

## SECTION 2

### Part I

# City of Dublin ETB POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON QQI PROGRAMME Validation

## Section 2 PART I: City of Dublin ETB POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON QQI PROGRAMME VALIDATION AND COURSE APPROVAL (RESTATEMENT)

### Introduction


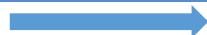







The purpose of section is to set out City of Dublin ETB policy and procedures on course approval.

#### 1. Awards, Programmes and Programme Modules

One of QQI's functions is to develop awards, while providers such as City of Dublin ETB develop programmes and programme modules which lead to major and minor (component) awards respectively. As a Statutory Provider City of Dublin ETB has devolved responsibility to develop and arrange for the independent evaluation of programmes and programme modules.

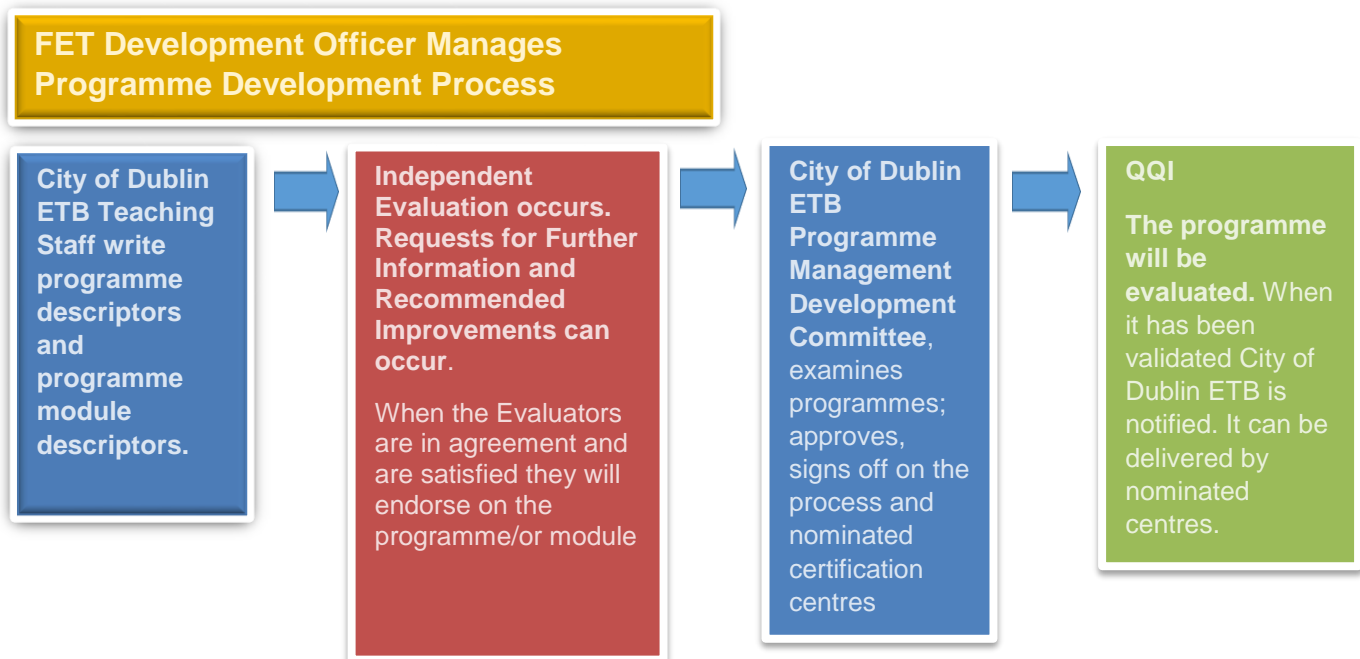
A QQI award specification cannot be delivered to a learner; a provider must develop a programme (set out in the Programme Descriptor) which leads to a QQI Major Award. The provider must also have developed programme modules which lead the minor/component awards which will make up the major award.

The provider must seek validation from QQI for the programme; once successful the provider can deliver the programme and seek certification for learners. These validated programmes are owned by the provider. The programme will contain a list of the minor (component) awards for which programme modules have been developed. **Centres can only deliver Programme Modules which are listed in the Programme Descriptor.**

City of Dublin ETB Programme (set out in Programme Descriptor)	Leads to	QQI Major Award (set out in Award Specification) E.g. NFQ Level 5 120 credits
Make up		Make up
Programme Module		Minor (Component) Award - 15 credits
Programme Module		Minor (Component) Award - 15 credits
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#### 2. QQI and City of Dublin ETB Programme Development, Approval and Validation Agreements

City of Dublin ETB signed Programme Approval Agreements (PAAs) with QQI in 2009. These were carried over by both City of Dublin ETB and QQI. They set out the procedure for City of Dublin ETB to develop, arrange independent evaluation of/and approve programmes and programme modules before seeking validation from QQI. They also provide for a Programme Approval Committee to ensure agreed procedures have been followed prior to validation for the programme from QQI being sought. City of Dublin ETB applies to QQI as the provider for the purposes of seeking programme validation on behalf of its centres.



In 2014 Regularisation of Arrangements Agreements were signed between all ETBs and QQI. These agreements provided for the continuance of the PAAs and City of Dublin ETBs agreed to take on provider status in relation to Quality Assurance. This is in contrast with previous individual VEC providers being responsible for ensuring QA agreements were adhered to. This means City of Dublin ETB has the responsibility for ensuring corporate governance, oversight and monitoring in relation to quality assurance for its centres and services.

These agreements also introduced the requirement that **ETBs must nominate appropriate centres to be certification centres for delivery the validated programme leading to a certain award.** This is in contrast to the previous practice of listing all centres as certification centres for all programmes when seeking validation. **City of Dublin ETB must assess and approve centres to deliver a programme taking account of a number of factors** including their ability to meet the award and programme requirements which take in Special Validation Requirements (SVRs). These are conditions which **MUST** be met in order to deliver the programme. They often include certain resources to be in place.

The Moodle site holds the bank of City of Dublin ETB Programmes and Programme Modules. Centres must be approved to deliver in line with City of Dublin ETB/QQI validation agreement

### 3. City of Dublin ETB Programme versus Centre Course

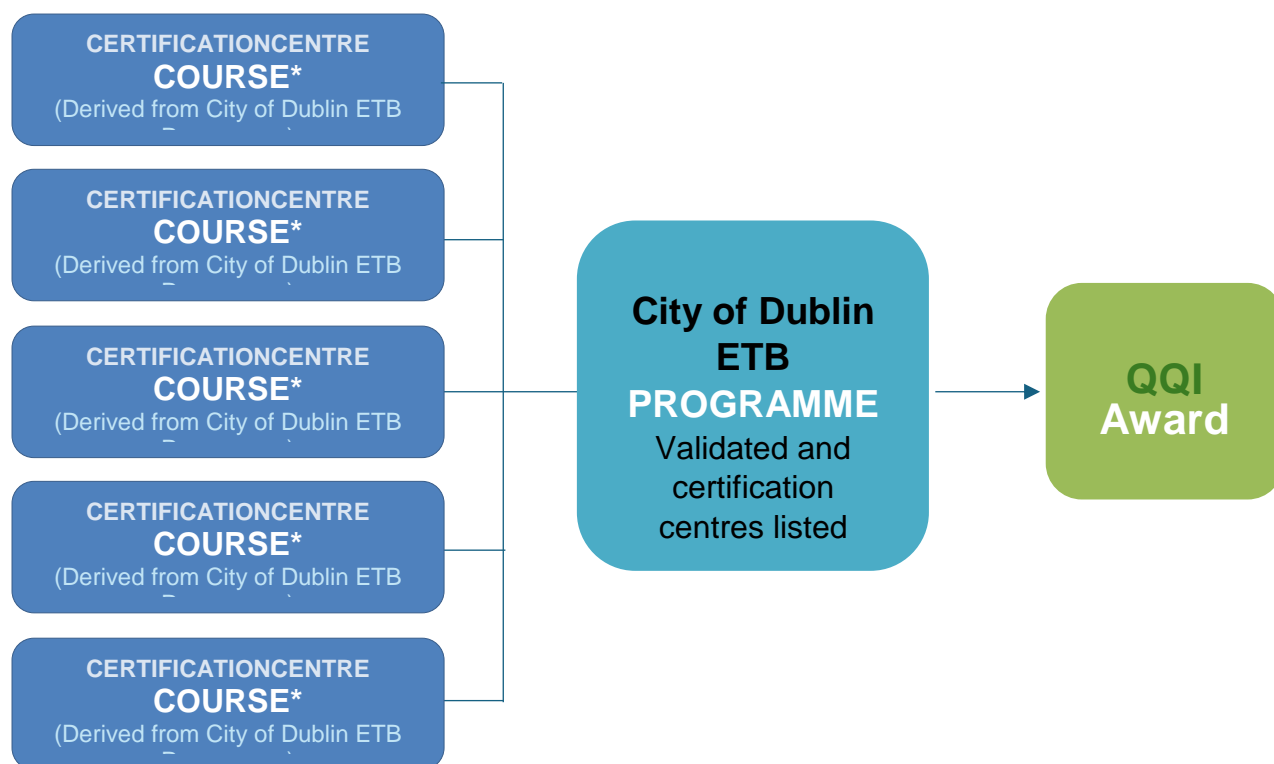
City of Dublin ETB Programmes were developed with extremely long lists of programme modules to give a high degree of flexibility post validation. This meant we could devise multiple variations of the programme to be delivered to meet the needs of different cohorts of learners and also the changing needs of learners. With long lists of programme module options there can be multiple variations of a programme depending on this selection.

*For example with the Level 5 City of Dublin ETB General Learning Programme there are 60 programme modules plus 13 programme modules added in under the 20% rule<sup>1</sup>. Even with some restricted selection choices, the number of course variations is considerable.*

City of Dublin ETB centres which are certification centres for a particular programme cannot put the totality of the City of Dublin ETB programme into delivery instead they must select from the list of programme modules available in a programme to design the course to be offered with credit considerations in mind. It is through the selection that course differentiation is achieved invariably giving the course a particular discipline focus subject emphasis and/or specialism. The centre devised course is the variant of the City of Dublin ETB programme which is put into delivery by the centre and offered to learners.

\*Centres are approved to deliver different variations of the City of Dublin ETB Programme achieving differentiation in terms of course offering while still leading to the same QQI Award

#### CENTRE COURSE > City of Dublin ETB



<sup>1</sup> Under current City of Dublin ETB/QQI Validation agreements, City of Dublin ETBs can add programme modules to validated programme within 20% of the existing number of modules from the validated programme e.g. if 20 programme modules were listed at validation, 4 programme modules can be added. This is subject to City of Dublin ETB and in some cases QQI approval for the programme to be modified in this way.

## City of Dublin ETB POLICY

City of Dublin ETB's programme development policy enables City of Dublin ETB to pursue key strategic planning goals for service provision to meet learner needs within Dublin City. It is important that the necessary level of co-ordination is achieved to ensure over supply does not occur which can undermine existing delivery. We must also endeavour to ensure course development occurs in line with the needs of learners in the City. It is essential that co-ordination occurs from the learner perspective – what is the course offering. **City of Dublin ETB is committed to supporting centres in developing their course offering to best meet the evolving needs of learners in Dublin City.**

City of Dublin ETB Centres must seek approval to become certification centres for programmes/programme modules.

**City of Dublin ETB approval is required for the Centre to deliver a course which is a variant of a City of Dublin ETB Programme, which has a particular discipline area, subject focus and or/specialism.**

*Centres currently have approval for courses which are variants of a City of Dublin ETB programme which are a certification centre for and were in delivery in the centre from 2014/2015 only, unless a centre has since applied for and was granted City of Dublin ETB approval to deliver a new course through using the FET FORM application process.*

**It is important that centres do not unilaterally change a course significantly through different module selection where the end result is essentially a new course offering to learners.** The centre can change modules being delivered once the change stays within the original focus of the course and does not result in a de facto new course offering.

### 1. Checklist:

**To deliver a course and ensure certification for learners is achieved every City of Dublin ETB Centre must:**

- a. Have approval from City of Dublin ETB to deliver the course. The course must be derived from a validated City of Dublin ETB programme. Centres are approved for all courses in delivery since 2014/15
- b. The centre must be listed as a certification centre on QQI's Business System (QBS) for the award to which the validated City of Dublin ETB programme leads (the course must have been derived from that validated programme). This enables the centre to seek certification for learners from QQI. Or you are an official certification centre for a different awarding body which certifies the course or aspect of. (see centre list of all approved programmes)
- c. Remain within the specifications and programme module list of the most up to date City of Dublin ETB Programme Descriptor from which the course is derived available from <https://curriculum.etbonline.ie>.

- d. Remain within the module selection the centre has been approved by City of Dublin ETB to deliver. For Courses in delivery since 2014/15 it is the module selection in delivery since then which gives the course its focus, subject emphasis and/or specialism is what the centre is approved to deliver. Unless a new courses has been approved since then.
- e. Not deliver any programme module on the course that is not listed on the City of Dublin ETB Programme Descriptor
- f. Not change modules on the course so that it becomes a different course offering to what was in delivery and approved by City of Dublin ETB.
- g. Do not put into delivery any programme or programme module for which the Centre is unsure whether they have approval to deliver, as certification for learners could be affected.



## *GLOSSARY of TERMS:*

**QQI Award Specification:** sets out the minimum requirements which must be met in order for QQI to confer the award. QQI Awards are divided into Major Awards, Minor/Component Awards and Special Purpose Awards. Every Award has a code E.g. 5M3789. The Code indicates the level 4 or 5 or 6 and whether it is Major (M) Minor (N) or Special Purpose (S).

**QQI Validation** – This is the process by which QQI examines a provider's application for programme validation. This is carried out in line with QQI Policy and Criteria for Validation. If the programme is deemed to meet QQI specification it is validated for deliver. This can be given under certain terms and conditions. The programme must be delivered in compliance with these. If it is not City of Dublin ETB is in breach of validation agreements. Fees are paid to QQI for the validation of programmes.

**QQI Special Validation Requirements:** set out special requirements in the QQI Award Specification that must be adhered to when delivering the programme or programme module which leads to that award. They can be very specific e.g. certain resources must be in place as part of delivery. If a City of Dublin ETB Centre cannot meet these or does not meet these City of Dublin ETB is in breach of its validation agreements and certification will be threatened for the learner. Special Validation Requirements are also set out in the City of Dublin ETB Programme Descriptor.

**City of Dublin ETB Programme:** leads to a specific Major award and are owned by City of Dublin ETB as the provider. It must be validated by QQI where it leads to QQI Awards.

**City of Dublin ETB Programme Descriptor:** the document within which the programme is set out. This must be in line with the QQI Award Specification to which the Programme leads. City of Dublin ETB may have developed the programme or it may have been shared with us by another City of Dublin ETB, we also share with programmes we develop with other City of Dublin ETBs.

It will include a list of the modules which can be selected for delivery. The QQI Award Specification will dictate the majority of the module selection. However, there will be a long list of modules to choose from under remaining credit value. Long lists were included to give centres a large degree of choice when designing a course. No module can be delivered that is not on this list. This is the City of Dublin ETB programme which has been validated for delivery by QQI and it must be complied with in full.

**City of Dublin ETB Programme Module** leads to a specific Minor/Component QQI award. The Programme Module must be developed in line with the Component Awards Specification Programme modules make up a Programme and are listed in the Programme Descriptor. City of Dublin ETB Programme Module Descriptor: sets out how the module must be delivered, it must be complied with fully to ensure validation agreements are adhered to.

**The 20% Rule:** This is currently provided for under City of Dublin ETB and QQI Agreements. It allows City of Dublin ETB to modify certain aspects of a Programme or within a 20% margin. This includes the module list under the remaining credit value. If there were 20



component listed only 4 can be added to the Programme Descriptor in total. Programme Modules can be altered within this rule. However, requirements dictated by the QQI Award Specification to which the programme or programme module leads cannot be altered by the provider

**<https://curriculum.etbonline.ie>**: is the City of Dublin ETB Moodle site which houses all our validated Programmes and Programme Modules. This is a key organisational resource. It contained the most up-to-date versions of City of Dublin ETB Programmes and Programme Modules. Centres can only take programmes and programme modules they are approved to deliver.

**City of Dublin ETB Programme and Course Approval Process**: the City of Dublin ETB as the provider must operate oversight and governance for the development of programmes, programme modules or alternations to same and ensure adherence to validation agreements with QQI. Certification is made based on Validation and Quality Assurance agreements

City of Dublin ETB must also operate oversight and governance in relation to the delivery of courses in Dublin City, this is to prevent under and oversupply in certain areas, the monitoring of which is provided for in SOLAS funding requirements. For courses which lead to QQI Awards, the course offering is an approved variation of a City of Dublin ETB Programme for delivery to learners.

**City of Dublin ETB Centre's Course**: The Centre's course offering is the variation of the City of Dublin ETB Programme which the centre is approved to deliver. The variation of the programme is based on the module selection which gives rise to a focus, emphasis and/or specialism. A centre is not approved to deliver any variation of a City of Dublin ETB Programme.

*Glossary of Organisations:*

**City of Dublin ETB** – City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The Statutory provider of Further Education and Training (FET) provision for Dublin City.

**ETBI** – Education and Training Boards Ireland. All ETBs are members of ETBI, the primary goals of which is to achieve national co-ordination in key policy areas in terms of lobbying and implementation.

**FET Development Unit** – An internal support Unit within City of Dublin ETB to support City of Dublin ETB centres and services meet the challenges and opportunities which arise and to develop and improve services while also ensuring legal and regulatory compliance.

**FESS - Further Education Support Service**. This is a national service set up to support the work of City of Dublin ETBs individually and work being carried out nationally especially in areas of programme development and initiatives to enhance quality of programme provision e.g. the training of External Authenticator, Programme Evaluators, the development of national teaching resources such as the Programme Module Specific Resources.

**SOLAS** – National Planning and Funding Body for the Further Education and Training (FET) sector in Ireland.

**QQI** – Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland. The Statutory awarding body and the External Quality Assurance Agency for all Education and Training Providers.

