1. Document Details

Title:	**Programmatic Review – Policy and Procedural Framework**
Author(s):	CIT Registrar's Office / Academic Planning and Review Committee (based on draft proposals of the Academic Review Committee)
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Important Note: If the 'Status' of this document reads 'Draft', it has not been finalised and should not be relied upon.

2. Revision History

Version Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes tracked?
1.1	Feb – Mar 2015	Initial version fully finalised and integrated into Academic Policy Template	No
1.2	Dec 2017	Non-critical revisions to review organisation, panel composition, reporting modalities, and the procedures for implementation and follow-up to reflect operating experience; updating of reference documents.	Yes

3. Relevant/Related Existing Internal Documents

n/a		

4. Relevant/Related Existing External Documents

Oireachtas	2012	*Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act*
ENQA	2015	*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (4th edition)*

5. Consultation History

This document has been prepared in consultation with the following bodies/functions:

n/a

6. Approvals

This document requires following approvals (in order where applicable):

Name	Date	Details of Approval Required
Academic Council Executive	**3 December 2008**	Original adoption of ARC process proposals

Academic Council Executive	17 April 2015	Approval of finalised process integrated into new Academic Policy Template, as mandated by Academic Council
Academic Council	13 December 2017	Approval of Version 1.2
Governing Body		

7. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the policy and procedural framework for the periodic review of the programmes of education and training offered by faculties and colleges of Cork Institute of Technology ('Programmatic Review').

8. Scope

The programmatic review process applies to all taught programmes of higher education and training offered by the Institute. A positive outcome to programmatic review enables revalidation of the respective programmes by the CIT Academic Council for a period not exceeding five years.

The policy and procedures codified in this document were developed by the Academic Review Committee and adopted by Academic Council in December 2008. The Committee's proposals were initially to be applied on a pilot basis during the 2008/09 academic year. This was subsequently extended to a complete round of programmatic reviews in all faculties and colleges of the Institute conducted over several years. During this time, some further refinement of the process took place, which was informed by operational experience gathered by the Registrar's Office.

This policy documents and sets out the programmatic review process as currently operated.

9. Audiences

This policy is addressed to all members of Cork Institute of Technology engaged in the provision and quality assurance of taught higher education and training programmes. It is also of interest to learner representatives or external stakeholders participating in programmatic review at the invitation of the academic unit reviewed, and to external members of programmatic review groups.

10. Responsible Officer(s)

Responsibility for implementation and operational maintenance of this policy lies with the Office of the Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Responsibility for review of this policy lies with the Academic Council of the Institute, more particularly the Council's Academic Planning & Review Committee.

11. Policy

1. Context

The Institute's portfolio of programmes needs to constantly change and evolve. This is essential if our programmes are to stay relevant to learners and to contribute to the wider economic, academic and social context. Programme teams need to continually update and further develop modules and programmes, design new modules and programmes in response to rapidly emerging market needs, and be prepared to critically evaluate programmes which no longer address a real need.

These processes need to be accompanied and supported by academic quality procedures which are robust and flexible enough to maintain and improve the quality of established programmes, while not stifling their vitality or hindering the momentum for change. In addition, the academic quality procedures should allow programme teams to derive maximum benefit from the flexibility of a modular system of delivery.

2. Overview

Programmatic Review is a periodic quality process in which peer evaluators analyse the effectiveness of a suite of programmes in a faculty or school, with an emphasis on quality, standards, and flexibility as well as appropriateness of response to changing needs. In CIT, this review is built on a self-study by the school/college (or faculty) under review, complemented by meetings of the Programmatic Review Group with staff, students and other stakeholders.

A key question for the Programmatic Review Group throughout will be if there is sufficient evidence of a thorough, effective and reflective self-review which identifies challenges, addresses shortcomings, and which lays the foundations for a successful development of the faculty/college or school and its programme portfolio over the next five years.

Guided by the principles set out in ENQA, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (www.enqa.eu), programmatic review is one of the most significant academic quality instruments of the Institute.

Externally, programmatic review contributes to the maintenance of public confidence in Cork Institute of Technology and its awards. Internally, it affords a periodic stimulus for academic units to step back from the ongoing business of programme delivery and management to reflect on the current status and envisaged future direction of its programme portfolio in the context of the strategic development of the faculty/college and the wider environment. It is important however that programmatic review should be understood, both internally and externally, as only one element of a continuous monitoring and improvement cycle, rather than a once-off effort to be survived and forgotten about.

3. Recurrence

To retain its validation, every CIT taught programme of higher education and training must successfully undergo programmatic review at intervals not normally exceeding five (5) years. Newly approved programmes of a school/college will normally be included in the next programmatic review of that academic unit, unless they were validated in the academic year just preceding the commencement of programmatic review.

4. Aims

The aims of the programmatic review process are:

a) To ensure the **relevance of the programme** (to learners, employers and other stakeholders) by reviewing the current programme and, where necessary, updating and developing its outcomes, structure, content and delivery;

b) To ensure that the **strategy, resources and systems** of the Institute and of the Faculty, College or School (as relevant) are sufficient to support and develop the academic activities;

c) To ensure that the **programme outcomes correctly describe the desired graduate profile**;

d) To ensure that there is a **demand for the graduate profile** produced by the programme;

e) To ensure that the **programme delivers the programme outcomes**.

5. Phases

Programmatic review in Cork Institute of Technology is conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1 of the Programmatic Review looks at strategic and high-level issues;

- Phase 2 is devoted to a detailed programme review.

During these two phases, the Programmatic Review Group (PRG) conducts two types of review: plenary review sessions to look at top-level issues (Phase 1, and Phase 2 as required), and programme review sessions conducted by sub-groups of the PRG (Phase 2).

The outcomes and findings of the Phase 1 review, presented in a Phase 1 (Interim) Report, should be considered by the school/college or faculty in the run-up to the second phase and may inform the Phase 2 self-study process. The Phase 1 Panel may also require a school/college or faculty to put in place certain enhancement measures, or submit an implementation plan for these, before the commencement of Phase 2.

The overall brief of the Programmatic Review Group on completion of both phases is to report to Academic Council on the adequacy of the measures taken by the school/college or faculty to ensure that the aims of programmatic review are met, and to recommend the respective programmes to Council for revalidation.

Clear guidelines / terms of reference and briefings are provided for panel members by the Registrar's Office to ensure consistency and adherence to the process.

6. Organisation

Phase 1 of programmatic review is normally organised either on a faculty or on a school/college basis, as determined by the Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement in consultation with the relevant head(s) of faculty and school/college on the basis of validation requirements, scheduling considerations etc.

Phase 2 programme reviews are normally organised by department within the school under review. Programme review panels may be held concurrently or sequentially.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Programmatic review in CIT is overseen and facilitated by the Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement or his/her nominee.

In preparing for PR, the relevant faculty or school/college has responsibility for the following:

- Arrange – in conjunction with the Registrar's Office – the review of the faculty or school/college, its constituent units and its programmes;

- Conduct a self-study of the faculty or school/college and its complement of programmes under the relevant headings, drawing on the results of ongoing monitoring or other evaluations completed since the last programmatic review to the furthest extent possible;

- Compile, produce and submit programmatic review documentation to the Registrar's Office;

- Participate fully in the programmatic review panel sessions and other interactions with the Programmatic Review Group.

7.1 Preparatory Panel Review (Organised by the Faculty or School/College)

A faculty or school/college may elect to organise its own preparatory panel review prior to the commencement of formal programmatic review to obtain preliminary feedback on its programme portfolio and review documentation. Review panels for this preparatory review may have internal and/or external membership.

When organising a preparatory review, a faculty or school/college should, as a minimum, take into account the necessary lead-in time for collating and circulating the formal self-study documentation. It is suggested that a preparatory review should be conducted at least two months before the scheduled PRG visit (ideally further in advance) to enable faculties to develop and document appropriate responses to feedback received ahead of programmatic review where appropriate.

Feedback obtained from a preparatory review may be included with the programmatic review documentation for the information of the Programmatic Review Group. It should be understood however that, while the PRG will be asked to duly consider all relevant materials submitted, it is under no obligation to reflect the conclusions of a faculty-convened preparatory panel in its own findings and recommendations.

8. Self-Study Documentation

8.1 Strategic Review Phase (Phase 1)

In its self-study documentation for Phase 1 of programmatic review, the faculty or school/college and its constituent academic units will review and report on their activities under the following headings:

a) External Environment Analysis;

b) Facilities;

c) Staff Development;

d) Industry Links;

e) Research;

f) Delivery & Assessment Methodologies;

g) Student & Graduate Analysis.

An essential part of this review is to address the recommendations from the previous programmatic review process.

The External Environment Analysis is an outward-facing review, examining trends and best practice under a variety of headings including:

- Society, industry and the graduate;

- Delivery and assessment methodologies;

- Prospective student perceptions.

As part of this exercise the faculty or school/college should benchmark itself against one or more relevant external comparators.

8.2 Programme Review Phase (Phase 2)

Each programme within the school/college's portfolio will conduct a self-review and will present proposals for the updating of the programme and modules. The self-review will use the following headings:

a) Summary information on the programme

b) Graduate profile (as defined by the intended programme outcomes) and professional environment ;

c) Programme management and monitoring;

d) Enrolment and student performance;

e) Graduate performance;

f) Programme and module changes since the last review;

g) Programme and module changes now proposed.

The programme self-review is conducted by the programme board in cooperation with the Head of Department. The review should have a view to establishing the need for, and proposing, developments to the programme's outcomes, structure, content, delivery and assessment.

The outcome of the programme self-review will be presented in two sets of documents:

a) <u>Programme Description, consisting of</u>:

- The complete Programme Descriptor for the existing approved programme and for the draft programme now proposed for revalidation (Akari Document output),

- A complete set of Module Descriptors for the programme now proposed for revalidation (Akari Document output, normally the 'Book of Modules'), and

- Where relevant, reports from external content reviews for any new draft modules.

b) An accompanying <u>Programme Report</u> which outlines and comments on

- Career and industry profile, graduate performance and student performance – current status, developments over the period reviewed, and projections which form the basis for changes now proposed;

- Any significant changes in the programme's outcomes, structure, content, delivery and assessment effected during the past five (5) years, and the rationale for these;

- Any proposed future developments, and the rationale for these.

Commentary on programme performance should be backed up by meaningful presentation and analysis of relevant performance data. Relevant supplementary documentation may be added, including for instance minutes of the meetings of programme boards, boards of study, or industry advisory panels; external examiner reports; reports on faculty-convened preparatory reviews; summaries of stakeholder surveys and evaluations; staff CVs, etc.

Programme descriptions and programme reports should incorporate information on embedded awards of major degree programmes (including brief commentary on graduate profile and continued need) and on short courses leading to non-major awards.

9. The Programmatic Review Group (PRG)

The Programmatic Review Group (PRG) is appointed and convened by the Registrar's Office in consultation with the faculty and school/college(s) under review.

The overall PRG for one programmatic review cycle is constituted of the combined members of the Phase 1 and 2 programmatic review panels.

Due to the shift in focus and differing expertise requirements between the two phases, PRG members will generally participate in one phase only.

Under some circumstances, it may be desirable to request one or more Phase 1 panel members to continue onto Phase 2, in order e.g. to strengthen the continuity between the phases or to follow up on the implementation of specific Phase 1 panel conditions to be discharged in the interim. In such a case, the specific needs of each individual Phase 2 panel in terms of detailed subject expertise and inclusion of both academic and industry/professional expertise should be kept in mind.

The Institute's policy on conflict of interest shall be adhered to in the selection and recruitment of panellists.

9.1 Composition and Review Focus of the Phase 1 Panel

The Phase 1 Panel normally consists of four (4), but no less than three (3), external peer experts and a representative of the CIT Registrar's Office.

External panellists should be drawn from academic institutions and from industry/the professions, ideally in equal proportions. In addition to general expertise in the field, a sufficient degree of management-level experience and strategic perspective should be present in the group as a whole to allow for an appropriate evaluation of high-level strategic and quality issues.

Where it is deemed advisable, e.g. for reviews of larger schools or faculties, additional external experts may be recruited to achieve adequate coverage of key areas and issues, giving due regard to maintaining an appropriate balance between academia and industry.

In relation to the general aims of programmatic review, the Phase 1 Panel will focus on a review the contextual and strategic factors impacting on the development of the school/college's programme portfolio, including the strategy, resources and systems of the school/college and faculty and the overall demand for graduates.

9.2 Phase 1 Chairperson

The Phase 1 Chairperson is appointed by the Registrar's Office and will normally be a senior external academic.

The overall functions of the Phase 1 Chairperson will be to chair the plenary sessions of the PRG during both PR phases, to convey key points of preliminary oral panel feedback to representatives of CIT senior management during the closing session of the site visit, and to take on overall executive responsibility for the production of the Phase 1 (Interim) Report.

9.3 Composition and Review Focus of the Phase 2 Programme Panels

The number and size of the Phase 2 Programme Panels depends on the overall number and nature of programmes under review and the diversity of fields of study represented. The guiding principle will be to achieve, within the given logistical constraints, an adequate breadth of subject expertise for the detailed programme review.

At a minimum, a Programme Panel will be composed of three (3) members, encompassing one external academic, one external industry/professional expert and one representative of the CIT Registrar's Office (or internal independent academic acting on behalf of the Registrar's Office). Where additional external experts are assigned to a Programme Panel to cover specific required subject expertise, regard should be given to an appropriate balance between academic and industry panellists.

Phase 2 entails a detailed analysis of each programme and its outcomes, structures, content and delivery. Within the overall aims of programmatic review, Phase 2 programme panels are asked to focus on the appropriateness of the programme outcomes and graduate profile, the achievability and achievement of the programme outcomes through the programme design and delivery, and strategic issues including employability of graduates and industry trends as they apply to the individual programme.

9.4 Phase 2 Chairperson

The Chairperson for each Phase 2 panel is normally agreed between the members of the Phase 2 panel at the beginning of the site visit, unless there are circumstances which necessitate a direct nomination by the Registrar's Office. In either case, the Phase 2 Chairperson should be external to the Institute, and should by preference have had some prior experience in chairing academic panels and the production of panel reports.

The overall functions of the Phase 2 Chairperson will be to chair the Phase 2 panel sessions, to share key points of preliminary panel feedback with other Phase 2 panels and subsequently with representatives of CIT academic management at the close of the site visit, and to take on executive responsibility for the production of the Programme Panel Report.

Very occasionally, a Phase 2 Chair may also be requested by Registrar's Office to oversee production of a Phase 1 Follow-Up Report or a summative Final PRG Report where this is deemed necessary and no Phase 1 panellist was available to continue onto the programme phase and to take on this function.

10. The PRG Reports and Programme Finalisation

The PRG normally submits two types of report: a Phase 1 (Interim) Report following conclusion of Phase 1; and a series of Programme Panel Reports following conclusion of Phase 2.

Responsibility for timely production of the reports lies with the respective Panel Chair, with guidance from the CIT Registrar's Office on timelines, structure and alignment with the aims of PR as required.

Where it is necessary to comment on the implementation of requirements or recommendations issued by the Phase 1 panel for completion prior to Phase 2, a Phase 1 Follow-Up Report may be added.

Alternatively, where deemed more practical, the different component reports may be collated or subsumed into a Final PRG Report. The Executive Summary of such a composite Final PRG Report would need to clearly state the recommendation of the overall PRG on revalidation of the programmes reviewed (see also 10.2 on the Programme Panel Report).

10.1 Phase 1 (Interim) Report

The Phase 1 (Interim) Report presents the findings and conclusions of the Phase 1 Panel following its site visit and sets out two types of requirements and recommendations:

- PRG requirements and recommendations on high-level strategic and contextual issues which will not be revisited during the programme-level discussions of Phase 2, and PRG commendations on exemplary features and instances of good practice at the strategic and governance level; and, where necessary,

- PRG requirements to be addressed by the school/college, faculty or Institute before Phase 2 can commence.

The Phase 1 (Interim) Report is normally presented to Academic Council for noting only, together with any response that the school/college or faculty may wish to issue, unless there are significant issues raised which require Council approval ahead of Phase 2 of the review.

10.2 Phase 1 Implementation / Follow-Up Report

Should the Phase 1 panel set requirements to be met in advance of the detailed programme review, a Phase 1 Implementation respectively Follow-Up Report will need to be produced.

a)   Unless specific expertise in the field is required to determine that the requirement(s) have been met, the Phase 1 panel will normally instruct the school/college or faculty to submit a Phase 1 Implementation Report to the Registrar's Office within a set timeframe. This should set out in detail how the Phase 1 requirements(s) have been met, and include appropriate evidence.

Following confirmation of implementation by Registrar's Office, Registrar's Office will submit the Phase 1 Implementation Report to Academic Council for approval prior to the start of Phase 2.

b)   Alternatively, where appropriate, the Phase 1 panel may request that the implementation of the Phase 1 requirements should be presented on and discussed during the Phase 2 site visit. If so, the Phase 1 Chairperson should liaise with the Registrar's Office to determine which Phase 2 panel(s) should be tasked with the Phase 1 follow-up.

In such a case, the Registrar's Office will normally request the Chair of the relevant Phase 2 panel to oversee production of a brief Phase 1 Follow-Up Report. Ideally, this report will record that the PRG considers the Phase 1 requirement(s) completed, citing/appending appropriate evidence.

However, in cases of significant non-compliance the panel may reiterate the outstanding requirement(s), or it may issue supplementary recommendations, keeping in mind how implementation of these should be confirmed post-panel.

Registrar's Office will forward the completed Phase 1 Follow-Up Report to Council for approval at the earliest opportunity. Should a panel determine that there are outstanding requirements, Council will note the Phase 1 Follow-Up Report only until implementation is confirmed.

10.3 Programme Panel Report

The Programme Panel Report presents the findings and conclusions of the Phase 2 Panel on a suite of programmes following its site visit. Each Programme Panel Report should include an Executive Summary which clearly states

a)   the overall recommendation of the Phase 2 Panel to Academic Council on revalidation of the programmes reviewed;
b)   any panel requirements to be met prior to validation; and
c)   any limitations to the period or scope of the revalidation recommended by the panel.

In addition to requirements, Programme Panel Reports may also include commendations on exemplary features of the provision or instances of good practice; and it may include recommendations. Implementation of any recommendations is not a prerequisite for validation, but will generally need to be demonstrated by the next programmatic review.

10.4 Phase 2 Implementation Report and Programme Validation

Following transmission of the finalised draft Programme Panel Report to the host department (and/or school/college as appropriate) of the programmes reviewed, the academic unit in consultation with the Registrar's Office works towards meeting any requirements for validation, including completion of the internal module moderation process.

When this work is complete, the relevant Head provides Registrar's Office with a brief written statement on the manner in which each requirement has been met, together with any supplementary documentary evidence of completion as appropriate. Implementation of any completed recommendations may also be recorded. Normally, the Implementation Table template provided in Section C of the Programme Panel Report should be used for this.

On confirmation by the Registrar's Office that implementation of the requirements meets the intentions of the panel and the CIT quality framework, Registrar's Office submits the final Phase 2 Implementation Report, together with any supporting materials, to Academic Council for adoption.

Adoption of the Phase 2 Implementation Report (plus any relevant Phase 1 Implementation or Follow-Up Report, where existing) enables Academic Council to revalidate the relevant programmes and concludes the programmatic review cycle for these programmes.

11. Follow-Up

Following conclusion of programmatic review, the school/college or faculty is required to report on progress towards implementation of the programmatic review recommendations.

To this end, the Head of School/College or Faculty, as determined by the Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement in consultation with the academic unit reviewed, should submit two (2) written follow-up reports in the 5-year period following the review as follows:

Two (2) academic years after the programmatic review; and

At the end of the review period, as part of the submission to the next programmatic review.

12. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed by the Academic Planning and Review Committee of Academic Council (or other appropriate committee as directed by Council) at intervals not exceeding three (3) years.

Minor procedural revisions and amendments may be initiated by the Registrar's Office.