Appendix VIII. Policy for the Development and Validation for all Programmes at Awards level 6-10 NFQ

Policy & Procedure Title: Policy and procedures for the design, development, validation and withdrawal of all programmes at award levels 6 – 10 on the NFQ

Effective Date	13th June 2022	**Version**	6.5
Approved By	Academic Council Governing Body	**Date Approved**	25th January 2022 24th February 2022
Form(s)		**Responsibilities/ Owner**	
New Taught Programme Proposal PP1		Head of Faculty/Campus/Department Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar	
New Taught Programme Proposal PP2			
Module Descriptor			
Programme Learning Outcomes mapped to QQI Standards			
Programme Learning Outcomes mapped to individual modules			
Staff Curriculum Vitae			
Checklist for the Accreditation of Taught Programmes (Level 6-10)			
Proposal for the withdrawal of a taught programme (PP3)			
New Taught Programme Evaluation Panel Report			
Response of Faculty/Campus/Department to the findings of the Evaluation Panel Report			
Certification of Accreditation Template			
Statement of Council Template			
Superseded or Obsolete Procedures			
Version 6.4 – June 2021 updated to include new template 'Alignment of Learning Outcomes to SETU Carlow Award Standards'			
Version 6.3 – June 2021 – Policy (Programme Evaluation Panel) updated as per the Quality Work Plan (Ann Campbell 2019)			
Version 6.2 – May 2018 – Policy updated to include amendments to the following by the inclusion of Akari			

details: Programme Proposal 1 (Appendix 1); Evaluation Panel Report (Appendix 10&10a); Response to Faculty Findings. Additionally, Evaluation Panel Report (Appendix 10&10a) combined into one appendix (Appendix 10).	
Version 6.1 – Nov 18 – Process flow for the design (PP1), development (PP2), evaluation, accreditation and withdrawal (PP3) of new taught programmes (Appendix 9) was updated to include indicative timelines and responsibilities. Updates were approved by Senior Management and sent for noting to Academic Council (30 June 2020). Approvals remain that of version 6.1 and 6.0.	
Version 06 – Nov 18 – PP2 template updated to replace 'QQI Awards Standards' with 'South East Technological University Carlow Awards Standards'. Note: Further approval of the amendment is not required as the policy has been updated in line with approval already given for award standards. Date of approval therefore remains that of version 6.0	
Version 05 – Jan 18 – Policy reviewed to reflect requirements under Equality Diversity & Inclusion and GDPR **Version 04** – April 16 - Policy reviewed to include Certification of Accreditation and Statement of Council Templates and to incorporate the revised QQI Programme Validation Manual for Programmes of HET and Apprenticeships (FET and HET) **Version 03** – Feb 2015 - Policy reviewed to merge with Policy & Procedure for Minor, Supplemental & Special Purpose Awards and to reflect changes to title of Faculty/Campus **Version 02** – Apr 2013 - Reviewed to reflect the inclusion of Joint Awards **Version 01** – Aug 2010 - Policy review to reflect recommendations regarding Gap Analysis and changes in legislation.	

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1.0   Policy

This policy is based on the National Qualifications Framework, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)[1] which have delegated awarding powers to the South East Technological University Carlow under *Section 45* of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.*
The purpose of the award and the overall objectives of the programme shall be clearly described.

2.0   Introduction, Background and Context

2.1   The South East Technological University Carlow aims to design and deliver programmes that anticipate the needs of society, the community and the economy, in line with regional, national and international requirements, the strategic plans of the South East Technological University Carlow, the national awards framework, and requirements of stakeholders. The South East Technological University Carlow strives to cultivate a culture of programme development that creates and supports new innovations which will keep the South East Technological University Carlow at the forefront of Irish higher education.

2.2   The academic quality applied at the South East Technological University Carlow requires that it satisfies itself that a learner may attain knowledge, skill and competence for the purpose of an award which is consistent with the requirements of QQI and fulfils

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[1] Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Established on 6 November 2012, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) www.qqi.ie was established as a new integrated agency replacing FETAC, HETAC, NQAI and incorporating the functions of IUQB. HETAC, FETAC and NQAI are now dissolved.

these requirements in relation to access, transfer and progression. This policy and procedure aims to ensure that programmes offered at the South East Technological University Carlow have academic currency and standards, appropriate to the level of the award, and comparable to similar awards offered anywhere in the world.

2.3   The taught programmes provided by the South East Technological University Carlow are validated by the South East Technological University Carlow under delegated authority from QQI [in accordance with *section 45* of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012] and additionally, potentially accredited by the professional bodies relevant to particular programmes.

2.4   Under the Regional Technical Colleges Acts 1992-2006, the South East Technological University Carlow has an Academic Council appointed by the governing body '*to assist in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the college and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the courses and the activities of the college*'. The Academic Council has established a number of committees to assist it in exercising its general responsibilities and, in particular, quality assurance activities, including the internal validation of proposals for new programmes, including jointly awarded programmes, changes to existing programmes and withdrawal of programmes, as required.

3.0   Purpose and Scope

3.1   The purpose of this policy and procedure document is to set out the processes for the development, approval, modification, periodic review and withdrawal of programmes and awards, including joint awards made under a joint awarding agreement. It aims to ensure that a clear, rigorous and systematic mechanism exists within the South East Technological University Carlow to encourage and assure the design, development and evaluation of taught programmes, as appropriate.

3.2   New programmes, including collaborative and jointly awarded programmes, are developed and existing programmes are reviewed/modified, within the context of the South East Technological University Carlow's strategic plan and within the available resources.

3.3   Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards may involve programmes extracted from major programmes or programmes that have been specially designed for business, industry or the community as part of individual life-long learning.

3.4   Where a validated programme exists, the proposed programme change may be eligible to undergo a differential validation process. Differential Validation Policy (Appendix 14)

4.0 Definitions and Abbreviations

4.1 **Major Award:** Major award-types are the principal class of awards made at each level of the National Framework of Qualifications. Such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the designated level. They include outcomes from many of the sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence appropriate to the level. An example of this at level 8 is the honours bachelor's degree. All major awards are listed on the *Table of QQI Named Awards* (www.qqi.ie)

4.2 **Validation:** This is defined in Section 2 (*Subsection 2*) of the Qualifications and Quality (Education and Training Act) 2012 where *'a programme of education and training is validated where the Authority confirms under Section 45 that the provider of the programme has satisfied the Authority that an enrolled learner of that provider who completes that programme has satisfied the Authority that an enrolled learner of that provider who completes that programme will acquire, and where appropriate, be able to demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award of the Authority being offered in respect of that programme'.* This responsibility was devolved to the South East Technological University Carlow on receipt of delegated authority to make awards from QQI. In cases where the South East Technological University Carlow does not have delegated authority to make awards, new programmes shall be submitted to QQI for validation.

4.3 **Minor awards:** Minor awards are multi-purpose awards that recognise attainment of part of a major award and which has relevance in its own right. The minor award shall also be a means of identifying the knowledge, skill or competence previously acquired by the learner. All Minor Awards shall be linked to a specified approved major award. The volume of learning shall not be less than 5 ECTS.

4.4 **Supplemental awards:** Supplemental award-types 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. In some cases there may be regulatory requirements for such awards in order for learners to retain a licence to practice granted in respect of the initial award. Such supplemental awards are not at a higher level than the initial award. The volume of learning shall not be less than 10 ECTS.

4.5 **Special-purpose awards:** A Special Purpose Award is a stand-alone award with a distinctive identity reflecting a clearly defined purpose. Special purpose awards derive their currency from the particular context of their use, such as individual fields of employment. The volume of learning shall not be less than 10 ECTS.

4.6 **Title of Awards**
   a) All Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards at level 6 to commence with the title "CERTIFICATE…" regardless of the volume of learning.

b) All Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards at levels 7 to 10 with an ECTS credit volume under 60 credits to commence with the title "CERTIFICATE".

c) All Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards at levels 7 to 10 with an ECTS credit volume of 60 credits or greater to commence with the title "DIPLOMA"

5.0   Procedure

There are two distinct phases to be undertaken within the programme development process programmes leading to major, minor, supplemental and special awards to undergo a programme validation process.

5.1   Phase 1: Initial development and outline approval

Programme Proposal 1(PP1) shall detail the rationale, demand, resource requirements, Ethical considerations, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations research carried out, *inter alia* consultation with employers and potential learners, and, in the case of proposed joint award programmes, the potential partner institution, progression routes for graduates, proposed programme schedule and delivery modes, (Appendix 1) as well as linking the proposed programme to the South East Technological University Carlow strategy. Following consultation with the proposer, the relevant Head of /Faculty/Campus[2]/Department shall determine whether the proposal proceeds to the Senior Management Team. The Head of Faculty/Campus shall communicate the results of each stage to the proposer and Head of Department.

5.1.1   Senior Management shall consider the proposal as outlined in the PP1 and shall choose one of the below outcomes. Refer to Appendix 1a: Guidance for Senior Management in Evaluating a Proposal.
   a) Approve without amendment
   b) Approve subject to minor amendments
   c) Not approve

5.1.2   On approval by the Senior Management the PP1 document shall be tabled for consideration by the Programme Planning and Validation Committee (PPVC).

5.1.3   Following consideration of the PP1, the Programme Planning and Validation Committee shall determine whether the proposal is:
   a) Approved and forwarded to Academic Council
   b) Not approved but with advice on how to proceed

5.1.4   Academic Council shall consider the PP1 and may:
   a) Recommend it to Governing Body for noting
   b) Refer it back to PPVC for further consideration

5.1.5   Following noting by Governing Body, the proposal PP1 shall be eligible to proceed to Phase 2.

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[2] The term Campus refers to the Wexford / Wicklow / Carlow Campus

5.1.6 Should the Head of Faculty/Campus/Department decide not to proceed with the PP1, they shall inform the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar.

5.2   Phase 2: Programme proposal development

The Programme Development Team (PDT) prepares the main Programme Proposal (PP2) submission document in draft form. Additional expertise may be asked to join the PDT at this stage. Input on teaching and learning strategies (including e-learning) shall be sought from the Teaching and Learning Centre. The PP2 document shall be prepared as set out in Appendix 2 and forwarded in draft form to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar for review.

5.2.1 The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar shall arrive at one of the following decisions:
   a) Approve for consideration by a validation panel;
   b) Convene an internal panel or, in the case of collaborative/ joint award programmes, a panel comprised of representatives from both partners, to review the draft PP2 and report back to the Faculty/Campus;
   c) Recommend revisions of the PP2 by the PDT and re-submission to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar for consideration by a validation panel.

5.2.2 On approval of the PP2, the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar shall empanel an external validation panel and forward it for its consideration and recommendations. In the case of a joint award, the panel shall be convened by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrars (or nominees) of both institutions. The validation panel process is outlined in the following section on external evaluation and validation process.

5.3   External evaluation and validation process

5.3.1 All newly developed programmes, including collaborative/joint award programmes at the South East Technological University Carlow, which lead to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications shall undergo an external evaluation process before they can be validated by the South East Technological University Carlow.

5.3.2 Composition of External Validation Panels, both for proposed the South East Technological University Carlow programmes and for collaborative/joint awarding programmes:

5.3.3 The Panel shall comprise of persons who are:
   a) experienced and eminent in the field of the proposed programme,
   b) experienced in academic quality assurance processes,
   c) knowledgeable of the operations and requirements of higher education institutions;

d) knowledgeable of and experienced in the operation of the National Framework of Qualifications.

5.3.4 The Panel shall include at least one member of the overall learner body.

5.4 <u>Membership of External Validation Panel (Refer to Appendix 4):</u>

5.4.1 <u>Composition of Major Award New Programme Panels</u>
Chairperson: A senior educationalist or business/industry leader
Secretary: The South East Technological University Carlow Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar or their nominee
Recording Secretary: designated administrator from the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office
Learner representative with appropriate experience in a similar learning environment
At least four other members to be present on the panel with at least one member drawn from the higher education sector and at least one member drawn from business, industry or the relevant professions
Additional members as may be proposed to provide specialist expertise.

5.4.2 <u>Composition of Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental New Programme Evaluation Panels</u>
Chairperson: A senior educationalist or business/industry leader
Secretary: The South East Technological University Carlow Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar or their nominee
Recording Secretary: designated administrator from the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office
Learner representative with appropriate experience in a similar learning environment
At least two other members to be present on the panel with at least one member drawn from the higher education sector and at least one member drawn from business, industry or the relevant professions.
Where the volume of learning equals or exceeds 60 ECTS, revert to 5.4.1 for composition of panel members
Additional members as may be proposed to provide specialist expertise

5.5 <u>Collaborative Provision /Joint Awards and Joint Awarding Panels (Refer to Appendix 5):</u>

All joint awarding panels and joint award programmes are subject to the same validation and review procedures as all internal South East Technological University Carlow programmes.

6.0 General Issues for Assessors

6.1   Expectations, ethical issues: In addition to fulfilling the duties stipulated in the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation Panel, individual group members are expected to conduct their responsibilities in a professional, thorough and objective fashion. Members shall be briefed by the Secretary of the Panel on their role and on the context within which they shall operate. This context shall include the national legislative environment that relates to Validation and South East Technological University Carlow policy, criteria, procedures and guidelines.

6.2   Conflicts of interest: the South East Technological University Carlow has a firm policy of not appointing an Evaluation Panel member in any case where there is any foreseen possibility of conflict of interest. Evaluation Panel Members shall be furnished with a copy of the South East Technological University Carlow's Conflict of Interest Policy and are obliged to declare if there is a conflict of interest.

6.3   Public disclosure and confidentiality: Evaluation Panel members, in reviewing documentation, visiting the South East Technological University Carlow or in the case of collaborative/joint awards, the collaborative/joint awarding partner and participating in other meetings and discussions in relation to the Validation process, shall do so on behalf of the South East Technological University Carlow, or the joint awarding partnership as applicable and shall treat all material, in accordance with findings, as strictly confidential.

6.4   External Evaluation Panels for Taught Programmes

Refer to Appendix 7 for [Evaluation Panel guidelines](#)

7.0   Guidelines to the procedures for the Validation of Taught Programmes

7.1   Formal Submission: On approval from the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, for both the South East Technological University Carlow awards and joint awards, a formal programme submission follows approval by the Academic Council to progress to Validation. Faculties submitting programmes for Validation shall ensure the following:

a) Submission is in electronic format;
b) Submission is available in hard copy format, in sufficient quantity for the respective panel, submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office.

A submission can be made for a programme to be accredited for delivery through any/or all of South East Technological University Carlow's designated sites.

7.2   Validation Policy: All programmes, including collaborative/joint award programmes, leading to major awards undergo a programme Validation process.
This is to ensure that:
▪ programme validation criteria are satisfied;

- the programme has coherence worthy of an award in its own right;
- the range and level of learning outcomes specified for the award-type is appropriate and relevant;
- the level reflects the standard to be attained by learners.

7.3   Programme Titles and Award Titles:

The Academic unit developing the programme shall be aware that award titles are determined by QQI. Programmes submitted for Validation shall clearly be congruent with QQI policy of named award(s) to which the programme leads.

The Faculty/Campus/Department developing the programme shall choose a programme title that is clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. The programme title, which may differ from the title of the related named award, shall be fully consistent with the title of the named award. In the case of joint award programmes this process shall involve representation (at an appropriate level) from both partner institutions.

Programme titles are required to identify the programme leading to the named award concerned. A provider may have several different programmes leading to the same named award, e.g., Bachelor of Arts (Honours). The programme title gives additional information regarding the field of learning of the programme. Programmes' titles shall always refer to the named award that the learner shall receive upon successful completion of the programme. All programme titles shall clearly indicate the level of the award on the National Framework of Qualifications to which they lead.

7.4   Programme Submission and Initial Evaluation:

The programme submission document (both the soft copy and hard copies), whether for an South East Technological University Carlow, Collaborative or a joint award programme, shall be forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar in sufficient time for the Validation process to be completed before the planned commencement date of the programme, and in accordance with the New Programme Validation Flowchart (refer to Appendix 9). An initial evaluation of the full programme submission document shall be made against the South East Technological University Carlow's checklist criteria by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar where recommendations for improvement may be made to the document(c.f. Appendix 5 for Checklist for Accreditation of Taught Programmes (Levels 6-10 NFQ)). This reviewed submission document is returned to the relevant Faculty/Campus to amend as required. The panel requires receipt of completed, internally approved final submission documents along with the Agenda, at least two weeks prior to the panel visit.

Submissions which are deemed to have addressed the criteria shall be forwarded to the members of the evaluation panel. A submission which is deemed not to have adhered to

the criteria shall be returned to the Head of Faculty/Campus/Department specifying the area required for reconsideration.

7.5   Visits:

The date and agenda for the visit shall be agreed between the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, the Head of Faculty/Campus and in the case of collaborative/joint award programmes, the appropriate representative(s) of the partner institution.   Any supplementary documentation requested is to be received by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office typically three weeks before the agreed visit date.

The evaluation panel may wish to discuss the programme submission with appropriate members of the management team or representation from partner institutions, in the case of joint awards, or their equivalents, a representative selection of the staff involved in the development, - delivery and assessment of the programme concerned and learner representatives as appropriate.

Supplementary documentation shall not (unless requested by the panel members) be presented to the evaluation panel during the visit.

The evaluation panel may review facilities including those in other location(s), or those required as part of a collaborative/joint awarding agreement where this is deemed appropriate.

The evaluation panel may conduct private meetings to discuss issues as the visit progresses.

8.0   The Purview of External Validation Panels

8.1   A Panel of Assessors is required to make an independent judgement on the aims and objectives, content and academic standard of the proposed new programme. The panel is constituted on a case by case basis in accordance with QQI's *Participating in an Evaluating Panel as an Expert Assessor: Guidelines.* Validation expert panels require expertise in the programme's discipline-area and in generic areas including pedagogy, assessment and quality assurance, while requiring competence in making both national and international comparisons, as the benchmark typically used in such judgements is the programme's comparability with similar programmes in Ireland and/or internationally.

8.2   Typically the expert panel undertakes a site-visit as part of the assessment to establish if the programme, whether an South East Technological University Carlow programme or a collaborative/joint award programme, meets the criteria and should be validated. The site-visit enables the expert panel to interview the South East Technological University Carlow's management and programme personnel about the programme and their self-assessment and the self-assessment of the collaborative/joint award partners as applicable. It also allows it to experience the *learning environment*, explore the *quality*

assurance procedures, and assess the appropriateness of relevant facilities and resources to support provision of the programme. The site-visit also provides an opportunity for the expert panel to discuss the proposed programme *in situ* with other relevant stakeholders including any relevant learners.

8.3 In its review of new Programme submissions for Major Awards the External Validation Panel shall consider the evidence presented. (Refer to Appendix 7 for guidelines on the type of evidence that may be considered by the external Validation Panel).

9.0 Decision of the Validation Panel

9.1 The Validation Panel may make one of the following decisions:

Approved:
An excellent submission not requiring modification (other than minor typographical corrections) to be carried out by Programme Development Team before submission to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar for onward transmission to the Academic Council for recommendation for Governing Body Approval.

Conditional Approval:
A very good submission requiring modification either via Condition or Recommendation, (subject re-balancing, changes in some syllabus content and learning outcomes, additional information required). This is carried out by the Programme Development Team before submission to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar for onward transmission to the Academic Council for recommendation for Governing Body approval, but not requiring a revalidation by the validation panel.

Conditions

The evaluation panel require that the Programme Development Team should take note of the following conditions and that a satisfactory response to address those conditions shall be received before the validation is considered by Academic Council of the South East Technological University Carlow.

Recommendations

Recommendations are suggestions made by the Programme Evaluation Panel in the spirit of improving the proposed programme.   While these are not binding, the reasons for not incorporating a recommendation have to be clearly stated by the Programme Development Team in its response to the Evaluation Report.

Referred:
A good proposal but requiring significant modification and/or additions.   These modifications/additions to be discussed and approved by the validation panel (the panel need not reconvene but may communicate by email) before submission to the Vice

President for Academic Affairs & Registrar for onward transmission to the AC for recommendation for GB approval.

Refused:
A deficient proposal that needs to be reconsidered in detail by the Programme Development Team, before being rewritten and resubmitted. Such proposals shall require the same full examination by the validation panel as would apply to a new proposal.

10.0   Validation Panel Report

10.1   The report of the Validation Panel shall be submitted to the South East Technological University Carlow's Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar on completion of the review. The Validation Panel Report shall be completed according to the approved template (Appendix 10).

10.2   The report shall be forwarded by the South East Technological University Carlow's Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar to the Head of Faculty/Campus and in the case of joint awards, the equivalent office holder in the partner institution, so as to provide an opportunity for the Programme Development Team to correct any errors.

10.3   The Head of Faculty/Campus/Department (and in the case of joint awards the relevant Head of Faculty/Campus/Department within the partner institution) shall uphold the panel conditions and consider recommendations, following receipt of the Panel report and shall forward any required revisal to the programme, with the response to the evaluation report (Appendix 11), to the the South East Technological University Carlow's Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office.

10.4   Following this, the South East Technological University Carlow's Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar shall present the findings, specifically the Panel Report, Department Response, Proposed Programme Schedule and Programme Abstract of the validation panel at the next scheduled meeting via Programme Planning and Validation sub Committee of Academic Council to Academic Council for recommendation for Governing Body approval.

11.0   Amended submissions

11.1   Should an amended or revised submission document be required, the relevant Department or, in the case of joint awards, the Departments from both awarding partners, shall, in addition, supply a summary document outlining point by point (referring to the revised submission) how the issues raised by the evaluation panel report have been addressed.

11.2   The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar shall consult with the Head of Faculty/Campus and relevant head of the joint awarding partner to ensure that all

recommended changes are made to the programme document and that the new programme document is lodged with their office.

11.3   A copy of the final amended document shall be returned to the Chair of each respective panel for final approval (including the final agreed Approved Programme Schedule). Once approved by the Chair, the programme submission documents shall be signed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar and in the case of joint awards, the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar of the joint awarding partner or relevant senior post holder in the case of collaborative provision and, together with a Certificate of Programme Validation, shall be forwarded to the Head of Faculty/Campus/Department by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar.

12.0   Role of the Academic Council

12.1   The Academic Council (via PPVC or a committee empanelled by the Academic Council to advise it[3]) shall consider the validation panel report and make recommendation to Governing Body. A copy of the minutes of Academic Council recording the decision to make recommendation shall be forwarded to the South East Technological University Carlow's Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar and the relevant Head of Faculty/Campus/Department.

12.2   Such recommendations shall be recorded in the permanent record of Academic Council meetings, and shall be considered by Governing Body in arriving at decisions.

13.0   Implementation

13.1   Every programme presented has an identified home Faculty/Campus/Department. This Faculty/Campus/Department maintains ownership and responsibility for the programmes developed. In the case of Joint Awards, the programme is owned by both partners and maintained within the remit of the Joint Awarding Programme Board

13.1   The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office at the South East Technological University Carlow shall add the new programme to the South East Technological University Carlow's Order in Council and publish same in addition to ensuring the publication of the Certification of Accreditation (Appendix 15 - template) and Statement of Council (Appendix 16 – template).

The Head of Faculty/Campus/Department shall empanel a Programme Board.   In circumstances of a collaborative/joint award programme the programme board shall include representation from the partner institution.

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[3] Committees of Academic Council are advisory and cannot make decisions on behalf of Academic Council. Academic Council is free to accept or reject the advice of any of its committee in the process of making recommendation to Governing Body.

13.2   The Programme Board shall be responsible, in conjunction with the relevant Head of Faculty/Campus/Department, together with appropriate partner representation in the case of collaborative/joint awards, for programme management, programme delivery, assessment, monitoring, review and amendment. This includes the reporting of annual updates to findings from the Panel Report (Appendix 12).   The relevant Head of Faculty/Campus/Department shall liaise with the admissions office, the Examinations Office, the Teaching and Learning Centre and the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office and relevant offices from the collaborative/joint awarding partner as appropriate.

13.3   The programme is subject to the quality assurance procedures of the South East Technological University Carlow.
Each year, the Programme Board shall meet for both the South East Technological University Carlow and collaborative/joint award programmes and shall examine statistics for admission, withdrawal, retention and completion[4]. The Board shall note improvements that may be made in programme content, delivery and/or assessment methodology. The Board shall determine whether or not the programme is meeting its objectives and whether it shall be offered again or terminated.

13.4   The Board shall communicate its decisions to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar of the South East Technological University Carlow and in the case of joint awards, to the equivalent office holder in the partner institution. The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar shall include these decisions in their annual academic report to Academic Council.

14.0   Obligations following Validation.

Validation of programmes – Communication with Academic Council:

QQI's Order in Council and New Programmes Validated Under Delegated Authority:

14.1   The Order in Council shall, as a general approach, specify delegated authority to make awards on the basis of an award-type.[5]

14.2   The South East Technological University Carlow may develop a new programme or amend an existing programme leading to a named award of a particular award-type. The South East Technological University Carlow then validates such a programme by satisfying itself that a participant meets the standards of skill, knowledge and competence, determined by the Academic Council, for the award to which it leads.

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[4] Completion is as defined in legislation – currently Section 2 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012.
[5] The terms "named award" and "award-types" are used in a manner consistent with the policies and criteria established by QQI on the National Framework of Qualifications.

14.3   The South East Technological University Carlow then proceeds to make awards in relation to that programme subject to informing the Academic Council that it intends to do so. The Council shall not put any further validation process in place.

14.4   In the case of joint award programmes and awards made under a joint awarding agreement both the South East Technological University Carlow and the collaborative/joint award partner have a responsibility to inform the Academic Council of their intentions regarding programme development, validation and notification of intention to make awards.

14.5   On receipt of the notification from the South East Technological University Carlow, the Academic Council shall add the named award to the Order in Council that confers delegated authority.

14.6   When the South East Technological University Carlow intends to make awards in respect of new programmes, and specifically in the case of all joint awards, it shall communicate this to QQI. The communication shall consist of a formal letter to the Academic Council of the joint awarding partner where applicable, a copy of the related programme schedule[6] and a copy of the South East Technological University Carlow's Certificate of Approval.

14.7   The Academic Council replies in writing and confirms receipt of the communication. The Academic Council, on an annual basis, updates the schedule of programmes for which awards are being granted by the recognised institute. The South East Technological University Carlow may only make awards under delegated authority in accordance with the award-type specified in the Order in Council.

14.8   The South East Technological University is and autonomous University of Higher Education that has been granted Delegated Authority by QQI. That Delegated Authority empowers SETU Carlow to make awards, including Joint Awards, up to Level 9 on the NFQ for taught programmes. In addition, SETU Carlow has DA to Level 10 in the research areas of Biological, Molecular and Environmental Science.

14.9   The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall publish an abridged version of the validation report on the South East Technological University Carlow's website which shall include the following information:

   a) Programme Title
   b) Date of Panel Visit
   c) Names, titles and affiliations of the validation panel members
   d) Details of joint award partners (if applicable)
   e) Declaration regarding any conflicts of interest

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[6] Copies of the Institute of Technology Carlow's validation report will not typically be required, but such reports should be available to the Academic Council if requested and, in any event, to evaluation or review panels.

f) Abstract describing the programme
g) Award title(s)
h) International Standard Classification of Education[7] (ISCED) classification
i) Summary of Findings (addressing Validation /validation criteria)
j) Recommendations and conditions

15.0   Publication of Evaluation Panel Report

Where the South East Technological University Carlow has received the panel validation report of a programme through the Validation process, an abridged version of the [Evaluation Panel Report](#), specifically the Department Response and that of the equivalent post holder within a collaborative/joint award partner where applicable, an APS shall be published on the South East Technological University Carlow's website.

16.0   Refusal and withdrawal of Validation

16.1   Despite approving that a newly developed programme may progress to validation and, despite a positive outcome from an External Peer Review of a new Programme of Education or Training, the South East Technological University Carlow and in the case of joint awards, the partner institution, through its Governing Body, may decide to refuse to commission the programme.

Additionally, in reviewing the coherence of its curriculum and its strategic plan the South East Technological University Carlow may, from time to time, review continuing the provision of any programme of education and training that it has validated under delegated authority from QQI.

If the South East Technological University Carlow, as a result of such a review, forms the opinion that the programme(s) (including joint award programmes) are no longer fit for purpose or do not meet validation criteria, then, the South East Technological University Carlow may decide to suspended or withdraw that programme.

16.2   In the case of joint award programmes made under a joint awarding agreement, the South East Technological University Carlow and its joint award partner may decide not to proceed with provision. In such circumstances each party shall recommend to its respective Governing Body that provision be suspended or validation be withdrawn. Following recommendation to Governing Body, both partners shall formally notify QQI of this.

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[7] The ISCED is developed by Eurostat, UNESCO and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). The codes feature a number of additions to the original ISCED codes to take account of the courses that have an equal combination of different subjects

In such cases the South East Technological University Carlow, through the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, shall communicate its decision in writing to the relevant Faculty/Campus/Department and, in the case of a joint award the equivalent post holder in the partner institution, indicating the reasons for that decision.

17.0   Withdrawal of Programmes

17.1   Withdrawal of programmes including joint award programmes provided under a joint awarding agreement, shall be submitted by the Head of Faculty/Campus/Department or the equivalent post holder within the partner institution in the case of collaborative/joint awards, through the *Proposal for the withdrawal of a taught programme* (Appendix 6) for recommendation by Academic Council to Governing Body for approval to ensure that any decision to withdraw or discontinue a programme is conducted. Remaining programmes shall continue to reflect and promote the South East Technological University Carlow's commitment to providing undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and learning. Programme withdrawal shall be aligned with the Annual Programme Review and shall require the inclusion of a Statement of Intent to Withdraw a Programme as part of that process.

17.2   For all programmes being withdrawn, protection of enrolled learners is fundamental. The enrolled learners affected by such a withdrawal shall be allowed to finish their studies, within that programme, or a suitable alternative shall be provided for them. The proposed withdrawal of any programme is not deemed as complete until all learners on each year throughout the programme have completed their studies within that programme or within the alternative provided by the South East Technological University Carlow within a timeframe of a typical programme cycle.

18.0   Statement of Intent to Withdraw a Programme

18.1   Where a decision has been made to recommend the withdrawal of a programme, the appropriate Head of Faculty/Campus/Department and, in the case of joint award programmes the appropriate equivalent post holder in the partner institution, shall include a Statement of Intent with the Annual Programme Review to that effect.

18.2   The Statement shall clearly detail:
   a) The Programme Code and Title
   b) The reason(s) for the withdrawal
   c) The status of all learners registered to the programme code, including the timeframe for them to complete the programme.
   d) Any other programme which shares common modules with the programme which is to be withdrawn.

e) Where common modules are shared with another programme, the Head of Faculty/Campus/Department responsible for that programme shall also sign the Statement of Intent.

f) The proposed timetable for withdrawing the programme.

18.3   The proposed withdrawal shall be considered in the same way as any other change recommended as part of the Annual Programme Review, other than that, following receipt of the submission, the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar can convene a meeting of any stakeholders, including equivalent post holders within the joint awarding partner (as determined by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar), to consider the proposal and provide additional responses which shall also be considered by Academic Council.

18.4   Should Academic Council recommend that a programme be withdrawn, the Head of Faculty/Campus/Department, the equivalent post holders within the joint awarding partner and the programme board, shall be notified and any relevant changes to CAO, prospectus, the South East Technological University Carlow website or literature shall be made.