



Academic Quality Enhancement Framework

Programme Validation Process

Approved by Academic Council

23 June 2021

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1. Context

- 1.1. TU Dublin programmes are student-centered, socially relevant, provide excellent learning opportunities and the validation process supports the development of new programmes that build on achievements to date, and support and enable graduates to take up an active role in society, as employees, employers and active citizens.
- 1.2. This document sets out the University's processes for the design and approval of academic programmes. Programme validation is the process that enables the University to establish that any new programme and its constituent parts meet or exceed the minimum academic standards for the designated award, that academic standards have been appropriately defined, and that there are provisions for best practices in teaching, learning and assessment. It deals with assuring quality, promoting best practice, and embedding opportunities for adding value through the enhancement of quality on a continuous basis.
- 1.3. The validation process also ensures programmes are aligned to the TU Dublin Educational Model and to the core Mission, Vision and Values of the University.
- 1.4. The Programme Validation process ensures programme development and approval are aligned to the guidance, checklists and advice in the [Programme Design and Delivery Handbook](#).
- 1.5. The rationale for Programme Validations embodies the requirements in international best practice and legislative requirements and regulatory guidelines. The awards resulting from a validated programme will be clearly specified and communicated, and aligned to the appropriate level on the [National Qualifications Framework](#) (NFQ) for Higher Education and, consequently, to the [Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area](#).

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this document is to outline the policies and procedures relating to the validation of a TU Dublin academic programme.
- 2.2. The purpose of the validation procedures of new programmes and awards, including the associated guidelines and forms, is to ensure that all new programmes developed by the University:
 - Align to the [University's Educational Model](#) and [learning, teaching and assessment](#)

[strategy, guidelines and policies](#);

- Fulfil and enhance the University mission, vision and [Strategic Plan](#);
- Align to the [NFQ](#) at appropriate levels;
- Fulfil an identifiable industry and/or society need;
- Have the appropriate academic breadth and depth, and with learning outcomes that are consistent with the levels of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences as prescribed in the relevant [NFQ](#) award descriptor;
- Provide each student, irrespective of the nature of the programme with the best educational experience that the University can provide, recognising that this experience will be delivered through a curriculum (formal/informal) that has been developed in a collaborative process ensuring appropriate inputs from all stakeholders;
- Reflect the most appropriate educational pedagogy to achieve the learning outcomes and the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes;
- Provide pathways to qualifications that maximise opportunities for access, transfer and progression, as per the [University Access, Transfer & Progression policy](#);
- Are developed via a process that is consistent across the University and identifies the academic, physical, human and other resources required for successful delivery;
- Align to [QQI guidelines on Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement](#), and the [European Standards and Guidelines](#) (ESG).

3. Scope

3.1. The University has four award-types:

- **Major** awards are the main class of award made at an NFQ level. There are 16 major awards in the Framework each with an award type descriptor. TU Dublin currently has seven major awards types from Level Six to Level Ten on the NFQ: Higher Certificate (Level Six), Ordinary Degree (Level Seven), Honours Degree (Level Eight), Higher Diploma (Level Eight), Postgraduate Diploma (Level Nine), Masters (Level Nine) and Doctoral (Level Ten);
- **Minor** awards provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. These

awards allow learners to accumulate ECTS credits at their own pace and needs. Minor awards are normally a sub-set of other larger awards;

- **Special-purpose** awards are made for very narrow fields of study for specific purposes;
- **Supplemental** awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. They could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.

- 3.2. The process for validating new academic programmes applies to all programmes of study irrespective of the delivery mode.
- 3.3. A similar process applies to collaborative programmes where the University is the main or lead degree awarding body (see [Collaborative Provision Procedures](#)).
- 3.4. Procedures for the validation of *Joint Awards*, where the partner institution is also a degree awarding body, are outlined in the [Collaborative Provision Process](#).
- 3.5. Procedures for the approval of modules that have been validated as part of existing academic programmes, to be offered to students on a standalone basis leading to Single Module Certification (normally classified as minor awards), are presented in Section 8.7 of this document.
- 3.6. Procedures to introduce exit awards on previously validated programmes are presented in Section 8.8.
- 3.7. Procedures for making modifications to existing programmes, which can be made on an annual basis, are described in the [Making Changes to Modules & Programmes Procedures](#). More significant modifications to programmes are normally considered during Programme Review.

4. Schedule of Programme Validation Process

- 4.1. New academic programmes may be proposed at any point in the academic year. However, all new programmes must be fully approved in sufficient time to allow for marketing and promotion of the programme for optimal recruitment.
- 4.2. The [University Operational Plan](#), which lists all new programmes leading to Major awards that will commence in the following academic year, is submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in February. In order to complete this plan and meet approval deadlines, a proposal

([Programme Proposal Form](#)) to commence a major award in the following academic year must be submitted to Academic Affairs by the start of November.

4.3. The time required to complete the approval process is dependent on relevant committee meeting dates. New programmes can normally only be advertised, and students recruited, once all stages of the validation process are completed and the programme is fully approved. Schools should be mindful of external deadlines such as inclusion in CAO listings in this regard.

5. Procedures for the Validation of New Programmes

- 5.1. Ideas for new programmes can come from a variety of internal and external sources. Preliminary discussions will normally occur within a School or between groups of Schools and/or Discipline Programmes Boards and should involve consultation with relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- 5.2. New programme proposals must be submitted for validation and approval in accordance with the University’s agreed policies and procedures (relating to finance and human resources, as well as academic validation).
- 5.3. In the case of cross-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary programmes, the Heads of School must nominate a lead School to take administrative responsibility (i.e. resourcing, management, delivery and monitoring) and a Disciplinary Programmes Board to take responsibility for all quality assurance and enhancement processes, once the programme is validated.
- 5.4. An overview of the process of new programme development is outlined in Figure 1 below. All proposals must be submitted using the [Programme Proposal Form](#).

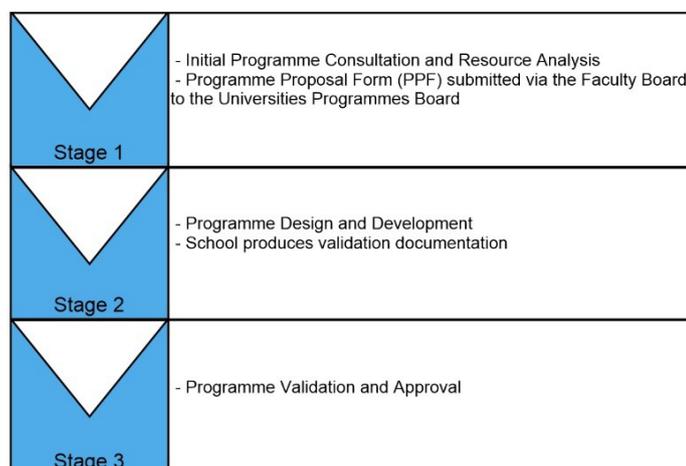


Figure 1 Three stages of the programme approval process

6. Stage 1 – Programme Proposal

6.1. Programme Proposal Form

- 6.1.1 New programme proposals are usually developed based on an idea of one or more staff members, but may also be initiated by a collaborative or industry/community partner. If the proposal is approved, a School will lead the development of the initial idea into a coherent academic programme and prepare for validation.
- 6.1.2 The first stage in programme development is the completion of the [Programme Proposal Form](#) which provides the rationale for the programme, an overview of the programmes intended objectives, learning outcomes, market demand and a resource analysis. In addition, the proposal will describe how the programme has stemmed from the TU Dublin Strategic Plan and aligns to the Core Mission, Vision and Values of the University and the Educational Model.
- 6.1.3 The Programme Proposal Form also provides a description of the external stakeholder input that has informed the proposal, and the planned level of stakeholder input into the design and development of the programme.
- 6.1.4 A [Programme Proposal Form](#) must be completed in the case of:
- A new programme, leading to a major, minor, special purpose or supplemental award of the University (it is not required for Single Module Certification);
 - The addition of a stream to an existing programme;
 - The addition of a mode of delivery to an existing programme where there are resource implications.
- 6.1.5 The School must provide evidence of a demand for the programme, for example by providing trend data and student numbers in similar programmes elsewhere and by citing industry and market reports. The Admissions Office should be consulted at the proposal stage, particularly in relation to potential student numbers and access routes.
- 6.1.6 In cases where the School expects that a derogation may be required from a University policy or regulation (e.g. assessment regulation), this can be proposed within the Programme Proposal Form. In such cases, the School must provide a rationale and can provide additional documents if required. Alternatively, approval for derogations can be submitted to the University Programmes Board, via the Faculty Board, by the School in the Programme Design and Development stage (see Section 7 below).

- 6.1.7 Where the development and delivery of a proposed programme will involve multiple Schools, the Head of School of the proposing School must secure sign-off of any required resources from the other School(s) as appropriate. In this case, each Head of School providing modules or resources must sign the programme proposal form.
- 6.1.8 Where the subject matter covered by a programme potentially overlaps with subject(s) designated to other Schools but these Schools are not being asked to deliver modules or provide resources, the Head of School of the proposing School should consult with the relevant Heads of Schools. In this case, the signatures of the other Heads of School are not required on the Programme Proposal Form. However, a description of the consultation process and the Schools involved shall be provided in the Programme Proposal Form. Such consultations should be undertaken as early as possible to avoid delays in the development and approval of the programme. This consultation should include the following steps:
- Communicating the proposal to relevant Heads of School;
 - Discussing potential collaborations and sharing of modules and delivery;
 - Where possible, resolving any issues arising from the discussions before the proposal is tabled at the Faculty Board or the University Programmes Board.
- 6.1.9 The School shall liaise with the Faculty *Finance Business Partner*, to ensure that the resource analysis is compliant with the University's Finance Policies and Procedures. When the University Finance Office is satisfied with the proposed finances, the Finance Business Partner signs the form to confirm that:
- The programme can be delivered within the University's existing resources or the proposed additional income from the programme justifies the allocation of additional resources;
 - The proposed fee rate is consistent with the University's fees and income policy/collaborative provision costing model.
- 6.1.10 Once the form is signed by the Finance Business Partner, it can be signed by the Head of School (and other relevant Heads of School where required) and forwarded to the Faculty Vice-Dean of Education for tabling at the Faculty Board. The Head of School should also forward the form to the relevant *Discipline Programmes Board* (i.e. the Discipline Programmes Board which will have responsibility for the quality assurance and enhancement of the programme) at this stage for noting.

6.2. Consideration of Programme Proposal Form by Faculty Board

6.2.1 The *Faculty Board* reviews the proposal, specifically addressing the following questions:

- Does the programme align well with the School and *Faculty* existing programme portfolio?
- Is the extent of proposed cross-over/collaboration with other Schools' portfolios appropriate?
- Is the stated market demand sufficient to justify the predicted student numbers and the sustainability of the programme, in the context of the existing competitive environment?

6.2.2 Proposals for programmes of less than 30 ECTS can be approved at Faculty Boards and do not require University Programmes Board approval. Hence, where the proposed programme is less than 30 ECTS credits, the Faculty Board should also use the criteria in Section 6.3.2 in making its decision to approve the proposal. If required, advice should be sought from Academic Affairs in relation to the application of any of the criteria.

6.2.3 Where the proposed programme is greater than 30 ECTS credits, approval of the University Programmes Board is required. However, if satisfied with the proposal, the Faculty Board should endorse the proposal before submitting to the University Programmes Board.

6.2.4 After reviewing the proposal, the *Faculty Board* may either:

- Endorse the proposal, and recommend its approval to the *University Programmes Board* (in the case of programmes of 30 ECTS or greater) or approve (in the case of programmes of less than 30 ECTS);
- Refer the proposal back to the School for revision based on specific comments; or
- Decline to endorse the proposal in its submitted form providing a rationale for the same.

6.2.5 Where the Faculty Board approves a proposal for a programme of less than 30 ECTS credits, the form is submitted to the University Programmes Board for noting. Where the Faculty Board endorses a proposal for a programme of 30 ECTS credits or greater, the form is submitted to the University Programmes Board for consideration.

6.2.6 Where derogations from University policies or regulations are proposed within the Programme Proposal Form, the Faculty Board must make a recommendation to the University Programmes Board and submit the proposal to the University Programmes Board.

All requests for derogations must be submitted to the University Programmes Board regardless of whether the programme is greater or less than 30 ECTS credits.

6.3. Consideration of Programme Proposal Form by University Programmes Board

6.3.1 The University Programmes Board notes proposals for programmes of less than 30 ECTS credits that have been approved by Faculty Boards.

6.3.2 The *University Programmes Board* will assess the Programme Proposal Form (for programmes of 30 ECTS or greater) in terms of its alignment with the criteria, policies and procedures for new programme development and specifically address the following questions:

- Is the proposed award title in accordance with the University's naming conventions for awards and does it align with the stated ECTS, duration and NFQ level for the programme?
- Are the stated access, transfer and progression arrangements in accordance with the University's policy?
- For collaborative provision only: are the proposed Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) arrangements appropriate?
- Is the programme compatible with the University's Strategic Plan and Core Mission, Vision and Values?
- Does the programme align well with the University's existing programme portfolio and research themes?
- Does the programme align with national priorities in Education and Skills and key objectives for Higher Education Institutions as set out by the HEA in the Systems Performance Framework?
- Has there been sufficient consultation and collaboration with other relevant Schools?
- What is the impact of the addition of the programme on the University's professional and support services?

6.3.3 The *University Programmes Board* may either:

- Approve the proposal, thereby authorising the School to develop the programme validation documentation;
- Request additional supporting information to the [Programme Proposal Form](#);

- Refer the [Programme Proposal Form](#) back to the School for revision based on specific comments; or
- Decline to approve in its submitted form providing a rationale for the same.

6.3.4 Programme Proposals approved by the University Programmes Board will be noted by Academic Council at the next scheduled sitting.

6.3.5 Where derogations from University policies or regulations are proposed within the Programme Proposal Form, the University Programmes Board may either:

- Approve the derogation;
- Request additional supporting information;
- Not to approve providing a rationale for the same.

6.5. Validity of Programme Proposal Approval

6.5.1 Once a programme proposal is approved, the programme validation documents must be submitted to the *Faculty Board* within one calendar year.

6.5.2 If the documents are not submitted to the *Faculty Board* within that time period, the [Programme Proposal Form](#) should be revised as appropriate and resubmitted to the *Faculty Board* for consideration as a new submission.

7. Stage 2 – Programme Design and Development

7.1 Once the [Programme Proposal Form](#) has been approved, *Academic Affairs* will set up the basic programme information in the [Programme & Module Catalogue](#). This will include title, ECTS, NFQ Level, School, location and award type.

7.2 The School will continue its consultation with relevant internal and external stakeholders to fully develop the documentation, as per the requirements set out in the [Programme Validation Documentation](#). In drafting the programme documentation, the School should look for inspiration and guidance in the relevant University policies and guidelines, and in particular those on curriculum [design](#), [Educational Model](#), [TU Dublin Graduate Attributes](#) and the [learning, teaching and assessment strategy](#). Guidance from Academic Affairs in relation to the implementation of these policies and strategies will be provided.

- 7.3 Where it is intended that the School shall seek accreditation/approval of the programme by an appropriate professional/regulatory/statutory body, the School should ensure that the programme complies with the relevant requirements.
- 7.4 The programme should be developed following the guidance, checklists and advice provided in the Programme [Design and Delivery Handbook](#).
- 7.5 The School will populate module and programme data within the [Programme & Module Catalogue](#). *Academic Affairs* will advise on any specific or additional documentation required for programme validation and can be consulted to ensure all relevant policies are being fully considered. Documents will be provided in PDF format, with the detailed curriculum information drawn from the University's [Programme & Module Catalogue](#).
- 7.6 To minimise the time required to develop and start delivering programmes of less than 30 ECTS, the School can submit the programme validation documents at the same time as the Programme Proposal Form.
- 7.7 Each aspect of the programme design and delivery should align to the University Educational Model, and the relevant policies and regulations. Any derogation from these should be identified early in the development process and tabled separately for approval first at the Faculty Board and subsequently at the University Programmes Board. Only derogations that have been approved by the University Programmes Board should be included in the programme documents submitted to the validation process. To avoid delays in the process, approval for derogations should be sought at the Programme Proposal stage.

8. Stage 3 – Validation

8.1. Validation Process

- 8.1.1 The *Faculty Board* is responsible for the validation of new programmes and it reports on its decisions to the *University Programmes Board*. The validation process to be followed by the *Faculty Boards* is outlined here.
- 8.1.2 The Head of School or nominee submits the programme validation documentation to the Faculty Vice-Dean of Education. The programme and module information are submitted via the Programme & Module Catalogue.

- 8.1.3 The validation of all new programmes, leading to major, minor, supplemental and special purpose awards, shall be organised and led by the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee*, which is a sub-committee of the *Faculty Board*. The constitution of this sub-committee including membership and terms of reference is provided in [Quality Framework Committee Structure](#) document. A representative of *Academic Affairs* who is a member of this sub-committee will work with the Chair of this committee (or nominee) to coordinate the validation and draft the programme Validation Report.
- 8.1.4 To validate programmes leading to major, minor, supplemental and special purpose awards of 30 ECTS or greater, the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee* (sub-committee of the *Faculty Board*) shall constitute a panel to conduct the validation. The panel should have a minimum of five members and include at least two members of the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee*. Additional members of the Faculty or University can be co-opted to a panel for the validation, at the discretion of the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee*, for their particular expertise and/or experience relevant to the programme being validated. Panel members will not be staff members of the School proposing the programme.
- 8.1.5 The Validation Panel must also include at least one expert external to the University, nominated by the School proposing the programme and approved by the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee*. Whether the expert is from academia, a profession, industry or the community can be decided by the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee*, in consultation with the School, and can depend on the nature of the programme.
- 8.1.6 The School should complete the [External Panel Member Nomination Form](#) and submit it to the Vice-Dean of Education. Any conflict of interest, current or previous associations between the proposed external panel member(s) and the School or programme must be declared, as per the requirements in the External Panel Member Nomination Form. The External Panel Member Nomination Form shall provide sufficient background information to allow for informed decision on final panel selection.
- 8.1.7 The *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee* will select a Chair from the membership of the Panel and all panels must include a representative of *Academic Affairs* who will draft the Validation Report.
- 8.1.8 The validation of programmes leading to minor (including Single Module Certificates), supplemental and special purpose awards of less than 30 ECTS may be considered through scheduled meetings of the *Faculty Academic Quality Enhancement Committee*, on

submission by the Head of School of the relevant documentation. The decision to establish a panel or to consider the programme at a meeting of the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee should be made by the Committee in consultation with Academic Affairs. In the case where a Validation Panel is not established, the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee takes on the role of the Validation Panel and hence follows the process described in Section 8.2.

- 8.1.9 Where a Validation Panel is established, the Panel will visit the School to meet with staff and other stakeholders involved in the development of the programme. It will also visit the facilities that will be used to deliver the programme and support the student experience. The Panel may request to be given access to any learning resource, including online resources, which will support the teaching, learning and assessment on the programme. The School will arrange a meeting room where the Validation Panel can meet privately and which can be used for refreshments and lunch, if required.

8.2. Role of Validation Panel

- 8.2.1 The Validation Panel evaluates the programme based on the following criteria, as set out in the [Validation Report](#) template
- 8.2.2 To recommend approval of a programme, the Validation Panel must be satisfied the programme:
- a) Aligns to the University's Educational Model and learning, teaching and assessment strategy, guidelines and policies;
 - b) Fulfils and enhances the University mission, vision and Strategic Plan;
 - c) Has clear aims, objectives and outcomes that align to the relevant NFQ level;
 - d) Fulfils an identifiable industry and/or society need;
 - e) Has the appropriate academic breadth and depth, and with learning outcomes that are consistent with the levels of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences as prescribed in the relevant NFQ award descriptor;
 - f) Provides each student, irrespective of the nature of the programme with the best educational experience that the University can provide, recognising that this experience will be delivered through a curriculum (formal/informal) that has been developed in a collaborative process ensuring appropriate inputs from all stakeholders;
 - g) Provides teaching, learning and assessment methods which are appropriately aligned with each other and with the learning outcomes, and will enable the students to reach the

appropriate standard to qualify for the award.

- h) Includes an appropriate mix of assessment methods that provides opportunities for timely and effective student feedback, and enable the students to demonstrate that they have met the module and programme learning outcomes and the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes;
- i) Reflects the most appropriate educational pedagogy to achieve the learning outcomes and the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes;
- j) Has been developed to ensure all students are included equitably in the learning environment, through the Universal Design of teaching, learning and assessment activities and the physical environment;
- k) Uses appropriate learning and online technologies to support the student learning experience and the [Blended Learning Checklists](#) have been appropriately applied and completed;
- l) Provides pathways to qualifications that maximise opportunities for access, transfer and progression, as per the University Access, Transfer & Progression policy;
- m) Has been developed via a process that is consistent across the University and identifies the academic, physical, human and other resources required for successful delivery;
- n) Provides the students with sufficient and appropriate support through their studies.

8.2.3 In addition, to recommend approval of the programme, the Validation Panel must be satisfied:

- a) The proposed programme management and quality arrangements are aligned to University policy and the Quality Framework;
- b) For collaborative provision programmes, the role and responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined;
- c) There has been sufficient input into the development of the programme from external stakeholders and the programme has been benchmarked against similar programmes nationally and internationally;
- d) The programme design was well informed by current developments in the discipline and associated subject areas, having taken into consideration current trends, stakeholder feedback and market analysis;

- e) There are sufficient resources, in particular human and physical, to support and deliver the programme;
- f) Programme information is clearly communicated to students and strategies are in place to ensure all students are provided with the necessary information to help guide them through the programme.

8.2.4 Where the Validation Panel is not satisfied that any criterion listed in 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 is sufficiently addressed, the Panel may still recommend approval of the programme but set conditions that must be met by the School before the programme can be recommended to the Faculty Board for approval.

8.2.5 Where the Validation Panel is satisfied that a criterion listed in 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 has been met but could be further enhanced, the Panel may make recommendations for changes or further developments to the School. The School must respond to these recommendations before the programme can be recommended to the Faculty Board for approval.

8.2.6 At the end of the Programme Validation event, the Chair will provide a verbal draft report that will make one of the following recommendations to the Faculty Board:

- a) To approve the programmes as submitted and without amendments;
- b) To approve the programme subject to minor amendments to be completed as soon as possible and/or with suggested recommendations for further enhancement;
- c) To approve the programme subject to the fulfilment of conditions. Conditions are requirements which must be met prior to approval of the programme;
- d) Not to approve a programme. A report shall be issued for the attention of the Head of School (copied to the Vice-Dean of Education), outlining the reasons for this decision. In this case, any future resubmission of the proposed programme shall follow all steps outlined in this document.

8.2.7 Approval of a programme may be subject to both recommendations (option b above) and conditions (option c above).

8.2.8 The Validation Panel (or the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee) may agree not to accept documentation submitted for validation, or agree to defer consideration of the documentation, if it considers that the documentation is incomplete. It may also defer approval of a programme where matters emerge during the validation process that the sub-committee considers require further deliberation by the School. In both cases the programme documentation must be resubmitted and the Validation Panel (or the Academic Quality

Enhancement Committee) reconvenes to progress the validation process.

8.3. Validation Report

8.3.1 The intention of the report is to reflect the robust consideration of the proposed programme, noting any issues of concern or precedent, as these reports may inform the University's [Annual Programme Enhancement Process](#) and the periodic review of the programme. The report may identify examples of good practice and areas for commendation, as well as issues requiring the attention and/or consideration by the School or *Faculty Board*.

8.3.2 The Programme Validation Report contains the following sections:

- Programme Details
- Membership of Programme Validation Panel
- List of documentation reviewed by Programme Validation Panel
- Schedule of Validation Event
- Details of Facilities/Resources viewed by Programme Validation Panel
- List of any approved derogations from University regulations
- Summary of Validation Panel's findings (highlighting strengths, weaknesses and inherent opportunities for improvement)
- Overall Recommendation to University Programmes Board
- List of Conditions & Recommendations

8.3.3 The Academic Affairs representative will complete the draft report within two weeks of the validation event and circulate to the Validation Panel members.

8.3.4 The Validation Panel members will have one week to check the factual accuracy of the draft report and to provide any additional comments/feedback on to the Academic Affairs representative.

8.3.5 Unless any significant issues are raised in the panel members' feedback, the Academic Affairs representative will finalise the document and send to the Vice-Dean of Education.

8.4. School Response to Validation Report

- 8.4.1 The Head of School will have one week to check for factual accuracy. Assuming there are no inaccuracies, the School will have two months to respond to the Programme Validation Panels report, clearly identifying how the conditions have been met and recommendations have been addressed, and to submit updated documentation.
- 8.4.2 For conditions or recommendations that may require long-term changes or resourcing, the School response must present the actions, including timelines, that will be taken to ensure these conditions will be met and recommendations addressed in a specified time.
- 8.4.3 Should there be no response to the report within two months of the issuing of the report, the outcome of the validation process shall be deemed null and void and the validation process will be terminated.

8.5. Programme Approval

- 8.5.1 The Programme Validation Panel's report and the School's response will be tabled at the *Academic Quality Enhancement Committee* for consideration. If satisfied all conditions have been met and all recommendations have been addressed, the Report and School response will be submitted to Faculty Board. The *Faculty Board* must satisfy itself that the criteria for approval have been met in the proposed programme and this shall be evidenced within the report of the validation process.
- 8.5.2 *Faculty Board* may either:
- a) Endorse the Validation Panel's recommendation, and recommend its approval to the *University Programmes Board* (in the case of programmes of 30 ECTS or greater) or accept the Validation Panel's recommendation thereby approving the programme for delivery (in the case of programmes of less than 30 ECTS).
 - b) Decline to endorse/accept the Validation Panel's recommendation and provide the School with a rationale for this decision.
- 8.5.3 The *University Programmes Board* will note the approval of programmes of less than 30 ECTS credits, and in the case of programmes of 30 ECTS credits or greater may either:
- a) Accept the Faculty Board's recommendation thereby approving the programme for delivery;

b) Decline to accept the Faculty Board’s recommendation and provide a rationale for this decision.

8.5.4 New programmes approved by *University Programmes Board* shall be reported to Academic Council for noting.

8.5.5 Where derogations to the University assessment regulations/marks and standards have been requested, these proposed derogations shall be captured in the Validation Report but will have been approved by the *University Programmes Board* prior to the Validation Panel meeting. However, in the event that the Validation Panel recommends a derogation, these will be considered by the University Programmes Board for all programmes.

8.6. Post-Validation Process

8.6.1 Completed Programme Validation Reports and the School Responses will be published on the Academic Affairs website, in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. All approved programmes shall be included on the University’s Register of Academic Programmes and Awards.

8.6.2 On completion of the validation process and approval by the Faculty Board (programmes of less than 30 ECTS) or the *University Programmes Board* (programmes of 30 ECTS or greater), the programme shall be marked as ‘approved’ on the University [Programme and Module Catalogue](#). Programmes may not normally commence or recruit until fully approved. New programmes shall be allocated a programme code and the programme shall be set up on the programme and student record system.

8.7. Single Module Certification

8.7.1 Modules that have been validated as part of existing major, minor, special purpose or supplemental awards may be approved to be delivered for students who wish to register for single modules within existing programmes or may be delivered on a stand-alone basis for specific cohorts of students.

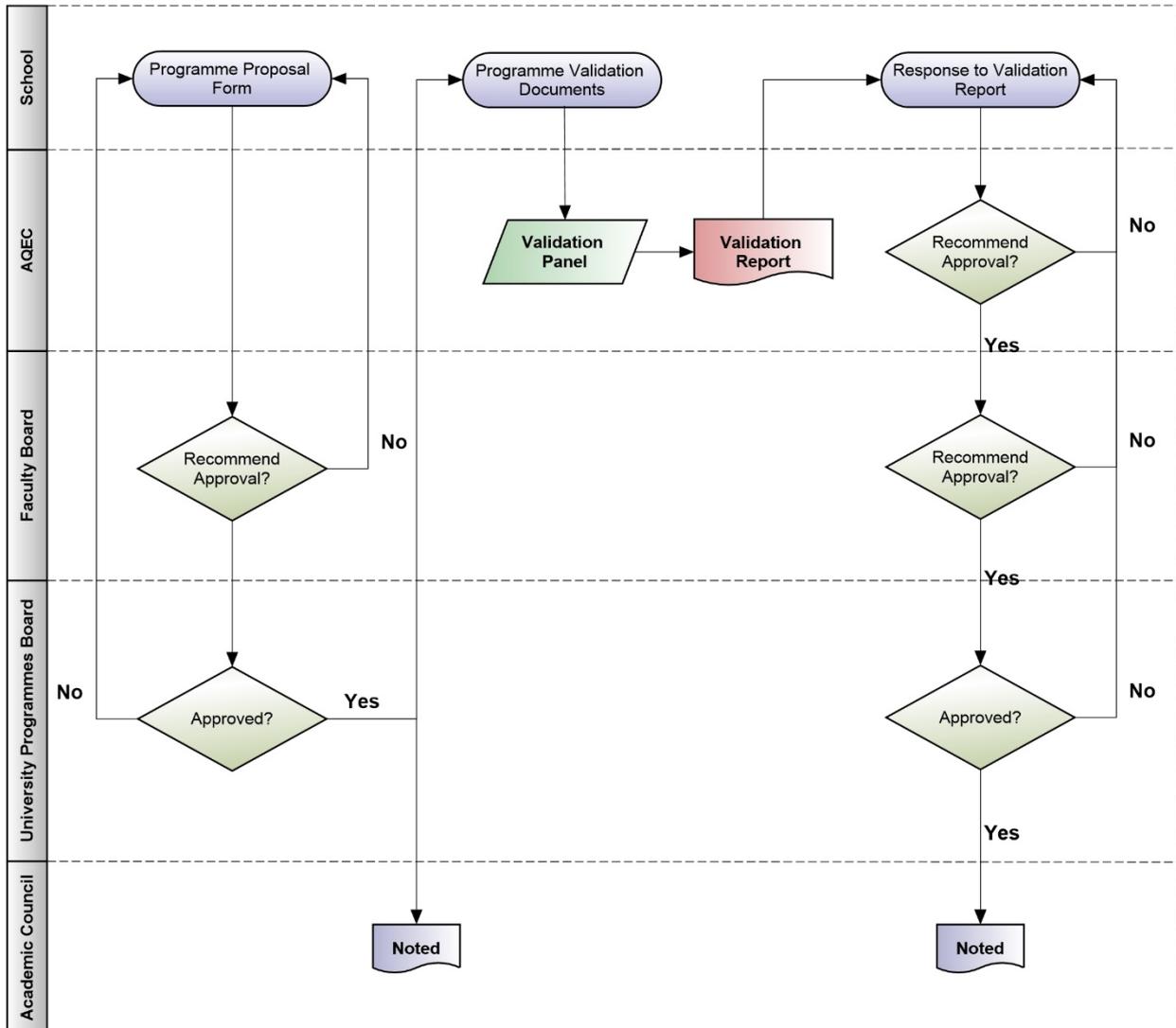
8.7.2 A School may seek approval of existing modules for Single Module Certification by completing the [Single Module Certification Form](#). The *Faculty Board’s Quality Academic Quality Enhancement Committee* receives and considers the form and recommends approval to *Faculty Board*, or refers back to the School for further consideration.

8.8. Exit Awards

- 8.8.1 Exit awards enable students, who are unable to complete the programme for which they have initially registered, to obtain an academic qualification for learning achieved up to their desired point of exit from a programme. They are normally at an NFQ level and/or accumulated ECTS credit lower than that of the award for which the student was registered.
- 8.8.2 Schools should propose, at the initial point of programme validation, to include exit awards options within their academic programme - see [TU Dublin Exit Award Policy](#). This detail should be included on the programme proposal form and within the programme validation documentation.
- 8.8.3 Where a School wishes to subsequently introduce exit awards to a previously approved programme, the School shall put forward an application for approval of such exit awards to the relevant *Discipline Programmes Board* via the [Exit Award Proposal form](#).
- 8.8.4 The Discipline Programmes Board will review applications for new Exit Awards (i.e. not considered at programme validation or review) and make a recommendation to the *Faculty Board* for approval. Should the *Faculty Board's* consideration of the application require that a programme validation is required to further consider the application, it shall advise the Head of School accordingly. The *Faculty Board* shall make a recommendation to *University Programmes Board* on the approval of new exit awards.

9. Process Flow Charts

9.1. Validation of Programmes 30 ECTS Credits or Greater



9.2. Validation of Programmes under 30 ECTS Credits

