City of Dublin FET College

Curriculum Development Unit

City of Dublin FET College - a provider of programmes leading to QQI awards

City of Dublin FET College CDU Handbook

for

Management & Governance of Programmes & Courses

Under the category of:

Approvals to Deliver New Programmes/Courses

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Contents

Introduction 2

1. CIA Process for Approvals to Deliver New Programmes/Courses 3

2. Strategic Checks & Oversight 4

3. Quality Assurance Checks & Oversight 5

4. CIA Process for Certification Purposes 7

5. CIA Process by Category of Application 8

5.1 Tertiary Degrees 8

5.2 Differential Validation Applications 9

5.3 New Course Offerings from Existing Provision 10

5.3.1 Course Change of Name 10

5.3.2 Adding/Changing Modules 10

5.3.3 Replacing an Existing Course 11

5.3.4 Creating a new course as part of Course Innovation (to meet a Skills Gap/Education Need, new BTEI courses etc) 12

5.3.5 Course Innovation in an Existing Traineeship; or new Traineeship Offering 13

5.3.6 Change of Delivery Mode: Face to Face, Blended 13

6. Mechanism for making a CIA Application 14

7. Process for dealing with applications outside the CIA Window 15

7.1.1 Methodology to make applications outside the CIA Window 16

7.1.2 Rationale for using the CIA MS Form Process 17

8. Relevant Legislation 19

Appendix 1 – Sample CIA QA Report Generated by AI 20

Introduction

Under Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) statutory requirements, the newly rebranded City of Dublin FET College, as an approved Education and Training Board provider, must maintain formal and documented programme and course governance processes and procedures as per **QQI QA-policies-and-guidelines**.

These statutory guidelines were produced for the attention of, and for use by, providers establishing quality assurance procedures under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012.

In the context of this handbook, Quality Assurance (QA) is used to describe the enhancement of education and training provision, and the standards of certification attained by learners, at City of Dublin FET College.

To ensure the QA in provision of programmes and courses in City of Dublin FET College, our QA policies and procedures must be effective and fit for purpose, quality assurance processes and procedures should be regularly self-monitored to ensure ongoing effectiveness as circumstances change, and any processes and procedures that are found to be ineffective are amended or replaced.

As such, as an approved QQI provider, City of Dublin FET College's quality assurance processes and procedures should:

- Be informed by QQI quality assurance guidelines
- Be fully documented and available publicly (published); necessary information is available to staff and/or the public as required in usable formats
- Be fit for purpose and appropriate to the provider context
- Have formal standing within the provider and form part of strategic management
- Include a role for learners and other stakeholders as required
- Promote a culture of quality
- Facilitate diversity and support innovation
- Cover any elements of a provider's activities that are subcontracted to, or carried out by, other parties both at home and abroad
- Demonstrate accountability as a given, but always aim for continuous improvement
- Be reviewed periodically to ensure they are fit for purpose and remain effective
- Be consistent with the requirements of relevant legislation

This handbook provides information on the QA processes and procedures in place relating to approvals to **Deliver** New Programmes/Courses/Course Iterations across all of City of Dublin FET College provision via the Course Innovation Approvals process (CIA) and related procedures.

1. CIA Process for Approvals to Deliver New Programmes/Courses

City of Dublin FET College manages the approvals to deliver all its new programmes, new courses & new course iterations using its Course Innovation Application process (CIA). This process is managed via the CIA MS Form which is updated and renewed for each cycle in line with planning for the next academic year.

Since 2025/2026, the CIA process has been re-developed to separate the levels of checks required to approve an application i.e.

- Strategy specific checks carried out by the Strategic Planning & Development Team (Strategy Team) and
- Quality Assurance specific checks carried out by the Programme Development Team CIA Lead, in conjunction with the QAE Team Lead responsible for Blended Applications

Following the circulation of the CIA applications to all Heads of Centres for consultation after the CIA window closes, the Strategy & QA checks can then take place concurrently once the consultation has been completed.

As in previous iterations of the process, once the Draft CIA Memos are issued, an appeals & 'request to meet conditions' 2-week window opens ahead of the preparation and approval of the Final CIA Memos at FET Director level.

In addition, a number of key controls have been put in place since 2025/2026 as part of the overall process to ensure compliance with the FET Director final decisions. A range of teams have been identified who must complete follow up tasks arising from the Final CIA Memos to ensure compliance with the FET Director decisions i.e. Centre Level Teams, Admin Team, SharePoint Administrator(s), PLSS Team and Programme Development Team/FET Directors.

The final part of the CIA process ensures that all programme/course specific decisions go through the appropriate governance structures i.e. PMDG & QASPC, as appropriate.

2. Strategic Checks & Oversight

As the statutory body with responsibility for education and training in Dublin city, the City of Dublin ETB strategic plan for 2026-2030 focuses on the ETB becoming a leading digital public service and the education partner of choice that transforms lives through inclusive e-services.

The strategic plan includes a commitment to providing professional excellence in teaching and training, generating quality outcomes in learning, and integrating digital technologies into all aspects of operations and services. The plan aims to create a more efficient, flexible, and innovative educational environment, better suited to meet the evolving needs of learners and staff.

In order to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan, applications for new programmes and courses for delivery in any of the City of Dublin FET college service spheres should meet one or more of the strategic criteria and align with the strategic development goals of the campus, the service sphere and faculty allocation.

The criteria include:

- Local Needs & Inclusion
- Workforce Development
- Innovation & Skills Development
- Pathways & Progression
- Targets
- Finance

As such, the strategic checks for the allocation and distribution of programmes and courses include:

- Faculty & Campus approaches
- Identification of pedagogies and approaches that underpin all provision
- Identification of specific areas that align with City of Dublin FET College's four key strategic pillars
- Risk assessment & mitigation
- Programme & course innovation
- Resource planning

3. Quality Assurance Checks & Oversight

As part of City of Dublin FET College's continuous improvement objectives for Quality Assurance of programmes and courses, **and subsequently the correct certification of learners**, a range of QA checks are completed each cycle and for the CIA 2027/2028 cycle some of these will be done using Generative AI.

This methodology will apply to New Course Offering applications **only**, under four specific categories of CIA QA checks i.e. Faculty, Course Naming Conventions, Programme/Award Specification & Learner Certification.

To assist in the use of Generative AI in this way, a detailed four part AI Prompt has been developed by the Programme Development Team CIA Lead.

When used in conjunction with a screenshot from the spreadsheet data downloaded from the CIA MS Form applications, and three related City of Dublin FET College documents, AI can generate a CIA QA report for each New Course Offering application.

The screenshot from the spreadsheet data downloaded from the CIA MS Form is taken from the responses to the following questions in the CIA MS Form: Q3 Faculty Name, Q8 New Course Offerings (all types), Q9 Current Course Title (if applicable), Q10 Course Title (if different to Q9), Q11 Award Title, Q12 Award Code and Q14 Modules (includes Modules Codes & Module Names).

The three documents used in conjunction with this screenshot are the Faculty List V3 2026, CAO Naming Conventions Handbook and the Award Specification; when the screenshot and the three documents are added with the four part AI Prompt, a CIA QA report will be generated.

The full extent of the content AI can produce for the CIA QA report can be found in Appendix 1 – Sample CIA QA Report Generated by AI on Page 20

The very impactful application of using Generative AI in this context is in its ability to summarise long form text and the resulting CIA QA report AI can generate where previously all of this information was collated and typed up by the Programme Development Team CIA Lead. This will support the timelier completion of the CIA Draft Memos for the FET Directors first stage review of all the CIA applications.

In real terms, the use of Generative AI in this way means that these four categories of CIA QA checks that previously could take up to 60 minutes to manually complete per application, now takes AI only two minutes to complete and produce a supporting CIA

QA report: thus reducing the overall QA processing times per New Course Offering application from an average of 45 minutes to a maximum of 15 minutes per application including the set-up of all the relevant documents and the AI prompt in the AI Platform.

While the use of AI will be transformative for these specific categories of the CIA QA checks, this methodology cannot be used for CAO progression checks or QHub Programme Structure checks, and as such, these checks will continue to be completed manually.

However, the reduction in CIA processing times as mentioned above means we can build efficiencies into the CIA process and dedicate time & resources to those other areas of the CIA process that need it, including more timely processing of CAO checks and QHub Programme Structure checks.

In embracing Generative AI in this way consideration has been given to a number of implications including Human Agency & Oversight, Environmental and Privacy & Data Governance.

In terms of Human Agency & Oversight, this new methodology for the four categories of CIA QA checks provides a mechanism for the Programme Development Team CIA Lead to oversee the accuracy of the AI generated CIA QA report to reduce errors or omissions that could occur when all of these QA Checks were previously completed manually only. It also provides an additional QA layer for ensuring correct learner certification.

In terms of Environmental impacts, while this use of Generative AI will consume additional energy, it will only be utilised at specific times of the year, over a 1 to 3 day period maximum. The trade-off in additional energy consumption lies in the increase in efficiencies and productivity of employees involved in the CIA process i.e. it will ensure an overall increase in accuracy, speed of processing and timely completion of the CIA process in line with the CIA processing timelines schedule.

In terms of Privacy & Data Governance, all employees engaged in the AI generated elements of the CIA QA checks process will need to have completed appropriate AI training, such as Introduction to AI provided by Krisolis training, or equivalent.

In addition, only organisation approved AI platforms will be used.

The use of Generative AI for completing the four specific CIA QA checks represents a minimal risk for the organisation as fair use, the documents being used and data protection issues have all been considered in the design of the process and the four part AI prompt.

4. CIA Process for Certification Purposes

A crucial element of the CIA process governance & oversight of new programmes & courses is to ensure the **correct certification of learners,** particularly for CAO & other progression routes.

The CIA process includes the following categories of application:

- New Tertiary Degrees validated for delivery in the relevant academic year (with or without a FET award at Level 5 and/or 6)
- Programmes validated by other ETBs i.e. Differential Validation applications (DV)
- New Course Offerings from existing validated provision & funding streams (CAS, Traineeships, BTEI, STA, BTEC, ITEC etc.) as part of innovation in teaching & learning that can comprise of **one, some, or all of the options below**, within an existing course offering, or proposed new course offering, as follows:

    - ❖ Course Change of Title
    - ❖ Adding/Changing the selection of modules in a current course
    - ❖ Replacing an existing course with a different one
    - ❖ Creating a new course as part of Course Innovation for the centre to meet a skills gap/education need, new BTEI course etc
    - ❖ Course Innovation in an existing Traineeship; or a new Traineeship offering
    - ❖ Change of Delivery Mode: Face to Face, Blended

Note: Any change in an existing course offering, for example, a change of title, addition/change of module offering and/or a brand new course offering constitutes a New Course Offering application.

The next section of this document provides a strong rationale for requesting a wide range of information in all categories of CIA applications.

This is primarily to ensure that City of Dublin FET College learners will be correctly certified and not misled in terms of the qualifications they will acquire on completion of their course and/or their career progression pathways.

5. CIA Process by Category of Application

5.1 Tertiary Degrees

A new Tertiary CIA process was developed in May 2026 for the management & governance of City of Dublin FET College Tertiary provision via the CIA process.

Rationale for the QA checks required for this type of application:

1) To ensure correct certification of learners where a FET award at Level 5 and/or Level 6 exists (both during & after the CIA window, as appropriate)
2) Pre HE Institution approval stage QA checks need to be completed to ensure any changes since the previous QA checks of the awarding structure still ensures correct learner FE certification before final HE validation
3) Whether a FET award at Level 5 and/or Level 6 exists or not, a QA Check is required against the FET Directors approved allocated centres list to ensure only those centres approved to deliver a Tertiary Degree have applied to deliver it
4) Whether a FET award at Level 5 and/or Level 6 exists or not, a QA Check is required against the FET Directors approved allocated centres list to ensure those centres who have been approved to deliver a Tertiary Degree have each made an individual application to deliver it
   Note: This is of particular importance where different approved centres for the same Tertiary Degree are offering different streams and/or module offerings

5.2 Differential Validation Applications

Differential Validation applications refers to programmes developed and validated by other ETBs such as Special Purpose Awards/Micro Qualifications. There are three types of DV applications, with links to the organisation's strategic direction & faculty alignment and SOLAS targets, that go through the CIA process for oversight of provision as follows:

a) Requests made directly to access/deliver programmes validated by another ETB, but not yet validated by City of Dublin FET College
b) Requests made directly from centres to deliver programmes that are already validated by City of Dublin FET College via the DV application process (for noting purposes)
c) SOLAS driven DV applications – Provisions are made to retrospectively add any additional DV applications required to the CIA Final Memos that fall outside the normal CIA window as & when new programmes are validated by other ETBs throughout the year

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application include:

1) Is City of Dublin FET College validated for delivery of the programme
2) Has the requesting centre been validated for delivery of the programme
3) If not, and approval is needed, which may include adding additional centres as part of faculty realignment, the QQI QHelp/FET Director Letter process must be approved and followed as applicable
4) If the programme is designed by the Lead ETB for delivery in a Medium Blend has the applying City of Dublin FET College centre completed the Blended Phase 1 Centre Capacity application process as a condition of their approval
5) Does the selection of modules/embedded certificates require Special Validation Requirements

5.3 New Course Offerings from Existing Provision

5.3.1 Course Change of Name

Links directly to: Faculty, Course Name, Award Structure, Programme Structure & CAO Progression and as such requires inclusion of all of the information about the course including the full list of modules, without exclusion, to complete sufficient QA checks.

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application:

1) Does the change of name reflect the overall offering within the specific faculty
2) Is the change of name misleading to learners in terms of what they will be qualified to do on completion e.g. Pharmacist vs Pharmacy Assistant
3) Does the change of name comply with CAO Naming Conventions which requires advertising of any course to be consistent with and/or align to the overall award name
4) Does the change of name make sense in terms of the overall selection of modules e.g. adding Rehabilitation to the title may not make sense if the selection of modules does not include any that relate specifically to that discipline (Kinesiology)
5) If the change of name is for CAO Progression will the new course name be misleading in terms of the overall award that will be achieved i.e. Level 5 & 6 FET awards versus Level 7 & 8 HE awards, where the proposed change of name is too similar to the HE equivalent and the learner may be misled into thinking they are achieving a different qualification

5.3.2 Adding/Changing Modules

Links directly to: Faculty, Course Name, Award Structure, Programme Structure, CAO Progression and Special Validation Requirements

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application:

1) Does the selection of modules align with the faculty or does it materially alter the provision under a particular faculty
2) Does the selection of modules align with the course name (See QA check No 2 for Change of Course Name above)
3) Does the selection of modules meet the award specification criteria for correct certification of the learner under the selected award name & code
4) Does the selection of modules meet the **programme structure** as validated by City of Dublin FET College against the award structure i.e.

   - ❖ Is our programme validated for all of the modules in the award structure
   - ❖ Have all the modules in the award structure been developed

- ❖ Have modules added under the 20% rule, as listed in CDU Moodle, been added to QQI's programme structure for City of Dublin FET College certification under the award
- ❖ Have modules approved in previous CIA cycles been added to QQI's programme structure for City of Dublin FET College as an approved provider

5) Does the selection of modules align with QQI's remaining credit rules relating to vocationally relevant module additions
6) Does the selection of modules align with QQI's rule relating to remaining credit values from either a Level above or below the named award
7) Does the selection of modules align with the existing and/or proposed course title and award criteria
8) Does the selection of modules meet the **CAO grading specifications** of the HE institutions e.g. a requirement to have Distinctions in certain modules, and if so, are these modules included
9) Does the selection of modules include the **CAO module specifications** of the HE institutions e.g. a requirement to have completed Maths for STEM as part of HE entry requirements
10) Does the selection of modules require Special Validation Requirements

5.3.3 Replacing an Existing Course

Links directly to: Faculty, Course Name, Award Structure, Programme Structure, CAO Progression and Special Validation Requirements

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application:

1) Does the replacement course align with the correct faculty or does it materially alter the provision under a particular faculty
2) Does the selection of modules align with the existing and/or proposed course title and award criteria (See QA check No 2 for Change of Course Name above)
3) Does the selection of modules meet the award specification criteria for correct certification of the learner under the selected award name & code
4) Does the selection of modules meet the **programme structure** as validated by City of Dublin FET College against the award structure i.e.

- ❖ Is our programme validated for all of the modules in the award structure
- ❖ Have all the modules in the award structure been developed
- ❖ Have modules added under the 20% rule as listed in CDU Moodle been added to QQI's programme structure for City of Dublin FET College certification under the award
- ❖ Have modules approved in previous CIA cycles been added to QQI's programme structure for City of Dublin FET College as an approved provider

5) Does the selection of modules align with QQI's remaining credit rules relating to vocationally relevant module additions
6) Does the selection of modules align with QQI's rule relating to remaining credit values from either a Level above or below the named award
7) Does the selection of modules meet the **CAO grading specifications** of the HE institutions e.g. a requirement to have Distinctions in certain modules
8) Does the selection of modules include the **CAO module specifications** of the HE institutions e.g. a requirement to have completed Maths for STEM/STEAM as part of HE entry requirements
9) Does the selection of modules require Special Validation Requirements

5.3.4 Creating a new course as part of Course Innovation (to meet a Skills Gap/Education Need, new BTEI courses etc)

Links directly to: Faculty, Course Name, Award Structure, Programme Structure, CAO Progression and Special Validation Requirements

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application:

1) Does the new course align with the correct faculty
2) Does the selection of modules align with the faculty or does it materially alter the provision under a particular faculty
3) Does the new course meet a genuine skills need and/or education gap
4) Does the selection of modules align with the course name (See QA check No 2 for Change of Course Name above)
5) Does the selection of modules meet the award specification for correct certification of the learner under the selected award name & code
6) Does the selection of modules meet the **programme structure** as validated by City of Dublin FET College against the award structure i.e.
    - ❖ Is our programme validated for all of the modules in the award structure
    - ❖ Have all the modules in the award structure been developed
    - ❖ Have modules previously added under the 20% rule as listed in CDU Moodle been added to QQI's programme structure for City of Dublin FET College certification under the award
    - ❖ Have modules approved in previous CIA cycles been added to QQI's programme structure for City of Dublin FET College as an approved provider
7) Does the selection of modules align with QQI's remaining credit rules relating to vocationally relevant module additions
8) Does the selection of modules align with QQI's rule relating to remaining credit values from either a Level above or below the named award
9) Does the selection of modules meet the **CAO grading specifications** of the HE institutions e.g. a requirement to have Distinctions in certain modules

10) Does the selection of modules include the **CAO module specifications** of the HE institutions e.g. a requirement to have completed Maths for STEM as part of HE entry requirements
11) Does the selection of modules require Special Validation Requirements

5.3.5 Course Innovation in an Existing Traineeship; or new Traineeship Offering

Links directly to: Faculty, Course Name, Award Structure, Programme Structure, CAO Progression, Special Validation Requirements and SOLAS Traineeship requirements

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application:

1) All of the above as per **5.3.4 plus**
2) Is the Traineeship designed to be compliant with SOLAS requirements for Traineeships i.e.
    - ❖ Leads to an award at NFQ Levels 4-6, or equivalent
    - ❖ Is between 6-20 months in duration
    - ❖ Includes at least 30% of learning on-the-job
    - ❖ Combines transversal and technical skills development
    - ❖ Is designed for flexible delivery – face-to-face, blended learning
    - ❖ Provides open access to prospective trainees, unemployed people may be eligible for income support
    - ❖ Responds to an identified industry skills need

5.3.6 Change of Delivery Mode: Face to Face, Blended

Links directly to: Faculty, Course Name, Award Structure, Programme Structure, CAO Progression, Special Validation Requirements and Blended Phase 1 & 2 requirements

Rationale for the QA Checks required for this type of application:

1) All of the above as per **5.3.4** as appropriate, **plus**
2) Has the centre completed **Blended Phase 1 – Centre Capacity**
    - ❖ All centres applying to deliver any course under a blended mode must have completed Phase 1 with sign off from the Digital Learning Team
    - ❖ In the case of applying to deliver a PDAS programme acquired under a DV application where the programme was developed for blended delivery, Phase 2 will not be needed, but Phase 1 must be in place
3) Has the centre submitted **Blended Phase 2 – Course Capacity**
    - ❖ In the case of applying to deliver specific CAS modules, CAS award or part thereof in a blended mode, a centre must complete Phase 2 to ensure the redesign of the course is in line with City of Dublin FET College's validated categories for their blended scope of provision at QQI Levels 1, 2 or 3

6. Mechanism for making a CIA Application

As with all previous iterations of the CIA, the mechanism for making a CIA Application is via the CIA MS Form.

This CIA MS Form has been streamlined in the past 2 x cycles in line with the redevelopment of the overall CIA process where there has been a separation of Strategic and Quality Assurance checks and oversight.

As part of the streamlining of the CIA Process for building in more efficiencies, the window for making a CIA application via the CIA MS Form is now one extended window spanning both years in the cycle, replacing the former two window cycles in Autumn (Oct) & Spring (Feb).

This single extended window now opens in early November and closes in early February in the other half of the academic year. This allows centres more time to make applications to that previously available in the two window cycle model, but with less processing & report creation overall from a Strategy and QA checks perspective: hence further building efficiencies into the overall CIA process without disadvantaging innovation in provision at centre level.

7. Process for dealing with applications outside the CIA Window

Contingencies are built into the CIA 2027/2028 Cycle for applications required outside of the new single window cycle, whereby the CIA MS Form can be re-opened, **in extenuating circumstances**, to facilitate additional applications such as those that may be required, for example, by the Tertiary team, Employer Engagement Unit and/or SOLAS related launches at different times of the year.

However, it is important to note that the CIA MS Form will only be re-opened beyond the normal CIA window close date to facilitate extenuating provision needs i.e. the CIA MS Form close date will **not** be extended in February to facilitate **late applications**.

This is due to the need for adherence to the CIA processing timelines schedule published for each cycle, a copy of which will be provided to all Heads of Centre/Provision when notice of the opening/closing dates of the CIA MS Form are circulated in early November each year.

Examples of applications required outside of the regular CIA window could include:

- Timetabling changes required in PLC Colleges in August/September due to:
  - ❖ Courses not being filled and new courses needing to be timetabled to facilitate learners, in conjunction with availability of subject specific teachers
  - ❖ Non CAS provision deactivation requiring a new CAS award equivalent course to replace it e.g. deactivation of a BTEC award
  - ❖ Last minute changes to availability of a teacher with specialist subject matter expertise requiring re- timetabling and changes to module selections
- Tertiary Degree pre HE validation changes to exit awards at Level 5 and/or Level 6 throughout the year
- Applications from AES, ESP, TC & YR to support changes to provision due to SOLAS specific requests to provide additional courses, or similar, as pre-approved by the FET Directors, the Strategy Team and/or the Employer Engagement Unit

7.1.1 Methodology to make applications outside the CIA Window

The CIA MS Form can be re-opened on request outside the normal CIA window, as explained earlier in Section 5, where a genuine change to provision needs has been identified by the FET Directors, the Strategy Team, the Employer Engagement Unit, and/or the Tertiary Team.

Methodology for PLC college applications outside the normal CIA Window:

To facilitate possible PLC college timetabling changes at the start of the relevant academic year, the CIA MS Form can be re-opened in August/September on request, with a defined cut-off date provided.

The Head of Centre needs to email the dedicated CIA email account to request the re-opening of the CIA MS Form and complete the process as follows:

- Where the application relates to a change to an existing course, the centres QA team will access the "Validated Programmes & Modules" SharePoint site and find the exact course name as listed in their centres private SharePoint channel
- The centres QA team will complete the CIA MS Form as normal, listing **all** course modules in Q14 for any of the following categories of New Course Offerings:

  (a) A brand new course offering
  (b) Adding/changing modules in an existing course offering
  (c) Changes to an existing Course Title

  Note 1: It is essential that all modules are listed for changes to existing courses as the courses in the new SharePoint site were taken from PLSS schedules, and QA checks could not be completed at the time of the amnesty due to the sheer volume of courses set up. Therefore, a complete QA check is required for any changes to existing courses to ensure correct learner certification.
  Note 2: It is also important that all modules are listed so that the CIA QA report can be accurately generated using the four part AI prompt.
- A separate CIA application needs to be made for each course i.e. if more than one existing course is being amended
- The CIA QA Checks will be completed using the new AI process
- The Programme Development Team CIA Lead will provide oversight of the AI generated CIA QA report to ensure accuracy of the proposed changes
- The Strategy Team Lead will review the applications as per the current process
- The CIA Final Memos will be updated in the new section provided and a meeting will be held with the FET Directors for approval of changes
- The revised CIA Final Memos will be circulated to all relevant QA teams e.g. Heads of Centre, the SharePoint Administrator and the PLSS team to make changes on their platforms

Methodology for all other provision applications outside the normal CIA Window:

As per the PLC colleges methodology, the CIA MS Form can be re-opened on request outside the normal CIA window, for AES, YR, ESP & TC, for the reasons as explained earlier in Section 5, where a genuine change to provision needs has been identified by the FET Directors, the Strategy Team, the Employer Engagement Unit and/or the Tertiary Team.

The FET Directors, the Strategy Team, the Employer Engagement Unit and/or Tertiary Team can email the dedicated CIA email account to request the CIA MS Form to be re-opened to facilitate extenuating changes to provision outside of the normal CIA Window.

The same process as outlined above for the PLC colleges needs to be followed.

Note: The CIA MS Form **cannot** be re-opened during the processing timelines for the normal CIA window i.e. before the CIA Final Memos are circulated to allow for completion of the regular CIA process.

7.1.2 Rationale for using the CIA MS Form Process

- It ensures accurate record keeping of all applications, both inside and outside the normal CIA window, by providing an audit trail of all course changes in one place
- The rationale for using and re-opening of the CIA MS Form in the scenarios mentioned above ensures that a complete Strategy and QA review is done **Note:** This is particularly important, as while the exchange of a module in itself may seem a straightforward proposition, a new module may have special validation requirements that impact funding needs and resource allocation
- Similarly, a new module being proposed may not be validated for use under the Major award cited and/or City of Dublin FET College may not be validated to deliver it; hence the necessity to follow due process for Strategic and QA oversight to ensure correct certification of learners
- By using the existing CIA MS Form as the mechanism for applications, both inside & outside the normal CIA window, it means centres have a one-stop option for all of their programme and course innovation requests

In order to maintain both Strategic and QA oversight, and to provide appropriate record keeping, the CIA Final Memos approved and circulated in March/April now have an additional section to track all of these new additions outside of the normal CIA window.

These CIA Final Memos will be updated with the new additions and circulated to all relevant QA teams e.g. Heads of Centre, Admin Teams, the SharePoint Administrator and the PLSS team.

The final part of the CIA process ensures that all programme specific decisions go through the appropriate governance structures i.e. PMDG & QASPC.

8. Relevant Legislation

- Qualifications and Quality (Education & Training) Act 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018
- GDPR 2018
- EU AI Act (2024)
- EU Digital Services Act (2024)
- Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI

Appendix 1 – Sample CIA QA Report Generated by AI

See Below

1. Faculty Validation

Award Code: 5M3807
QQI Award Title: Laboratory Techniques

According to the **Faculty Breakdown Master V3. Feb 2026**, award **5M3807 Laboratory Techniques** is classified under **Science, Environment and Horticulture**.

Faculty Selected: Science, Environment & Horticulture

Result: ✅ Correct Faculty Selected

The faculty assigned in your table matches the faculty mapping for award **5M3807 Laboratory Techniques**.

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2. Programme/Course Title Validation

Proposed Title

Pre University Science

Relevant Naming Convention Rules

For QQI accredited CAS programmes:

- The title should be linked to the award name.
- The course title should comprise:
  - A local title in Title Case.
  - The award name in brackets. City of Dublin ETB FET Naming …
- The title should indicate what the course is about by linking the title to the award name. City of Dublin ETB FET Naming …

Examples provided include:

- **Pre-University Arts (General Studies)** for award 5M3114 General Studies. City of Dublin ETB FET Naming …

Assessment

The proposed title:

> **Pre University Science**

does **not fully comply** with the naming convention because the associated award name (**Laboratory Techniques**) is not included.

Recommended Title

✅ **Pre-University Science (Laboratory Techniques)**

or

✅ **Pre University Science (Laboratory Techniques)**

This follows the documented convention of:

> Local Title + (Award Name) City of Dublin ETB FET Naming …

Result

❌ **Current title does not fully meet naming convention requirements**

✅ **Recommended compliant title:**
Pre-University Science (Laboratory Techniques)

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3. QQI Award Structure Validation

Award

5M3807 Laboratory Techniques (120 credits) 5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Modules Provided

Module	Code	Credits
Laboratory Skills	5N2751	15
Biology	5N2746	15
Chemistry	5N2747	15
Mathematics	5N1833	15
Teamworking	5N1367	15
Personal & Professional Development	5N2985	15
Anatomy & Physiology	5N0749	15
Microbiology	5N0737	15

Module	Code	Credits
Safety & Health at Work	5N1794	15

Total Credits = 135

Pool 1 – Mandatory Component

Requirement:

- 5N2751 Laboratory Skills (15 credits mandatory) 5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Provided:

- Laboratory Skills 5N2751

Result: ✅ Meets requirement

Pool 2 – Science / Mathematics Pool

Requirement:

Minimum **45 credits** from: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Maths for STEM.
5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Provided:

Module	Credits
Biology	15
Chemistry	15
Mathematics	15

Total = **45 credits**

Result: ✅ Meets requirement

Pool 3 – Communications / Teamworking Pool

Requirement:

Minimum **15 credits** from:

- Communications
- Teamworking
- Personal Effectiveness
- Problem Solving

5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Provided:

- Teamworking 5N1367 = 15 credits

Result: ✅ Meets requirement

Pool 4 – PPD / Work Experience Pool

Requirement:

Minimum **15 credits** from:

- Personal & Professional Development
- Work Experience
- Work Practice

5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Provided:

- Personal & Professional Development 5N2985 = 15 credits

Result: ✅ Meets requirement

Pool 5 – Specialist Science Pool

Requirement:

Minimum **15 credits** from:

- Anatomy & Physiology
- Animal Anatomy & Physiology
- Materials Science
- Nutrition
- Microbiology
- Food Chemistry
- Safety & Health at Work

- Soil Science & Growing Media

5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Provided:

Module	Credits
Anatomy & Physiology	15
Microbiology	15
Safety & Health at Work	15

Total = **45 credits**

Result: ✅ Exceeds requirement

Remaining Credit Requirement

The specification states:

> "The remaining credit value of 15 can be obtained by using vocationally relevant component(s) from level 5." 5M3807_AwardSpecifications_Labo…

Your programme contains an additional 15 credits beyond the minimum award structure.

Result: ✅ Requirement satisfied

Final Determination

Validation Area	Result
Faculty Selection	✅ Correct
Course Naming Convention	❌ Amend title
Mandatory Component Requirement	✅ Pass
Science/Maths Pool	✅ Pass
Communications/Teamworking Pool	✅ Pass
PPD/Work Experience Pool	✅ Pass

Validation Area	Result
Specialist Science Pool	✅ Pass
Credit Requirement	✅ Pass
Overall QQI Award Structure	✅ Compliant

Overall Outcome

1. **Faculty: ✅ Science, Environment & Horticulture is the correct faculty for award 5M3807.**
2. **Programme Title: ❌ Pre University Science should be amended to "Pre-University Science (Laboratory Techniques)" to align with the naming convention guidance.**
3. **Award Structure: ✅ The proposed module set fully satisfies the QQI 5M3807 Laboratory Techniques award specification, including all mandatory components, credit pools, and overall credit requirements.**