Section 4 - Policies and Procedures Associated with Programmes of Education & Training			
Subject:	Policy on Validation of New Programmes		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			February 2021
Applicable QQI Core Standard	Programmes of Education and Training		
Policy Version	1/2021	Date due for Revision	February 2024

CONTEXT

The development of new programmes is vital to the overall success of the College which allows for future growth and development. It is important that the College has the capacity to respond to the needs of society by providing Higher Education programmes that are fit for purpose and ensures that there is both a legitimate educational need and demand for proposed programmes, that they are educationally and commercially viable and that the College has the resources to allow for the development and delivery of programmes in line with the Quality Assurance Framework.

POLICY STATEMENT

In relation to the validation of a new programme, ICHAS puts in place robust processes and procedures to ensure that New Programmes presented to QQI for validation meet and exceed the Core Criteria for Validation as set out by QQI (2016). As set out in the Policy for Programme Design & Development – proposed programmes are considered internally and if approved by Academic Council, the College may proceed to the Application Phase. This is followed by formal independent evaluation and subject to meeting the Validation Criteria as set out by QQI. In particular, the College ensures that;

- Its QA procedures are fully compatible with the capacity to develop and deliver proposed programmes
- Comprehensive procedures for access, transfer and progression are in place as per "Policies, actions and procedures for the promotion of access, transfer and progression" (QQI Policy restatement, 2015).
- It has the necessary capacities to protect enrolled learners as per Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL): Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act Guidelines for Providers (QQI 2013)

SCOPE

Applies To	Staff	Students	Both	
			✓	
Responsible for Implementation	Registrar			
Responsible for Monitoring & Review	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Registrar	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer
		✓		

DEFINITIONS

Validation has been defined as "a regulatory process that in essence, determines whether or not a particular QQI award can be offered in respect of a provider's programme of education and training." (QQI, 2016).

Major awards: Are nationally and internationally recognised qualifications which satisfy the full requirements for a specific framework level on the National Framework of Qualifications NFQ. Major awards include Higher Certificates, Ordinary Degrees, Honours Degrees, Higher Diplomas, Post Graduate Diplomas, and master's Degrees.

Minor awards: Recognise attainment of part of a major award and which have relevance as an award in their own right. All Minor Awards must be linked to a specified approved major award.

Supplemental awards: Are for learning which is additional to a previous award. Programmes leading to such awards may be described as refresher, updating or continuing education and training, with respect to an occupation or profession. Such supplemental awards are not at a higher level than the initial award.

Special-purpose awards: Are made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes. They may comprise learning outcomes that also form part of major awards. However, where there is a need for separate certification of a set of outcomes, there should be a separate award. For example, there may be a statutory obligation for certain workers to have certification of their competence in specific areas. Special–purpose awards need not be linked to a major award. Special purpose awards derive their currency from the particular context of their use, such as individual fields of employment. Special purpose awards may or may not be part of the learning outcomes for a major award. Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards may be devised for any level in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

RELEVANT GUIDELINES/ POLICIES INFORMING THIS POLICY

- QQI Validation Policy and Criteria, QQI Validation template Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) et al (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed By QQI For Independent/Private Providers Coming To QQI On A Voluntary Basis
- Government of Ireland (2012) Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education and Training Act.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Policies & Criteria for the Validation of programmes of Education.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2015) QQI Policy Restatement Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training.
- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (2005 – re-published by QQI, 2015) Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training June 2005
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2018) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes
- Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2013) Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013

Linked Policies & Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Programme Design and Development
	Policy on Programme Review and Revalidation
	Policy on Programme Management and Annual Monitoring
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Validation of New Programmes
	Procedures associated with Programme Design and Development
	Procedures associated with Programme Review and Revalidation
	Procedures associated with Programme Management and Annual Monitoring