PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PAEC)

Wednesday 8 April 2020 at 9:30am

via Microsoft Teams

Note of the 45th meeting of the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held via Microsoft Teams, at 9:30am on **Wednesday 8 April 2020.**

Present:
Dr Padraig Walsh (Chairperson)
Ms Andrina Wafer
Ms Angela Lambkin
Ms Barbara Kelly
Dr Bryan Maguire
Dr John O'Connor
Ms Marie Gould
Ms Róisín Sweeney

In attendance:
Ms Therese Masterson (Key Executive)
Ms Janet Cawley (Secretary)
Ms Carmel Kelly
Mr Walter Balfe
Dr Deirdre Stritch
Ms Alex Keys (Item 6.3 – Item 13)

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson enquired and confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to any of the items of business before the Committee.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 6 FEBRUARY 2020

2.1 The Minutes of the PAEC Meeting held on 6 February 2020 were approved by the Committee.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 6 FEBRUARY 2020

3.1 Thematic analysis of provider reengagement (QA Approval)

The Committee NOTED that the Thematic Analysis for Reengagement had commenced. QQI commissioned an expert to conduct a thematic analysis of the process and findings. The analysis comprises a document review, a survey of providers and panel members and individual interviews. This has been conducted by Dr Orlaith McCaul, formerly Head of Provider Quality Assurance in HETAC. The report of the findings will be considered at the next PAEC meeting in June.

All other matters arising were covered within agenda items and were discussed during the meeting.

4. NOTE OF THE MEETING, REPORT FOR THE BOARD

4.1 Note of Meeting of 6 February 2020

The Committee APPROVED the Note of the PAEC Meeting of 6 February, for publication on the QQI website.

4.2 Report for the Board on the Meeting of 6 February 2020

The Committee NOTED the Report for the Board on the PAEC Meeting of 6 February 2020.

5. PROGRAMME VALIDATION APPLICATIONS

5.1 Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes

5.1.1 **Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programme:

5.1.1.1 PG24266, Tour Guiding, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 30 Credits, CAS (PAEC/A45/5.1.1.1)

5.2 Higher Education and Training Programmes – Programme Validation

5.2.1 **CCT College Dublin**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

5.2.1.1 PG24244, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing and Information Technology, Level 8, Major Award, 240 Credits
PG24245, Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Technology, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits, *Exit Award*
PG24246, Higher Certificate in Science in Computing and Information Technology, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits, *Exit Award*

5.2.2 **City of Dublin ETB**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programme:

5.2.2.1 PG24146, Dental Nursing Traineeship - Leading to a Level 6 Higher Certificate in Dental Nursing, Major Award, 120 Credits

5.3 Devolution of Responsibility for Validation Sub-Processes
No Business

5.4 Validation of Research Degree Programmes
No Business

5.5 Apprenticeship Programmes
No Business

6. REVALIDATION

*(Note: Part of item 6.3 (*measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on programmes leading to QQI Awards*)
was taken at this point of the meeting*

6.1 Application for Extension of Validation Period

6.1.1 National College of Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

National College of Ireland (NCI) advised that they are seeking an extension of validation for a number of specific programmes as a number of issues arose during the programme review process. The issues are outlined by the provider in the documentation provided.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date for the following seven programmes until 31 December 2020. One programme with a single annual intake, currently has a last intake date of September 2019. The other six programmes have two annual intakes and last intake dates of August 2020.

6.1.1.1 PG21878, Master of Business Administration, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG21877, Master of Science in Management, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG21881, Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Management, Level 9, Major Award, 70 Credits, *Exit Award*
PG21885, Master of Science in Entrepreneurship, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG21887, Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Entrepreneurship, Level 9, Major Award, 70 Credits, *Exit Award*
PG21882, Master of Science in International Business, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG21883, Postgraduate Diploma in Business in International Business, Level 9, Major Award, 70 Credits, *Exit Award*

6.1.2 Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences

Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences (ICHAS) advised that they are seeking an extension of validation for a number of specific programmes as a number of issues arose during the programme review process. The issues are outlined by the provider in the documentation provided.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date for the following ten programmes until 31 December 2020. The programmes currently have a last intake date of September 2019.

6.1.2.1 PG21852, Certificate in Counselling Studies, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits, *Exit Award*
PG21851, Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling Studies, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits, *Exit Award*
PG21855, Bachelor of Arts in Counselling Skills and Addiction Studies, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG21850, Bachelor of Arts in Counselling Studies, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits, *Exit Award*
PG21853, Bachelor of Arts in Counselling Skills and Psychotherapy Studies, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG21856, Bachelor of Arts in Counselling Skills and Youth Studies, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG21849, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling Studies, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits, *Exit Award*

PG21846, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Addiction Studies, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits

PG21848, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Youth Studies, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits

PG21847, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits

6.2 <u>**Revalidation**</u>

6.2.1 **Accounting Technicians Ireland**

The Committee NOTED the documentation. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programme subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.2.1.1 PG24348, Advanced Certificate in Accounting, Level 6, Major Award, 146 FET Credits

6.2.2 **National College of Ireland**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programmes subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.2.2.1 PG24337, Master of Science in Cloud Computing, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG24338, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Cloud Computing, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits

6.2.3 **Independent Colleges**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programmes subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.2.3.1 PG24339, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG24340 Certificate in Business Studies, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits, *Exit Award*

6.3 <u>**Measures to Mitigate Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Programmes leading to QQI Awards**</u>

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The executive has put in place measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on programmes leading to QQI Awards. Three papers were combined in this document as follows:

i) Temporary Extension of Providers' Scope of Provision and related Amendments to Validated Programmes.

The Committee APPROVED the sanction given by QQI to providers to operate outside their previously approved scope of provision, and to adjust programmes and assessment from which was validated, in the knowledge that the measures taken are temporary and taken only in response to the current exceptional circumstances.

ii) Extension of Period of Enrolment for Validated Programmes

This paper proposed that QQI extend, by four months to 31 December 2020, the last intake date for those validated programmes whose last permitted intake date will have passed by 31 August 2020. This extension would be unilateral i.e. without a requirement for the providers to request it.

It would be granted in recognition of the current difficulties arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, which makes the processes of programme review and revalidation vulnerable, dependent as they are on the availability of external experts, provider QA personnel and QQI executive staff.

The Committee APPROVED the proposal and directed the executive to notify the providers concerned of the extension of their enrolment periods.

iii) Temporary Modification of Rules for Awarding in Common Awards System (CAS)

The PAEC NOTED that the Policies and Standards Committee approved the executive's proposal regarding the methodology and criteria for adjusting award requirements for specific CAS major awards to extend the work placement pool of components to include approved alternatives to Work Experience and Work Practice.

7. FOLLOW-UP ON PAEC RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS IN PANEL REPORTS
No Business

8. QA FOR COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL PROVISION
No Business

9. APPROVAL OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR LEGACY PROVIDERS (RE-ENGAGEMENT)

9.1 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee REFUSED to approve with recommendations the quality assurance procedures of a named provider (pending mandatory changes being made). The named provider may submit revised procedures for approval within a six-month period of notification of this decision.

9.2 The Open College

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of The Open College.

The Committee NOTED that all mandatory changes confirmed by the PAEC at its meeting on 13 June 2019 had been satisfactorily addressed. The Committee APPROVED the Quality Assurance procedures of The Open College.

9.3 FRS Training Limited

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of FRS Training Limited.

The Committee NOTED that all mandatory changes confirmed by the PAEC at its meeting on 13 June 2019 had been satisfactorily addressed. The Committee APPROVED the Quality Assurance procedures of FRS Training Ltd.

9.4 Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated as PAEC/A45/9.4. The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland.

9.5 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee REFUSED to approve with recommendations the quality assurance procedures of a named provider (pending mandatory changes being made). The named provider may submit revised procedures for approval within a six-month period of notification of this decision.

10. ROUTINE STANDARDS ACTIVITIES UPDATE
No Business

11. CHANGE OF STATUS OF LEGACY HET AND FET PROVIDERS
No Business

12. REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PAOC)
No Business

13. EXPERIENCE TO DATE OF DEFERRED PANEL DECISIONS IN THE REENGAGEMENT PROCESS

13.1 Experience to Date of Deferred Panel Decisions in the Reengagement Process

The executive provided an overview of the experience to date of use by panels of the option to defer decisions in the reengagement process. Since its introduction, half of all panels have deferred their decision at the conclusion of the site visit. An analysis of trends indicates that panels have increasingly opted to defer decisions in instances where the number and nature of proposed mandatory changes to be addressed by the provider are quite significant. Some providers have noted the undue pressure this places them under, while the executive expressed a concern that this may lead providers, of necessity, to address proposed changes in a more superficial way. It was agreed that the executive will develop further guidelines on use of the deferred decision option by panels to address these concerns.