

1. Document Details

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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

3. Relevant/Related Existing Internal Documents

n/a		
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4. Relevant/Related Existing External Documents

Oireachtas	2012	<i>Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act</i>
ENQA	2009	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (3rd edition)</i>

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
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 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 faculty/college or school 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.engq.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 faculty/college or school will normally be included in the next programmatic review of that 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 an Interim Report, should be considered by the faculty/college or school in the run-up to the second phase and should inform the Phase 2 self-study process as necessary. The PRG may also require a faculty/college or school 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 faculty/college or school 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 on a faculty- or school-basis, as determined by the Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement in consultation with the relevant heads of faculty/college and school on the basis of validation requirements, scheduling considerations etc.

Phase 2 programme reviews are normally organised by department within the faculty or 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/college or school has responsibility for the following:

- Arrange – in conjunction with the Registrar's Office – the review of the faculty/college or school, its constituent units and its programmes;
- Conduct a self-study of the faculty/college or school 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 wherever 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/College or School)

A faculty/college or school 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/college or school 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 and its constituent departments 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/college or school should benchmark itself against one or more relevant external comparators.

8.2 Programme Review Phase (Phase 2)

Each programme in the faculty/college or school 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) Career/industry profile;
- b) Graduate profile (as defined by the programme outcomes);
- c) Programme design and delivery (should examine the delivery and assessment of programme outcomes in detail);
- d) Graduate performance;
- e) Student performance.

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:

- Programme Description, consisting of:
 - The complete Programme Descriptor for the existing approved programme and for the draft programme now proposed for revalidation (Course Builder output),
 - A complete set of Module Descriptors for the programme now proposed for revalidation (Course Builder output, normally the 'Book of Modules'), and
 - Reports from external content reviews for any new draft modules presented;
- An accompanying Programme Report 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.

Relevant supplementary documentation may be added, such as reports on faculty-convened preparatory reviews, summaries of stakeholder surveys and evaluations, 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 convened by the Registrar's Office in consultation with the faculty/college or school under review.

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

Due to the shift in focus between the two phases, not every PRG member will be required in both phases. PRG membership will generally be wider in Phase 2 to achieve adequate breadth of subject expertise during the detailed programme review.

To ensure a sufficient degree of continuity between the two phases, the Panel Chair and the designated Registrar's Office representative will need to be available for both phases of PR. All other Phase 1 panellists should normally also expect to continue onto Phase 2 wherever possible.

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 consists of a minimum of four (4) external peer experts and a representative of the CIT Registrar's Office.

Of the external panellists, half should be drawn from academic institutions and half from industry/the professions. In addition to subject expertise, a sufficient degree of management-level experience and strategic oversight should be present in the group as a whole to allow for an appropriate evaluation of high-level strategic and quality issues.

For reviews of larger faculties, it may be advisable to recruit additional external experts to achieve a sufficiently representative coverage of core academic and professional fields from the outset, giving due regard to maintaining an appropriate balance between academic and industry-based expertise.

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 faculty/school's programme portfolio, including the strategy, resources and systems of the faculty/college and the overall demand for graduates.

9.2 PRG Chairperson

The PRG Chairperson is nominated by the Registrar's Office and will normally be a senior external academic.

The overall functions of the PRG Chairperson will be to chair the plenary sessions of the PRG during both PR phases and to oversee production of the Phase 1 Interim Report and the Final PRG Report. The PRG Chairperson will normally also chair one of the programme sub-panels during Phase 2.

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.

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, due regard should again 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.

10. The PRG Report (Interim Report and Final PRG Report)

The PRG submits two reports:

- an Interim Report following conclusion of Phase 1; and
- a Final PRG Report following conclusion of Phase 2 and the overall programmatic review.

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

Both reports should include an Executive Summary which extracts all the requirements and recommendations from the body of the report. In the Final PRG Report, the Executive Summary will also clearly state the overall recommendation of the PRG on revalidation of the programmes reviewed.

10.1 Interim Report

The Interim Report summarises the findings of the PRG following the Phase 1 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 requirements and recommendations to be addressed by the school, faculty/college or Institute before Phase 2 can commence.

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

10.2 Final PRG Report

The Final PRG Report constitutes the formal report of the Programmatic Review Group to Academic Council on the outcomes of the programmatic review process.

The Final PRG Reports contains the overall recommendation of the PRG to Council on revalidation of the programmes reviewed. It also includes any validation requirements and further recommendations of the PRG which have not been met prior to the conclusion of Phase 2. The Interim Report may be deemed by the PRG to form a constituent part of the Final PRG Report if it so sees fit.

The Final PRG Report is submitted to Academic Council for adoption, following which Council is enabled to revalidate the programmes reviewed.

11. Follow-Up

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

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