 2.1.9 Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years<br><br>2.1.10 Total costs and income over the 5 years | |
| (i) Planned intake (first five years) and | 2.1.9 Proposed first year (i.e. new learner) enrolment over five years | |
| (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. | 2.1.10 Total costs and income over the 5 years | |
| e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property | 3.1 Programme management | |

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| (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required. | 8.1 Provider declaration | |

| Criterion 8 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **17.8 The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners** | Elements of Section 6 will address this criterion | |
| 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. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy | |
| 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. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy | |
| 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. | 6.11 Integration, organisation and oversight of work-based learning | |

| Criterion 9 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **17.9 There are sound teaching and learning strategies** | Elements of Section 6 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes. | 6.7 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency<br><br>6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy<br><br>7.10a Teaching and learning strategy, including delivery modes, teaching and learning methodologies and suggestions for formative assessment.<br><br>7.10b Module content | |
| b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy<br><br>7.10a Teaching and learning strategy, including delivery modes, teaching and | |

| | | learning methodologies and suggestions for formative assessment.<br><br>7.10b Module content | |
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| 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). | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy | |
| d) | Learning is monitored/supervised. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy | |
| e) | Individualised guidance, support[15] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme. | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |

| **Criterion 10** | **Relevant heading from programme descriptor template** | **Evaluation** |
|---|---|---|
| **17.10 There are sound assessment strategies** | Elements of Section 6 and Section 7 will address this criterion | |
| a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[16] | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy | |
| b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy | |
| 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.[17] | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy<br><br>7.11b Mapping of minimum intended module learning outcomes to assessment techniques/tasks | |
| d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy<br><br>6.13 Programme assessment strategy<br><br>7.10a Teaching and learning strategy, including delivery modes, teaching and | |

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[15] 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.

[16] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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| | | learning methodologies and suggestions for formative assessment. | |
| 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.[18] | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy<br><br>7.11b Mapping of minimum intended module learning outcomes to assessment techniques/tasks | |
| 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. | 7.11f Sample assessment materials | |
| g) | There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results. | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy | |
| 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.[19] | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy | |

| Criterion 11 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **17.11 Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for** | Elements of Section 5 and Section 6 will address this criterion | |
| 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. | 6.13 Programme assessment strategy | |
| b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme. | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures. | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |

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[18] 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.

[19] 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).

| | | Relevant heading | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 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. | 5.1 Information to be made available to a learner<br><br>6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| 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. | 6.10 Programme teaching and learning strategy<br><br>6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| g) | The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs. | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| h) | The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[20]. | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| i) | If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[21] 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 . | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |
| 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). | 6.12 Programme-specific information/guidance/care for a learner | |

| Criterion 12 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **17.12 The programme is well managed** | Elements of Section 2 and Section 3 will address this criterion | |
| a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner | 3.1 Programme management | |

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[20] 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).

[21] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

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| | assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures. | | |
| b) | The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not. | 2.1.13 Name of centre(s) where the programme is to be provided

2.1.14 Criteria for selecting locations for programme delivery

3.1 Programme management | |
| 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. | 3.2 Programme staffing | |
| 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. | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources | |
| e) | Quality assurance[22] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. | 3.1 Programme management | |
| 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. | 3.1 Programme management | |
| g) | The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. | 3.1 Programme management | |
| h) | There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification. | 3.1 Programme management | |

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[22] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

| CAS Criterion 1 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **7.1 Linked Certificate Specification** | | |
| a) The minor programme prepares a learner to meet the relevant part of the requirements for the linked certificate specification. | 2.1.4 Linked certificate, if applicable | |

| CAS Criterion 2 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **7.2 Purpose Statement** | | |
| a) The compound programme is consistent with the relevant award specification's purpose statement. | 6.2 Programme aim and programme objectives | |
| b) The minor programme is consistent with the relevant minor award(s) specification's purpose statement and that of the linked certificate specification. | 7.8 Purpose statement for this module | |

| CAS Criterion 3 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **7.3 Field of Learning** | | |
| a) The provider's approved scope of provision must encompass the programme's field of learning subject to units (4.2) and (4.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training. | 1.5 Contextual information about the provider and its other programmes | |

| CAS Criterion 4 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **7.4 Expected Learning Outcomes** | | |
| a) The minimum intended compound programme learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable award standard (non-minor award) and the minimum intended module learning | 6.6 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs)<br><br>6.9 Minimum intended stage learning outcomes (MISLOs), if applicable<br><br>7.9 Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) | |

| | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| outcomes are consistent with the applicable minor awards standards. | | |
| b) The minimum intended minor programme learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable award standard | 6.6 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) | |
| c) The minor programme's minimum intended programme learning outcomes must also be consistent with the linked certificate specification. | 6.6 Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) | |
| d) The programme leading to a compound award cannot be completed unless the learner has acquired, and where appropriate, is able to demonstrate, its expected learning outcomes (those of the compound award itself in addition to those of the required minor awards). The demonstration of the acquisition of minimum intended outcomes defined in a), b) and c) as applicable should suffice for this. | 7.9 Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) | |

| CAS Criterion 5 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **7.5 Certificate Requirements[23]** | | |
| a) The compound programme ensures the certificate requirements are satisfied for each learner before the (non-minor) certificate is requested in respect of a learner on the basis of completion of the programme. | 6.7 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency<br><br>6.14 Provider programme structure | |
| b) The satisfaction of the certificate requirements is a necessary but insufficient condition for the (non-minor) certificate to be requested[24]. | 6.7 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency<br><br>6.14 Provider programme structure | |

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[23] Certificate requirements are a necessary but insufficient requirement for the recommendation to QQI that a compound award be made. A particular component award may appear in the certificate requirements of more than one compound. For example, the Level 5 minor award 'work experience' appears in the certificate requirements of dozens of major awards. Achievement of this such a minor award in the context of one programme does not automatically imply that it can be used to meet the certificate requirements of a different programme. For example, work experience in 'Engineering Technology' will not be useful for 'Early Childhood Care and Education'. It is the responsibility of the provider of a programme leading to a compound award to determine whether or not an enrolled learner's prior CAS awards can be used to meet the compound award's certificate requirements. CAS minor awards cannot be taken at face value in this regard especially general ones that can be achieved in significantly different ways

[24] A learner who meets the certificate requirements may not be entitled to the certificate if they have not demonstrated achievement consistent with the certificate's expected learning outcomes

| CAS Criterion 6 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **7.6 Assessment Requirements** | | |
| a) The programme only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award if they have been specifically assessed against the standard determined by QQI for that award—this applies separately to each award including minor, major and special purpose awards[25]. Assessment of the achievement of minimum intended outcomes defined in 7.4 a), b) and c) as applicable should suffice. | 6.7 Mapping the MIPLOs against the QQI awards standards and demonstrating consistency<br><br>6.13 Programme assessment strategy<br><br>7.11 Module summative assessment strategy | |

| CAS Criterion 7 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **7.7 Special Validation Requirements** | | |
| a) The programme complies with the special validation requirements from the relevant certificate/component specifications. | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources<br><br>7.7a Specifications for module staffing requirements<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |
| b) Where special validation requirements relate to facilities or staff or other factors that vary with centre, there are arrangements to ensure that the conditions are met as necessary at each centre involved with the programme. | 3.1 Programme management<br><br>7.7a Specifications for module staffing requirements<br><br>7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |

| CAS Criterion 8 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **7.8 Supporting Documentation** | | |
| a) Where the expected learning outcomes require compliance with supporting standards (e.g. occupational standards or competence standards) this compliance is | 3.3 Special requirements, including physical resources | |

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[25] 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)

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| systematically demonstrated in the application for validation. | 7.7b Specific module-related physical resource requirements, including QQI specific validation requirements | |

| CAS Criterion 9 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
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| **7.9 Access Statement[26]** | | |
| a) Where the award specification specifies access requirements these are enforced by the programme. | 5.2 Entry procedures<br><br>7.7c Entry/Access requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence) | |

| CAS Criterion 10 | Relevant heading from programme descriptor template | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **7.10 Other CAS Criteria** | | |
| a) The programme complies with the 87.5% Rule There is a lower limit to the volume of learning at the award's NFQ level involved in a programme leading to a CAS compound award. The lower limit is 87.5% of the minimum credit requirements for the compound award. For example, if the minimum credit requirement is 120 FET credits then at least 105 FET credits must be at the award's NFQ level. | 6.14 Provider programme structure | |
| b) The minor programme complies with the Compound Award Rule The compound award rule concerns the threshold beyond which an application for the validation of a programme leading to a compound award (e.g. a major award) must be made. A provider applying for validation of one or more minor programmes must ensure that the set of minor awards accessible through the proposed minor programmes together with those accessible through its QQI validated minor programmes does not overlap with the certification requirements of any QQI compound award by more than the FET credit limits below. The limits for major awards are: NFQ level 3: 45 FET credits NFQ level 4: 70 FET | 6.14 Provider programme structure | |

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[26] CAS awards are designed to enable people to qualify in stages. The credit allocation for an NFQ level N award assume that a person has qualified with a major award at NFQ level N-1 in the field

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| credits NFQ level 5: 90 FET credits NFQ level 6: 90 FET credits<br><br>Limits for other compound awards are not automatic but QQI may require a provider to apply for the validation of a programme leading to a particular compound award where the provider wishes to access compound award components that amount to more than 75% of the compound award's credit allocation. | | |