Periodic Review of Academic Programmes Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose and Parent Policy

(1) This procedure sets out the steps for the periodic review of programmes delivered by Hibernia College. The periodic review is normally instituted every five years or more frequently if deemed necessary by the Academic Board, QQI or the Programme Director.

(2) The [Periodic Review of Academic Programmes Policy](#) applies.

Responsibilities

Student Responsibilities

(3) Students and student representatives contribute feedback and input to reviews.

Staff Responsibilities

(4) The Registrar, supported by the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager, is responsible for the implementation of the procedure.

Faculty Responsibilities

(5) The Programme Director is responsible for conducting the self-evaluation of the programme.

The Academic Board

(6) The Academic Board is responsible for overseeing the periodic review of programmes and for making decisions in respect of recommendations in a review report.

Section 2 - Periodic Review of Academic Programmes Procedure

Part A - Stage One of the Procedure – Conducting the Self-Evaluation

Terms of Reference

(7) The Department of the Registrar advises the Programme Director that a review period is commencing and invites the Programme Director to draft Terms of Reference in consultation with the Programme Team.

(8) The Terms of Reference are submitted to the Registrar, who forwards them to the Academic Board for approval.

(9) Any amendments or adjustments by the Academic Board are incorporated into the Terms of Reference before the formal review process begins.

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Critical Self-Evaluation

(10) A process of critical self-evaluation is undertaken, and its findings are documented in a written report.

(11) The Programme Director leads the critical self-evaluation of the programme by the Programme Team and Programme Board.

(12) The critical self-evaluation should address the following key questions:

    a. What are we doing?

    b. Why are we doing it?

    c. How are we doing it?

    d. Is our approach effective?

    e. How do we know?

    f. What changes do we need to make?

    g. Should we continue to offer this programme?

(13) The Self Evaluation Report (SER) will include a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the programme and its provision.

(14) The self-evaluation should consider whether the programme still meets the programme approval criteria specified in the [Development and Approval of Programmes for a Blended or Fully Online Environment Policy](#).

(15) The self-evaluation is based on:

    a. Annual monitoring reports

    b. Consultation through both the issue of surveys and the conduct of focus groups with:

        i. Current and past students

        ii. Current and past Adjunct Faculty

        iii. Current and past Faculty

        iv. External stakeholders such as work placement providers and professional bodies

(16) The self-evaluation should focus on qualitative analysis supported with quantitative and qualitative evidence to underpin conclusions, as appropriate.

The Self Evaluation Report (SER)

(17) The Programme Director writes the SER with input from Faculty and appropriate department heads using the template provided for this purpose.

(18) The SER commences with an overview of the College and programme covering the period since the previous SER.

(19) Where relevant, the Programme Director drafts a revised programme document based on the review findings.

Part B - Stage Two – Considering the SER

Review by the Registrar

(20) Following completion of the critical self-evaluation, the Registrar will review the SER to ensure that all required quality assurance processes have been adhered to and acted upon appropriately. It should also ensure that

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appropriate scrutiny and assessment of the proposal has taken place to confirm the programme is in line with the initial proposal and addresses the programme approval criteria. In that regard, specific attention will be given to the findings of the critical self-evaluation and any subsequent action proposed.

(21) The Registrar may specifically consider how the programme has addressed the requirements of the [NFQ](#), including:

    a. Credit allocation, learning hours

    b. Award standards

    c. Learning outcomes at programme and module level

    d. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

    e. Award structure including access, transfer and progression

(22) The Registrar may seek assurance that internal policies and procedures have been fully considered and satisfied in respect of:

    a. Arrangements for the provision of placements or teaching/assessment venues and the associated roles and responsibilities

    b. Programme management arrangements

    c. Relevance to the Irish, European and international labour markets

    d. Physical and human resource implications of providing the programme

    e. Impact on existing support facilities

    f. Timetabling

    g. Development of associated documentation, for example, student handbook

    h. Assessment scheduling, management and procedures

(23) On completion of the review, the Registrar may request for additional follow-up work on the documentation prior to its submission to a peer review panel.

Part C - Stage Three - Independent Peer Review Process

The Independent Peer Review Process

(24) Following completion of the critical self-evaluation, a competent independent peer review panel should evaluate the proposal, by considering the documentation and meeting with the College management and the Programme Team, which includes Authors and Learning Designers.

(25) There will be minimum of three external panel members and a maximum of five.

(26) The peer review process models the QQI validation and should be conducted in the context of the [Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training](#).

(27) Panel members should have appropriate subject expertise and the Chairperson must be familiar and experienced with appropriate QQI policies, including the validation process, in order to guide the panel and reach informed conclusions.

(28) The panel must be provided with the full programme validation submission at least one week before the independent peer review evaluation to allow for full and proper scrutiny of the documents.

(29) The development team, including Faculty, should be available to meet with the panel and be prepared to respond to queries relating to their areas of expertise.

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(30) The panel are required to compile a report of their findings and recommendations to include whether or not they would recommend the programme goes forward for validation.

(31) On receipt of the panel report, the Programme Director is required to consider all recommendations and arrange for the completion of any subsequent action as deemed necessary and appropriate.

(32) When all actions have been completed to the satisfaction of the Programme Director, the full submission should be forwarded to the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager to arrange for consideration by the Academic Board.

Part D - Stage Four - Follow-Up Review by the Registrar

Follow-Up Review by the Registrar

(33) The Registrar will review the findings of the external peer review process and seek assurance that these have been addressed.

(34) On completion of the review, the Registrar may request additional follow-up work on the documentation prior to its submission to the Academic Board for an approval decision.

(35) Final and complete documents including all appendices are submitted to the Registrar for review prior to the validation being submitted to the Academic Board for approval.

(36) Draft documents will not be considered as the Registrar is required to submit a report on the final submission to the Academic Board with a recommendation to approve or reject the request for the submission to go forward for validation.

(37) Before submission to the Registrar, an initial quality check is undertaken by the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager.

(38) The initial quality check is undertaken by the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager. This check will confirm that:

   a. All required documents are submitted
   b. Each of the sections has been completed in line with the template guidelines
   c. All appropriate appendices are complete
   d. All appropriate personnel have informed the development

(39) In addition, the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager will ensure that the submission includes the critical self-evaluation and the independent peer review evaluation panel report.

(40) The initial check is not intended to confirm the appropriateness of the information provided to the proposal put forward.

(41) Upon confirmation that the above requirements have been met, the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager will put the documentation forward for review by the Registrar on behalf of the Academic Board.

(42) Incomplete documentation will be returned by the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager and may result in approval by the Academic Board not taking place as per the scheduled timeline.

(43) Programme Directors are advised to allow sufficient time for the submission to be reviewed by the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager or Registrar and shortfalls addressed in advance of the Academic Board meeting.

Part E - Stage Five – Consideration by the Academic Board

Consideration by the Academic Board

(44) The Programme Director is required to attend the next scheduled Academic Board meeting and present a brief summary of the new programme as documented.

(45) Following the presentation, the Registrar summarises findings from the independent review of the programme.

(46) The Registrar provides a brief rationale for the recommendation.

(47) The Academic Board is required to support or reject the recommendation of the Registrar.

(48) The outcomes of the Academic Board are:

    a. Approval to submit to QQI
    b. Further work required

(49) In the event of approval, the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager with the Registrar makes all arrangements for submission.

(50) In the event of further work being required, the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager will advise the Programme Director of the additional work required and the timeline for completion of this. In such circumstances, the Chairperson of the Academic Board may authorise approval to submit by Chairperson's Action following review by an appropriate member or members of the Academic Board.

Section 3 - Submission for Academic Re-Validation

(51) On submission to QQI, the Registrar liaises with QQI throughout the external, QQI-owned validation process.

Section 4 - Subsequent to Academic Re-Validation

(52) On receipt of the validation report, there are normally two outcomes, approval subject to changes or advised to make a full resubmission.

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Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd November 2020
Review Date	2nd November 2023
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	23rd September 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Procedure" - Procedures are the broad actions that must be carried out to implement a policy. They set out 'how to do' what the policy specifies must be done.

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)

"Validation" - The process by which it is confirmed that a programme of higher education will enable a registered learner who completes that programme to acquire and where appropriate be able to demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify the award being made in respect of that programme in line with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

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