

Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document: validation and accreditation

This document is designed for those preparing proposals for new programmes of study which have to undergo university approval (validation and accreditation) processes. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Such Faculty-specific regulations, and/or Oscail regulations, and/or regulations in Linked Colleges (see box below), as may pertain with respect to validation and accreditation.¹ This is to ensure that all Faculty and Oscail and Linked Colleges' regulations and procedures are followed.²
- *Information for Programme Proposers* at <http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/ac.shtml>. This document provides operational information on the management of the validation and accreditation processes.
- The University schedule of meetings at http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/meetings_10_11.shtml as well as schedules of relevant Faculty meetings. It is **essential** that documentation be submitted in a timely manner; failure to take account of the need for this may result in a programme not gaining approval, and therefore not being offered, within the schedule originally envisaged by the proposers. (It should be noted that submission dates for documentation, for both University and Faculty meetings, are normally earlier than the dates of the meetings themselves.)³

A flowchart of the procedures is available as an appendix to this document.

At all points in this document at which there are references to Schools and Faculties, it should be understood that, in the case of the Linked Colleges, standard practices with regard to internal approval, including approval by their Academic Councils, apply, and, where appropriate, standard practices with regard to liaison with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences apply.

1.2 Procedures other than validation and accreditation

¹ See also Section 3.1.

² Throughout this document, references to Faculty procedures should also be read, as appropriate and necessary, as references to Oscail procedures and references to procedures in the Linked Colleges.

³ See also Section 3.3.

Where changes to programmes are made which do not require validation and accreditation, different procedures are followed. These are outlined at <http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/ac.shtml> under 'Requests for formal approval from Faculty committees and the Education Committee'.

The changes in question are:

- Restructuring of an existing programme
- Retitling of an existing programme
- New specialism/pathway/major on an existing programme.

Where (a) stand-alone/continuing professional development modules or (b) Special-Purpose Awards are being proposed, different procedures are followed. These are also outlined at <http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/ac.shtml> under 'Requests for formal approval from Faculty committees and the Education Committee'.

Where programmes are to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, the procedures relating to programme review are used. Advice on these should be sought from the Faculty Office and the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education in the Faculty⁴.

1.3 Re-accreditation

In some cases, the outcome of the review of a programme within the University may involve a recommendation that it be re-accredited. Where such a need arises, standard accreditation procedures are normally used. In certain circumstances, the procedures may be carried out electronically. A recommendation on the desirability, or otherwise, of electronic accreditation may be made by the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee to the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar. The final decision rests with the Deputy President/Registrar.

A need for re-accreditation may also arise on the basis of recommendations from an external professional accrediting organisation (often following a review visit) and/or significant changes which such an organisation may make to its requirements in terms of recognising the programme.

2. Validation and accreditation: overview

2.1 Definitions

When the University wishes to facilitate the establishment of new programmes, it uses procedures referred to as validation and accreditation. These procedures are defined below. The University is committed to ensuring, on the one hand, that all proposals have a clear strategic focus which relates to the University's strategic plan and relevant subcomponents of it and, on the other, that programme proposers have at their disposal a set of procedures designed to maintain the highest possible quality in terms of the preparation of proposals. Hence the processes of validation and accreditation are designed to ensure, *inter alia*, that:

- each proposal meets the requirements of Academic Council for the relevant award, and the standards and learning outcomes set are appropriate to that award
- individuals and groups are facilitated in creating new programmes of study within the University and its linked colleges and/or in partnership with other institutions or organisations as appropriate
- the necessary human, financial and physical resources are available.

⁴ In the case of Oscail, advice should be sought from the Chair of the Oscail Teaching and Learning Committee.

2.2 Validation

Validation is the process which involves the Education Committee <http://www.dcu.ie/internal/ec/index.shtml> in assessing new programme proposals with a view to ascertaining both their relationship to the strategic plan and their likely viability. The EC itself normally gives only outline consideration to new proposals and refers them, as appropriate, to its Validation Subgroup for detailed consideration. The Subgroup's recommendations must be endorsed by the EC, however. Where the EC is of the view that a proposal should proceed to accreditation, it makes a recommendation to Academic Council to this effect. This recommendation incorporates sub-recommendations relating to the setting up of a development team and the approval of members of an Accreditation Board, and may also incorporate sub-recommendations to modify the programme proposal as initially submitted to it. Academic Council may accept or reject the recommendation from the EC, or accept it with modifications. In the event of rejection, Academic Council will advise on the appropriate next steps for the proposal. In all cases, the decision (and recommendations, if any) of Academic Council will be communicated to stakeholders.

2.3 Accreditation

Accreditation is the process which involves the submission of a detailed programme proposal to an Accreditation Board. The Accreditation Board includes a group of academic and, as appropriate, other professional experts from outside the University with a request for a recommendation from it as to whether or not the programme meets the nationally and internationally accepted requirements for the award(s) to which it is designed to lead. Where the Accreditation Board is of the view that this is the case, it makes a recommendation to Academic Council to this effect. This recommendation may incorporate sub-recommendations to modify the programme proposal as initially submitted to it. Academic Council may accept or reject the recommendation from the Accreditation Board, or accept it with modifications. In the event of rejection, Academic Council will advise on the appropriate next steps for the proposal. In all cases, the decision (and recommendations, if any) of Academic Council will be communicated to stakeholders.

3. Consultation and timing

3.1 Consultation within the School and Faculty

A proposal may be submitted to the Education Committee only after it has gone through the appropriate discussion and consultation in the relevant School(s) and the appropriate approval procedures in the relevant Faculty or Faculties. The Head(s) of School must be satisfied that all relevant consultation takes place at School level. Where approval has not been given by all relevant Faculties, the EC will not consider a proposal. Approval procedures are available as follows:

- Dublin City University Business School: consult the Faculty Office and the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning
- Faculty of Engineering and Computing: consult the Faculty Office and the Associate Dean for Education
- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: https://www.dcu.ie/internal/staff/humanities/pdfs/valid_accreditation.pdf
- Faculty of Science and Health: http://www.dcu.ie/science_and_health/faculty_teaching_committee.pdf
- Oscail: consult the Chair of the Oscail Teaching and Learning Committee.

3.2 Collaboration with an external organisation

Where it is proposed to offer a programme in conjunction with an external organisation (i.e. an organisation other than the University's linked colleges and any other approved partner institution) reference must be made, as appropriate, to the University's policy on due diligence and the procedures for drawing up Memoranda of Understanding and related documentation: see http://www.dcu.ie/info/pdfs/Policy_on_Due_Diligence_-_MOU_Final_Nov09.pdf. It is very important to be aware that engagement in due diligence must be undertaken before, rather than at same time as, the validation process (see also Section 3.3 below).

3.3 Importance of timing

It is **essential** that documentation be submitted in a timely manner; failure to take account of the need for this may result in a programme not gaining approval, and therefore not being offered, within the schedule originally envisaged by the proposers. It is necessary therefore, in this connection, to take cognisance of the University's schedule of meetings http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/meetings_09_10.shtml. Further information about this matter is available in *Information for Programme Proposers* http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/pdfs/info_proposers_programmes.pdf. Cognisance should also be taken of the schedules of relevant Faculty meetings. (It should be noted that submission dates for documentation, for both University and Faculty meetings, are normally earlier than the dates of the meetings themselves.)

Where more than one Faculty is involved, care should be taken to ensure that all relevant staff members are aware of parallel timelines and in a position to meet parallel deadlines.

It is very important to note that, for programmes which it is intended to offer through the Central Applications System, early planning is of particular relevance. A programme to be offered through the CAO for 2012 entry should be approved in 2010/11, not 2011/12. This is because information for intending applicants is submitted to the CAO a year in advance, typically in April, i.e. information on programmes to be available for 2012 entry is submitted in April 2011.

It is very important to be aware that engagement in due diligence with respect to a proposed external partner organisation must be undertaken before, rather than at same time as, the validation process (see also Section 3.2 above).

Consideration may also need to be given to the possibility that a derogation from Marks and Standards (to meet the requirements of external bodies only) may be needed and, if so, that a request will have to be submitted, in due course, to the University Standards Committee. (See Section 5.2 (Section 6) below.)

3.4 Discussions with the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar

As early as possible in the process, to facilitate planning, discussions should take place between the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar and the Faculty/Faculties about the likely timeline involved in the following processes:

- approval within Faculty/Faculties
- due diligence process, where appropriate
- validation (through the EC/Validation Subgroup)

- approval of validation recommendations by Academic Council
- accreditation
- approval of accreditation by Academic Council
- finalisation of accreditation documentation to take account of the recommendations of the Accreditation Board
- preparations for launch.

3.5 Consultation with the range of other relevant offices

Consultation must also take place, as appropriate, with relevant offices, which may include those listed below (the list is not exhaustive). Consultation must take place through the responsible committee or designated staff member, where appropriate.

- Registry, with particular reference to (a) application and admissions processes and timelines including the CAO and PAC processes and systems and (b) the submission deadlines for academic structure information for the new programme and (c) liaison between the Registry and school Guidance Counsellors, where relevant
- Finance Office
- Information Systems and Services
- Library
- Public Affairs and Media Relations
- Access and Student Recruitment (including reference to the addition of programme information both to the online prospectus and to the next edition of the relevant printed prospectus and reference to the inclusion of information on the new programme in student recruitment activities including Open Day)
- Student Support and Development (including the International Office, the Careers Service and the INTRA Office – taking account of the fact that it is very important to plan well in advance for any proposed placement)
- Heads of Schools from which service teaching will be requested
- Partner organisations in which it is proposed that students will spend time (e.g. on study abroad or clinical placements).

It should also be ensured that issues such as the submission of modular information to the modular database (Coursebuilder) and the updating of any relevant mailing lists are discussed with the relevant member(s) of the Faculty Office.

4. Validation

4.1 Criteria for evaluation

Each validation proposal will be assessed on a number of criteria, which include:

- evidence of alignment with the university strategic plan
- evidence of alignment with the strategic plans of the relevant Faculty/Faculties and School(s), as outlined in the validation proposal
- evidence of a place for the proposal within higher education in Ireland generally, taking into account programmes offered in other institutions
- evidence of the likely demand for the proposed programme, and the likelihood of achieving the appropriate student intake
- coherence of the statement of programme purpose and underpinning educational philosophy
- appropriateness of the programme learning outcomes, and coherence of their relationship to the purpose and educational philosophy
- reasonableness of the estimate of the resources needed to offer the programme

- reasonableness of the proposed launch date
- appropriateness of the proposed development team
- appropriateness of the proposed members of the Accreditation Board in light of the regulations for the appointment of such members. These regulations are available in *Information for Programme Proposers* http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/pdfs/info_proposers_programmes.pdf. They are also detailed in Section 4.2 (Section 11) below.

4.2 Validation proposal: structure

The validation proposal document is an outline document aimed at making the business case for the proposal. Therefore it is normally much shorter than the accreditation proposal, which contains a detailed description of the programme. However, certain sections of each of the two types of document may be broadly similar (see Section 5.2 below).

A typical validation proposal might run to 10 A4 pages or approximately 4,000 words exclusive of appendices. Appendices might include detail of matters such the outcomes of surveys conducted to ascertain demand for the proposed programme, or possible competitor programmes. Appendices should, however, be kept to a minimum and should be included only where absolutely necessary.

In every instance where reference is made to a document which is available on line, the appropriate web link should be included. Examples include the National Framework of Qualifications, strategic plans, and reports which indicate a need for provision of higher education in a particular discipline area.

A validation proposal should consist of the following:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Content</i>
1	Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal (using the template provided)
2	Strategic fit
3	Likely demand, and proposed intake
4	Entry requirements, and progression and exit routes
5	Purpose of the programme
6	Programme learning outcomes
7	Outline structure of programme
8	Resources required (using the template from the Finance Office)
9	Implementation plans
10	Membership of the proposed development team
11	Membership of the proposed Accreditation Board
12	Any necessary appendices (but these should be kept to a minimum)

Resources at the following link may be of use to developers of programme and module learning outcomes:

http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/liu/resources/index.shtml#Learning_Outcomes.

Section 1 – Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal

Background (1,000 words maximum)	
Proposed programme title	
Proposed designatory letters⁵	
NFQ level	
Credits	
Part-time/full-time/modular	
Duration	
Mode of delivery⁶	
In partnership with external organisation(s)	
Proposed launch date	

Approved by Faculty 1	<i>[name of Faculty]</i>
Date	<i>[date of final approval]⁷</i>
Approved by Faculty 2	<i>[name of Faculty]</i>
Date	<i>[date of final approval]⁷</i>
Approved by Faculty 3	<i>[name of Faculty]</i>
Date	<i>[date of final approval]⁷</i>
Insert additional Faculty/Faculties as appropriate	
Insert additional approval date(s) as appropriate	
Submitted for EC approval	<i>[date of EC meeting]</i>

Section 2 – Strategic fit

- International context
- National context

- Relationship with University strategic plan
- Relationship with Faculty strategic plan(s)
- Relationship with School strategic plan(s)

- Relationship with existing cognate programmes in the University, including the Linked Colleges.

⁵ e.g. BA, Grad Dip, MSc, EdD.

⁶ e.g. traditional, distance, blended.

⁷ The date of approval of the proposal by the final committee designated within the Faculty for approval of proposals.

Where a partner organisation is to be involved, rationale for, and status of, the relationship, with due reference to the policy on due diligence and the procedures for drawing up Memoranda of Understanding and related documentation at http://www.dcu.ie/info/pdfs/Policy_on_Due_Diligence_-_MOU_Final_Nov09.pdf.

Normally, this means that confirmation that the due diligence process has been completed should be indicated here, and the current state of development of the MoU should also be indicated.

Section 3 – Likely demand, and proposed intake

- Description of market research conducted
- Quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the market research
- Projected student numbers (these should be consistent with those in the financial template – See Section 8 below)
- Extent to which the programme is expected to run over a limited period of years, or on an open-ended basis (reference must be made here to standard programme review procedures – see Section 1.2 above).

Where market research does not apply, e.g. where a proposed programme has been commissioned by an external agency, ‘not applicable’ should be indicated.

Section 4 – Entry requirements, and progression and exit routes

Entry requirements: undergraduate programmes

- State that university minimum entry requirements apply (and give brief details in terms of the Leaving Certificate, with a brief reference to the fact that equivalent requirements apply to applicants presenting other qualifications).
- If programme-specific entry requirements apply, state this (in terms of the Leaving Certificate, with a brief reference to the fact that equivalent requirements apply to applicants presenting other qualifications).
- If FETAC entry requirements apply, state this and give details.
- It is assumed that standard entry procedures for mature, access and international applicants and for applicants with disabilities apply. This should be stated. Details should not be given.
- Outline any RPL⁸/transfer/exemption procedures that apply. These must be in line with standard DCU procedures.

Progression and exit routes

- Normally, students will progress through to degree level. If it is planned to permit exit at Certificate and/or Diploma levels, state this and state the number of credits which must be obtained for such exit (these must be in accordance with Marks and Standards).

Entry requirements: postgraduate taught programmes

Details should be given of the following:

- Minimum entry requirements (e.g. Level 8 qualification with, e.g. H2.2)
- Disciplinary stipulations in terms of prior qualifications (e.g. any discipline, a range of preferred disciplines, one or a number of specific disciplines)

⁸ Recognition of Prior Learning.

- Whether the programme is a post-experience programme or not and, if the former, the nature and duration of the required experience
- The extent to which interviews, portfolios, written submissions or other procedures form part of the selection process
- Outline any RPL⁹/transfer/exemption procedures that apply. These must be in line with standard DCU procedures.

It is assumed that standard entry procedures for international applicants and for applicants with disabilities apply. This should be stated. Details should not be given. There should be no reference to ‘mature’ applicants, as this concept does not apply to postgraduate programmes.

Progression and exit routes

- Normally, students will progress through to degree level. If it is planned to permit exit at Graduate Certificate and/or Graduate Diploma levels, state this and state the number of credits which must be obtained for such exit (these must be in accordance with Marks and Standards).

Section 5 – Purpose of the programme

A student would register for this programme in order to:

Pursue an interest in ...	<i>[Give details]</i>
Acquire the [prerequisite] [advanced] knowledge and skills to seek employment in ...	<i>[Give details]</i>
Acquire the knowledge and skills to pursue [further] postgraduate studies in ...	<i>[Give details]</i>
Be eligible to obtain the professional designation of ... /obtain exemptions from professional examinations ...	<i>[Give details]</i>
Other ...	<i>[Give details]</i>

Where necessary and appropriate, further details should be given here about the underlying educational philosophy of the proposed programme.

Section 6– Programme learning outcomes

On successful completion of this programme, the learner will be able to demonstrate:

PO1	Knowledge – Breadth	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO2	Knowledge – Kind	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO3	Skill – Range	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO4	Skill – Selectivity	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO5	Competence – Context	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO6	Competence – Role	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO7	Competence – Learning to Learn	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>
PO8	Competence – Insight	<i>[100 words maximum]</i>

⁹ Recognition of Prior Learning.

It is assumed that the information in the above table will be identical with that submitted to Coursebuilder (subject to such modifications as may be required on the basis of recommendations at validation and, in particular, accreditation).

Section 7 – Outline structure of programme

The standard Programme Academic Structure, Registration Schedule and Assessment Schedule should be completed and inserted here.

Section 8 – Resources required

A template for outlining the resources required to run a programme is available from the Finance Office. This template must be used for validation. Advice on completing it is available from Faculty Offices. Only the overview page is required by the Education Committee/Validation Subgroup, though the more detailed pages which provide the background information to this overview page may be required for School and Faculty approval and may also be requested at the discretion of the Education Committee/Validation Subgroup. (They should not, however, be submitted to the EC/VS as a matter of course.)

Section 9 – Implementation plans

To include:

- Liaison with CAO (via the Registry), if relevant, including timescales
- Advertising and marketing plans, including timescales.

Please refer to Sections 3.3 and 3.5 above, with particular reference to the indicative list of stakeholders in Section 3.5 and the importance of timely communication with them.

Section 10 – Membership of the proposed development team

It should be ensured in advance that all concerned have indicated their consent to being included.

Programme proposer (1)	Title	First Name	Surname	School
Programme proposer (2)¹⁰				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member¹¹				

¹⁰ If applicable, i.e. if the leadership on proposing the programme is shared.

¹¹ Insert as many additional lines as are necessary.

Section 11 – Membership of the proposed Accreditation Board

In the selection of nominees to the Accreditation Board, account must be taken of the following:

- The principal programme proposer and colleagues should ensure that there is appropriate professional distance between all nominated Board members and the University. No individual employed by the University, or a student of the University, in the previous five years may be considered. Nomination of individuals with a personal connection with the University should also be avoided, as appropriate. Reference should be made to the University’s Conflict of Interest Policy at http://www.dcu.ie/staff/conflict_guidelines.pdf
- It should be ensured that the Board includes senior academic and professional experts as appropriate. There should normally be a minimum of one individual of professorial rank.
- It can be desirable, even necessary, for an individual to be appointed to a Board because he/she represents a professional accrediting body. In no circumstances, however, should an individual be appointed who is a member of an organisation which has commissioned a programme.
- Every effort should be made to ensure an appropriate gender balance and an appropriate balance between national and international expertise.
- An Accreditation Board should include no more than one representative from any one institution.
- Reciprocal arrangements between the University and other institutions should be avoided.
- In no circumstances may a staff member from DCU act as a member of an Accreditation Board in a linked college, or *vice versa*. Nor may a staff member of a linked college act as a member of an Accreditation Board in another linked college.

Summary list of all nominees

Title	First Name	Surname	Institutional affiliation	Position in institution

Outline *curriculum vitae*¹²

Title	
First name	
Surname	
Current position in home institution	
Contact details	
Home institution	
Contact address¹³	
Telephone number(s)	

¹² To be completed by the principal programme proposer in respect of each nominee to the Accreditation Board.

¹³ Note, in this connection, Section 2.2.6 of *Information for Programme Proposers*.

E-mail address	
Web page	
Academic and/or professional qualifications	
Principal research and/or professional interests	
Five publications of particular relevance to the proposed programme <i>(full citation required)</i> ¹⁴	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Case for nomination to the Accreditation Board (250 words max.) ¹⁵

Please note (as indicated also in footnote 15) that the box above is to be completed by the principal programme proposer. Note also that it does not form part of the CV.

5. Accreditation

5.1 Accreditation proposal: criteria for evaluation

Each accreditation proposal will be assessed on a number of criteria, which include:

- the likelihood that the programme will meet the needs which the proposal indicates it is intended to meet
- the appropriateness of the entry requirements and exit routes
- the validity of the purpose and underpinning educational philosophy of the proposed programme
- the linkage of the programme learning outcomes with the purpose and the underpinning educational philosophy
- the consistency and coherence of the proposed modules in the context of the underpinning educational philosophy and the programme learning outcomes
- the reasonableness of achieving the programme learning outcomes, in the time specified, by the majority of students
- the appropriateness and mix of learning and assessment methodologies
- the coherence between assessment methodologies, per module, and the module learning outcomes

¹⁴ Nominees who are practitioners as distinct from academics may, in some instances, not have publications. If this is the case, it should be stated.

¹⁵ To be completed by the principal programme proposer.

- the coherence of the group of skills and competencies that the student would be expected to have at the end of the programme
- the appropriateness of the quality assurance procedures to be used in relation to the programme
- the qualifications and experience of the programme team and the module co-ordinators.

5.2 Accreditation proposal: structure

The accreditation proposal document is a detailed document aimed at describing the proposed programme fully. It also includes module descriptors and a *curriculum vitae* for each programme proposer. Therefore it is normally longer than the validation proposal. Certain sections of each of the two types of document can, in principle, be the same as, or similar to, each other, and where this is the case it is indicated below. However, where recommendations have been made at the validation stage, these must be incorporated into the accreditation proposal, with concomitant changes as necessary. In addition, the information in the accreditation proposal may sometimes need to be more detailed than that in the validation proposal.

An accreditation document is divided into three parts:

1. The description of the proposed programme (Sections 1-8 below)
2. The module descriptors (using the approved template in Coursebuilder) (Section 9 below)
3. The *curricula vitae* of the members of the programme team (using the template provided) (Section 10 below).

A typical accreditation proposal might run to 15-20 A4 pages or approximately 6,000-8,000 words in terms of 1. above, with the length of 2. and 3. being determined by the number of modules and the size of the programme team.

In every instance where reference is made to a document which is available on line, the appropriate web link should be included. Examples include the National Framework of Qualifications, strategic plans, and reports which indicate a need for provision of higher education in a particular discipline area. If the online access is internal to DCU only, consideration should be given to providing a hard copy of the relevant document as an appendix to the proposal (but these should be kept to a minimum – see line 11 of the table below).

A table of contents should be provided. It should include a list of all the modules and a list of all the members of the programme team, for whom *curricula vitae* are provided (though these two lists may directly precede Sections 9 and 10 of the document rather than being in the table of contents, if this is considered more appropriate). If possible, for ease of reading, hard copies should be colour-coded – i.e. white for Sections 1-8 inclusive, a second colour for Section 9 and a third colour for Section 10. It should be ensured that the document forms a coherent and readable whole and that appropriate cross-referencing is in place.

It is important to note that, where a proposed new programme incorporates both new and existing modules, the latter are not of themselves deemed due for accreditation (as they have already been accredited in a previous context). What is due for accreditation is: (a) the new modules, and (b) the programme as a whole, including the appropriateness of the relationship between the new and the existing modules. The members of the Accreditation Board need not necessarily comment on existing modules *per se*, though it is open to them to make suggestions for amendments to them where they consider it appropriate to do this as well as to

consider the appropriateness of the relationship between the existing modules and the proposed new modules. Module descriptors should be provided in all cases.

An accreditation proposal should consist of the following:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Content</i>
1	Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal (using the template provided)
2	Entry, progression and exit routes
3	Purpose of the programme
4	Programme learning outcomes
5	Outline structure of programme
6	Marks and Standards and programme-specific regulations
7	Alignment matrix
8	Quality assurance and programme evaluation
9	Module descriptors
10	<i>Curricula vitae</i> of the members of the programme team
11	Any necessary appendices (but these should be kept to a minimum)

Resources at the following link may be of use to developers of programme and module learning outcomes:

http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/liu/resources/index.shtml#Learning_Outcomes.

Section 1 – Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal

The structure of this section is the same as that for the validation proposal except that a section on implementation plans is included. The information will need to be updated from the time of validation.

Background (1,000 words maximum)	
Proposed programme title	
Proposed designatory letters¹⁶	
NFQ level	
Credits	
Part-time/full-time/modular	
Duration	
Mode of delivery¹⁷	
In partnership with external organisation(s)	
Proposed launch date	
Implementation plans (500 words maximum)	

¹⁶ e.g. BA, Grad Dip, MSc, EdD.

¹⁷ e.g. traditional, distance, blended.

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Validation proposal approved by Validation Subgroup	<i>[date of Validation Subgroup meeting]</i>
Validation recommendations approved by Education Committee	<i>[date of Education Committee approval – consult the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar about this, if necessary]</i>
Validation recommendations approved by Academic Council	<i>[date of Academic Council meeting]</i>
Accreditation proposal submitted for forwarding to the Accreditation Board	<i>[date of submission to the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar]</i>
Accreditation proposal considered by the Accreditation Board	<i>[date of meeting of Accreditation Board]</i>

Section 2 – Entry, progression and exit routes

May be based on the validation proposal, with changes/updates if necessary.

Section 3 – Purpose of the programme

May be based on the validation proposal, though this section in particular may need to be more detailed than at the validation stage.

Section 4 – Programme learning outcomes

May be based on the validation proposal, with changes/updates if necessary.

Section 5 – Outline structure of programme

May be based on the validation proposal, with changes/updates if necessary (and it is likely that this section in particular may need to be more detailed than at the validation stage).

Section 6 – Marks and Standards and programme-specific regulations

Specify that the programme adheres to DCU Marks and Standards. A web link to Marks and Standards

http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/pdfs/M&S_version%202010.1.0%20April14.pdf should be provided.

In certain cases, the possibility of requesting a derogation from Marks and Standards may need to be factored into discussions. As outlined in Marks and Standards http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/pdfs/M&S_version%202010.1.0%20April14.pdf (page 2): ‘only derogations required by professional bodies will be considered for approval’. Such derogations, where approved by the Faculty, should be outlined here but flagged as provisional pending approval by the University Standards Committee (which must consider

all requests for derogations) and ultimate approval by Academic Council. In all cases the following statement must be included: ‘The derogation(s) is/are being requested within the parameters permitted by DCU Marks and Standards.’

The proposed programme-specific regulations (using the approved template, available from the Faculty Office) should be included here. The following statement must be included here also:

‘These programme-specific regulations are in addition, and complementary, to DCU Marks and Standards. They are proposed for the initial years of implementation and will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing fitness for purpose.’

Section 7 – Alignment matrix

The alignment matrix should provide a clear demonstration that each programme learning outcome can be achieved and assessed by the discrete modules that make up the programme. It should indicate the extent and strength of the contribution of each module to each of the programme learning outcomes.

This section should be copied and pasted from section in Coursebuilder called ‘PO Delivery’ which indicates how each module on the programme contributes to the programme learning outcomes.

Further examples of alignment matrices can be found on Coursebuilder.

Section 8 – Quality assurance and programme evaluation

Reference must be made here to:

- use of external examiners in accordance with University procedures (with links to relevant parts of University website, especially http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/guidelines_appoint_eetp.shtml and http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/code_practice_eetp.shtml)
- use of programme review procedures (with references to University procedures; the advice of the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education should be sought about this)
- use of student feedback procedures (with references to University procedures; the advice of the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education should be sought about this)
- periodic review by external professional bodies, where relevant
- any other quality assurance mechanism that may apply.

In all cases, it should be stipulated that standard procedures will be adhered to. Where additional detail is necessary, e.g. with regard to reviews by external professional bodies, this should be provided.

Section 9 – Module descriptors

As in Coursebuilder. Note the reference above to table of contents.

Section 10 – Curricula vitae of the members of the programme team

These should be made available in alphabetical order by surname using the template below. Note the reference above to table of contents.

Curriculum vitae
Dublin City University

Name _____

Position _____

School (or other group) _____

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Institution	From	To	Award

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

EMPLOYMENT RECORD

Organisation	From	To

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS PRESENTED

(Please include details of last 3 refereed publications and an indication of numbers of publications by category)

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

TEACHING INTERESTS

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

*Office of the Deputy President/Registrar
February 2011*

APPENDIX

Flowchart outlining the validation and accreditation procedures

