

Appendix 4(b)

Stage 2 – Programme Validation

To complete *Programme Validation* (PV) successfully, operators have to demonstrate that they have attained the threshold standard of IE in the ten areas enumerated below. According to the guiding principle of ‘fitness for purpose’, the operators may demonstrate that they are meeting the standards by a variety of evidences submitted in the accreditation document.

a. Financial and Physical Resources for Learning Programmes
Operators must have adequate financial and physical resources for the delivery of their programmes.

Operators may demonstrate that through:

- a) they have sound financial policies and practices and sufficient financial resources to ensure that they can sustain and further develop the delivery of programmes;
- b) they have suitable teaching facilities, such as seminar rooms, workshops, laboratories and other instructional facilities for the planned modes of delivery;
- c) they have adequate facilities, learning resources, equipment, library resources and access to information technology resources to support effective and independent learning; and
- d) they have access to specialist facilities and equipment required to deliver their programmes.

Possible documentary evidence:

- Initial and annual income and expenditure for the learning programmes
- Description of the accommodation and teaching facilities for the learning programmes.
- A detailed list of the specialist facilities and equipment required to deliver the learning programmes
- An indication of the type and extent of library collection relevant to the learning programmes

b. Staffing and Staff Development for Learning Programmes
Operators must have adequate teaching and supporting staff with the qualities, competence, qualifications and experience necessary for the effective programme management, planning, delivery and monitoring of their programmes. There must be adequate staff development scheme and activities to ensure that the teaching and supporting staff are kept updated for the quality delivery of the programmes.

Operators may demonstrate that through:

- a) they engage capable teaching staff with the appropriate academic, vocational or professional qualifications and occupational experience for the learning programmes they deliver;
- b) they have adequate and competent staff to support the educational functions and services they offer;

- c) they have a fair and transparent human resources system including policies such as appointment, appraisal, promotion and termination;
- d) they have effective processes in place to orientate and develop staff in areas relevant to their learning programmes and services; and
- e) their teaching staff adopt a professional approach to their teaching responsibilities, such as, they work to clear and well-structured instructional plans and provide effective guidance, feedback and general supervision of student learning.

Possible documentary evidence:

- A staff manual
- CVs of all teaching staff which include academic and/or professional qualifications, and work experience
- An indication of anticipated staff-to-student ratios for each programme
- Policies and plans for staff development

c. Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes should reflect the stated programme objectives, which are tested through assessment. The evidence from assessments must show that the QF level of the learning outcomes correspond to the GLD and other relevant documents.

Operators may demonstrate that their learning programmes have:

- a) clearly stated learning outcomes that contribute to the fulfillment of the programme objectives;
- b) adequate formative assessment tools to develop the expected learning outcomes;
- c) adequate summative assessment tools to accurately evaluate students' attainment;
- d) Proposed QF level of the programmes and a rationale as to why the level is appropriate as per the QF Generic Level Descriptors.

Possible documentary evidence:

- Mapping of learning outcomes against Generic Level Descriptors (GLD) and relevant documents
- Samples of formative and summative assessments
- Samples of students' work

d. Programme Content and Structure

The content and structure of the learning programmes must be coherent, integrated and effective in enabling students to achieve the stated learning outcomes and the required standards. The learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessments must be coherent, balanced, enable progression and be pitched at the appropriate level in the QF.

Operators may demonstrate an integrated programme design and structure setting out:

- a) Proposed title of the learning programmes
- b) Proposed title of qualification

- c) Rationale and the need for the programmes
- d) Programme objectives in terms of educational or occupational outcomes for graduates
- e) Duration of the programmes
- f) Core subjects, any elective subjects/ modules and any pre-requisite or co-requisite subjects/ modules, as appropriate
- g) Learning outcomes for each subject/ module (these should be clear, measurable written objectives)
- h) Modes of study (full-time or part-time)
- i) Delivery methods
- j) Attendance requirements
- k) Planned class or group size for each method of delivery

Possible documentary evidence:

- Definitive course documents
- Samples of teaching material and learning activities
- Samples of assessment material and activities
- A recommended reading list

e. Admission Requirements and Student Selection

The minimum admission requirements for the programmes must be clearly outlined for students and staff. These requirements and the student selection processes must ensure that students enrolling in the programmes have the knowledge and skills to be able to undertake the learning activities proposed in the programmes.

Operators may demonstrate that through:

- a) they have appropriate admission requirements;
- b) they have appropriate procedures for selecting and enrolling students in the programmes;
- c) they provide prospective and enrolled students with clear, accurate and timely information on the programmes, enrolment details, fees and refund policies, timetabling, assessment arrangements, student rights and responsibilities and support services; and
- d) they have ethical marketing materials and programme promotion practices.

Possible documentary evidence:

- Brochures, prospectuses or website information showing admission requirements and procedures
- Student selection and enrolment procedures
- Data on student recruitment, entry profiles and completion rates

f. Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning activities designed for the programmes must be effective in delivering the intended learning outcomes and programme content. A range of appropriate teaching methods must be employed to effectively engage students in the learning process.

Operators may demonstrate that through :

- a) a range of appropriate teaching methods, materials and activities are used to

- deliver the programmes;
- b) the teaching and learning methods employed result in the achievement of the stated learning outcomes;
- c) any employers or other parties who contribute to student learning, such as in industry placement, are effectively engaged in the process and fully informed of their responsibilities.

Possible documentary evidence:

- A description of the teaching and learning methods, sequence of learning and assessment activities, mode of teaching (e.g. lectures, tutorials, laboratories, practical demonstration, work placement, etc.) and contact hours for each mode
- Samples of teaching and learning materials
- A recommended reading list
- Guidance materials for employers or other parties involved in student learning, if relevant

g. Workplace Attachment and Student Support Services

Operators must provide students with clear, accurate information and dependable access to workplace attachment and support services that give students optimum opportunity for successful completion of the programme.

Operators may demonstrate that through:

- a) they have support services available to students, including orientation for commencing students, assistance in developing learning skills, academic support, support for finding work placement if required, financial planning advice and counselling;
- b) they monitor student under-achievement and provide effective guidance, feedback and general supervision of student learning;
- c) they have fair and consistent policies and procedures for dealing with complaints about academic and disciplinary matters, such as progression, assessment appeals and plagiarism
- d) they have a system in place to incubate workplace attachment and monitor students' performance during attachment.

Possible documentary evidence:

- Student handbook, brochure or website information outlining programme information, support services and relevant student policies
- Procedure for monitoring student under-achievement and evidence of appropriate counseling
- Copy of relevant academic, disciplinary and complaints policies as provided to students
- Memorandum of understanding or agreement with organization/company providing workplace attachment
- Student and supervisor manual for workplace attachment
- Assessment criteria for workplace attachment

h. Student Assessment

Assessments must support effective learning and enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes and the required standards. The assessment methods and techniques used for the programmes must be valid, reliable, fair and sufficient to reflect the learning outcomes at the claimed QF levels.

Operators may demonstrate that through:

- a) Assessment methods and criteria are appropriate to judge the learning outcomes of a subject/ module, for achieving the required standards;
- b) Assessments test knowledge and skills at each stage of the programmes and allow for progressive development of the required outcomes;
- c) Any grading of assessment results is based on clear and valid criteria for different classes of performance;
- d) Reviews of assessment are undertaken to ensure a consistent application of assessment criteria.

Possible documentary evidence:

- An outline of assessment methods and assessment criteria for each subject/ module
- Criteria and guidelines for activity-based assessment
- System of assessment verification or moderation and external examination, as appropriate
- Policies and procedures for grading assessment results (if using graded assessment)
- Samples of assessment materials

i. Quality Assurance (including Programme Development and Management)

Operators must (i) develop learning programmes by addressing the needs of the community, employees and employers and aligning them with the GLD of the QF; and (ii) monitor and review the performance of all their programmes on an ongoing basis to ensure that the programmes remain current and valid and that the learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and student assessments are effective.

Operators may demonstrate that their process of programme development, approval, and management:

- a) accurately identifies the market need for the programme and prospective student groups;
- b) includes consultation with and feedback from relevant professional and industry bodies, community groups, student groups and academics;
- c) ensures the setting of learning outcomes at appropriate QF levels, by making reference to relevant documents;
- d) identifies adequate physical and human resources to support the programmes;
- e) ensures that programme content and structure are coherent and appropriate to the specific objectives of the programmes;
- f) ensures that programmes include content necessary to develop understanding and acquisition of knowledge, as well as practical skills and abilities, as stated in the intended outcomes of the programmes;

- g) ensures that programme content and design are informed by recent developments in occupational and professional practice, by current scholarship and by developments of teaching and learning techniques;
- h) effectively monitors and reviews the performance of all their programmes;
- i) ensures that student assessment is valid, reliable, and effective; and
- j) effectively identifies areas for improvement, take actions and make improvements.

Possible documentary evidence:

- A written description or procedure for developing and approving learning programmes
- Details of learning programmes proposed to be offered including projected intake and student numbers
- Terms of reference and membership of relevant committees or advisory bodies involved in the development of the programmes
- Details of relevant bodies and individuals consulted during the development of each individual programme
- Indications of support for the proposed programmes from external bodies and from any relevant internal bodies or committees
- Terms of reference and membership of course review committee
- Consultation reports from external examiner, external advisor and employers.

j. Student Records and Information Management
Operators must have effective administration and management systems and procedures in place to ensure integrity, security, accuracy and currency of their record.

Operators may demonstrate that through:

- a) they have effective systems and procedures to collect and maintain information on student enrolments, fees paid, student progress and results, qualifications issued, learning programmes, staff qualifications, employment records and other data as needed, in a secure and confidential manner;
- b) they have systems for verifying student admission information and staff qualifications and experience; and
- c) they engage competent staff to manage their administration and records management systems.

Possible documentary evidence:

- Documented administration and record-keeping procedures
- Sample forms such as enrolment forms, class results forms or certificates
- Actual records of student enrolments, student assessments, qualifications issued, staff CVs and verified qualifications
- CVs and statement of duties of key administration staff