
**Policy
Programmatic Review**

**Version 1
Approved by Academic Council on 18th June 2018**

Document Location

Registrar's Office

Revision History

Date of this revision: June 2018	Date of next review: 2021/22
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Version Number/ Revision Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
1.0	June 2018	Extracted from CoP No. 2	N/A

Consultation History

Version Number/ Revision Number	Consultation Date	Names of Parties in Consultation	Summary of Changes
1.0		CoP No 2 Workgroup	

Approval

This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Title	Date
	Academic Council	18 June 2018
	Governing Body	29 June 2018

1.0 PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Section 28 of The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 requires that GMIT establish procedures for the evaluation at regular intervals of its programmes of education and training. The Act also requires that GMIT furnish a report to QQI and provide for the publication of findings arising out of the evaluation.
- 1.1.2 Programmatic review involves a periodic, formal, systematic, comprehensive and reflective review and evaluation of each programme and award offered by the Institute for purposes of programme development, quality enhancement and revalidation. It is an important means of ensuring and assuring, *inter alia*:
- that required academic standards are being attained;
 - that programmes and awards remain relevant and viable;
 - that student needs, including academic and labour-market needs, are addressed;
 - that the quality of programmes and awards is enhanced and improved;
 - public confidence in the quality of GMIT's programmes and awards.

The programmatic review process will involve a self-evaluation by each programme board followed by an external peer review. It is intended to be a positive, open, constructive and collegial process, designed to encourage and support active academic engagement with internal and external peers, and with relevant stakeholders, in the review, evaluation and development of programmes and awards.

The active participation of students in all phases is an integral part of programmatic review in GMIT, as recommended by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA).

Programmatic review is conducted under the auspices of the Academic Council. It will be carried out at least once every seven years, or as the Academic Council may direct from time to time.

Programme boards will be supported as necessary in the review process by the management of the Academic Unit (College/Centre/Campus/School) within which the programme is offered.

- 1.1.3 The Registrar, in consultation with the Heads of Academic Units, will draft a schedule for the review of all programmes and awards offered by GMIT. The Registrar should ensure that sufficient time is allocated for the satisfactory review of each programme and award.

This proposed schedule will be presented to the Academic Council for approval.

- 1.1.4 Proposed new programmes and awards must be evaluated separately in accordance with the policy and procedures outlined in sections 2 and 3 of this Code (full, special purpose, minor and supplemental).

Proposed programme and award change outside of the programmatic review process will be considered in accordance with the policy and procedures outlined in sections 4 and 5 of this Code.

1.2 Objectives of Programmatic Review

The objective of a programmatic review is to review the development of the programme over the previous five to seven years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality. The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes' responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria and relevant awards standards.

In particular, a programmatic review seeks to confirm that the promise evidenced at the original validation (or since the last programmatic review) in terms of academic quality, relevance and viability has been realised, and that the programme is adapting appropriately to evolving circumstances.

The specific objectives of a programmatic review are, *inter alia*, to:

- analyse and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, including details of student numbers, retention rates and success rates;
- review the development of the programme in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments;
- evaluate the response of the programme to regional and societal requirements and to educational developments;
- evaluate the feedback mechanisms for students and the processes for acting on this feedback;
- review the feedback from students relating to the student experience of the programme
- evaluate stakeholder engagement including links and collaboration with industry, business and the wider community;
- review feedback from employers and graduates;
- evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme;
- review any research activities in the field of learning in the disciplinary areas and their impact on teaching and learning;
- consider likely future developments in the disciplinary areas;
- make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules, and to discontinuing programmes or parts of programmes.

The exploration of opportunities and related proposals by programme boards to develop new programmes and awards should be a part of the review process.

1.3 Programmatic Review Process

1.3.1 Each programmatic review will be undertaken in two phases:

- Self-Evaluation Review (SER).
- External Peer Review (EPR).

1.3.2 Phase 1: Self-Evaluation Review (SER)

Self-Evaluation Review (SER) is an internal process involving each programme board undertaking a comprehensive and reflective self-study review and evaluation of their programme and award. The output from the review process will be a SER Report.

The SER should be conducted in accordance with established international good practice. It requires the active participation of all academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme and of student representatives. It will involve consultations with outside stakeholders, including graduates, employers and community representatives. It should involve consultation with those involved in the provision of essential support services including library and information services, careers services and counseling services. It should involve consideration of the regional and social environmental context of the programme, of any relevant market research, and of developments and research findings in the discipline and profession concerned.

The SER will incorporate an analysis of the programme board experience of providing the programme since the validation or the last review, informed by stakeholder consultation and developments in the discipline and professional practice. In this context, it will focus on a number of key underlying concerns:

- the overall validity, coherence, integration and consistency of the programme aims, intended learning outcomes and structure;
- the manner in which intended learning outcomes are being achieved;
- proposed changes (if any) to improve the programme and award in terms of design, delivery and assessment.

In particular, the SER should include a review and evaluation of the following:

- programme aims, rationale and history;
- minimum intended programme learning outcomes and their compliance with the relevant awards standard(s);
- prerequisite learning for participation in the programme and any other assumptions relating to the programme's target student cohort;
- access, transfer and progression;
- programme structure including balance of content and inter-relatedness, module titles and sequencing;
- developments and changes since the validation or previous programmatic review;
- module intended learning outcomes and prerequisite requirements;
- pedagogy, including teaching and learning strategies employed;
- programme and module assessment strategies;
- external examiner reports and follow-up actions taken;
- recruitment statistics, retention rates, pass rates;
- statistics on graduation and classification of awards;
- the operation and effectiveness of current quality assurance procedures;
- particular strengths and weaknesses of the programme, benchmarked against other similar programmes and considering developments in the discipline and professional practice;
- links with relevant industry and/or professional bodies;
- profile of teaching staff;
- the operation of the programme board;

- the level and appropriateness of resources available for programme delivery.

The SER should also be used by programme boards to identify opportunities and signal proposals for related new programme and award development.

The SER Report should be a comprehensive programme document including specification of programme aims, intended learning outcomes, the Approved Programme Schedule, proposed changes to the programme, pedagogy and assessment, admission criteria, module descriptors, and resource requirements. It should also outline details of the SER process, including an outline of the nature and findings of the consultation undertaken with stakeholders.

The Registrar will agree dates with the relevant Head of Academic Unit for the submission of the SER Report.

1.3.3 Phase 2: External Peer Review (EPR)

Following the SER, each programme will be subject to an External Peer Review (EPR) process. This involves convening a panel of independent external experts to comprehensively review each programme and award and consider it for revalidation.

The external evaluation should be conducted in accordance with established international good practice regarding external quality evaluation in higher education and training institutions. It should be a process of co-operation, consultation and advice between the external independent experts and the programme board, and it should be conducted in a spirit of collegiality, mutual respect and fairness.

In practice the following principles of good practice should apply:

- an external peer review panel will review each programme separately;
- panels should have the necessary academic and professional competence to undertake the review;
- normally the composition of the external peer review panel will mirror the composition of the original validation panel;
- programmes of the same disciplinary nature should preferably be reviewed by the same panel;
- the EPR should be undertaken at the programme delivery site.

The membership of an External Peer Review Panel (EPRP) will normally be as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Membership of External Peer Review Panel

Role	Level of expertise required	Nominated by
Chairperson	A senior educationalist or business/ professional person	President
Secretary	GMIT Registrar (or nominee)	
Member	An academic from the IoT sector with appropriate expertise.	Registrar in consultation with Head of Academic Unit

Member	A university academic with appropriate expertise.	Registrar in consultation with Head of Academic Unit
Member	A professional practitioner with appropriate experience.	Registrar in consultation with Head of Academic Unit
Member	An Institute graduate from the disciplinary area with a minimum of one year postgraduate experience.	Registrar in consultation with Head of Academic Unit

Ideally panels shall be gender balanced and every attempt will be made to ensure this is the case.

The Registrar shall establish the EPRP in consultation with the relevant Head of Academic Unit, composed as shown in Table 1.

It is the responsibility of the Registrar, to make arrangements for the EPR meeting. This should be done in consultation with the relevant Head of Academic Unit. It is also the responsibility of the Registrar to brief members of the EPRP on their role and to supply them with all necessary and relevant documentation, on a timely basis.

Specific functions of the EPRP include, *inter alia*, the following:

- to review the programme SER Report and the underlying process;
- to visit the Institute at the programme delivery site and meet with the programme staff to discuss the SER Report, and all related aspects of programme activities, performance, position, and proposed development;
- to clarify the contents of the SER Report;
- to meet with programme support staff, students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders;
- to consider how well the identified aims and objectives of the programme are being met;
- to consider the quality assurance arrangements which affect the programme;
- to consider the merits of proposed programme changes and quality enhancements;
- to review the facilities available for delivering the programme and to consider any other issues relevant to the successful provision of the programme.

At the end of the EPR meeting, the Chairperson of the Panel will make an oral presentation on the panel's findings and conclusions to the proposing programme board team. The Chairperson should indicate whether a recommendation for revalidation or for withdrawal of validation for the programme is to be made. Conditions, if any, relating to approval and recommendations, if any, for modifying the programme should be outlined with supporting rationale.

1.4 External Peer Review Panel (EPRP) Report

- 1.4.1 The EPRP Report should address the quality of the provision and make recommendations for improvement, and/or change, based on a combination of the SER, and findings during the site visit. It should also include a recommendation: positive, negative or conditional, in respect of the continuing validation of the programme and award. A rationale should be provided for any conditions imposed and for the main

recommendations that are made. The report should specify the duration of revalidation recommended, not to exceed seven years.

- 1.4.2 A draft written report of the findings of the EPRP shall be prepared by the Secretary. The draft report will first be approved by the Chairperson before being circulated to other members of the EPRP for their comments and endorsement. If any member objects to an item, this should be noted in the report. The Secretary shall incorporate the feedback received from EPRP members into a revised draft report subject to the agreement of the Chairperson.

A copy of the panel's revised draft report shall be forwarded to the sponsoring Head of Academic Unit for comment on issues of factual accuracy. Following this, the report shall be finalised by the Secretary subject to the approval of the Chairperson.

The Registrar shall submit the EPRP Report for adoption by the Academic Council. It will then be submitted for adoption by the Governing Body, forwarded to QQI and published on the Institute's website.

- 1.4.3 Proposed timelines for the EPRP Report generation are as follows:
- agreement on the draft report between the Secretary and Chairperson within two weeks of the programmatic review site meeting;
 - draft report forwarded to members of the EPRP and incorporation of members feedback into the report within 6 weeks of the programmatic review site meeting;
 - revised draft report forwarded by the Secretary to the Head of Academic Unit for comment on factual accuracy within two months of the programmatic review site meeting;
 - response from the Head of Academic Unit on issues of factual accuracy within one month of receipt of the revised draft report;
 - EPRP Report finalised for submission to Academic Council within one month of receipt of factual accuracy response from the Head of Academic Unit.

1.5 Implementation Plan and Monitoring

The Head of the Academic Unit will submit a response to the report to include an implementation plan within four weeks of the Academic Council meeting that considered the EPRP Report.

The Academic Council has responsibility for ensuring that the recommendations of the Report are implemented. The Head of Academic Unit shall agree a timeframe with the Registrar for the implementation of the recommendations.

On completion of the implementation plan, an updated electronic copy of each programme document shall be lodged in the Registrar's office on behalf of the Institute.

In accordance with the Act, GMIT shall provide for the publication of findings arising out of the evaluation.

The implementation plan devised by the Academic Unit and arising from the programmatic review report should include specific achievable actions with specified outcomes and timelines.

The date of implementation of the changes should be clearly identified, and include specific detail on the phasing in of changes proposed and in particular identify transition issues which should be addressed. A formal statement from the Registrar to the Academic Council must be made to state that any specified conditions have been met.

The EPRP Report and the related Implementation Plan will provide a basis for monitoring the relevant programme. The Head of Academic Unit will be required to present an annual progress report on implementation to the Academic Council.

Those who participate in Programmatic Review should be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the process.