


Policy and procedure for the proposal, development and validation of minor, supplemental and special purpose awards		
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Policy and procedure for the proposal, development and validation of minor, supplemental and special purpose award types

Revision History

Revision	Date	Revision Description DCRT#	Originator
01	13 April 2006	Design of policy and procedures to incorporate Delegation of Authority and NQAI framework.	Registrar
02	13 March 2013	Redesign	QA Officer

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to identify Institute policy and procedure in relation to the proposal, development and validation of minor, supplemental and special purpose awards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff of the Institute involved in the proposal, development or validation of minor, supplemental or special purpose awards.

3. Definitions

Minor award-types provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. This recognition will have relevance in its own right.

Special-purpose award-types are made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes; for example, the Safe Pass certification of competence in health and safety in the construction industry

Supplemental award-types 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.

Vendor. In the case where a programme has been designed and developed by a body external to the Institute, they shall be referred to as a Vendor. An example of this is a programme developed by a professional body and delivered by the Institute but examined externally such as the Institute of Accounting Technicians of Ireland or the CISCO Academy programme.

4. Reference

2MP01 Design and delivery of new academic courses

4FMP01 New course proposal outline form

QQI (formerly HETAC) Policy and Guidelines on Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards

http://www.hetac.ie/docs/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20the%20Making%20of%20Higher%20Education%20a_002.pdf

5. Guidelines

All Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards at level 6 to commence with the title “CERTIFICATE...” regardless of the volume of learning.

- ALL LEVEL 6 = Certificate

All Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards at levels 7 to 10 with an ECTS credit volume under 60 credits to commence with the title “CERTIFICATE”.

- LEVEL 7- 10 < 60 credits = Certificate

All Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards at levels 7 to 10 with an ECTS credit volume of 60 credits or greater to commence with the title “DIPLOMA”.

- LEVEL 7-10 > 60 credits = Diploma

Minor awards

Minor awards are awards that recognise attainment of a part of a major award¹.

Supplemental awards

Supplemental awards are for learners who have already attained a major or special purpose award, and who require refreshing or other continuing education with regard to this initial award (for example in an occupation or profession where new knowledge and skills are required in order to continue to perform the role).

Special purpose awards

Special purpose awards meet specific, relatively narrow focussed , learning requirements. They would typically be directly related to some specific field of employment.

¹ A major award is an award that fulfils a broad range of purposes. The NQAI has determined major award types for each of the levels in the National Qualifications Framework, including Higher Certificate (level 6), Ordinary Bachelor Degree (level 7), Honours Bachelor Degree (level 8), Masters Degree (level 9) etc. For more information see “Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications”, NQAI publication.

6. Policy

- All minor, supplemental and special purpose awards must articulate clear learning outcomes.
- All minor, supplemental and special purpose awards must provide a statement of the number and NFQ level of credits available on successful completion of the programme.
- Credits awarded will comply with the ACCS/ECTS system.
- The quality assurance policies of the Institute apply equally to short academic courses. However these may be supplemented by the quality assurance policies of the vendor (if relevant) where the relevant course board determines that this is necessary.
- Minor, supplemental and special purpose awards may be validated outside the normal process (ref 2MP01) with the approval of the Registrar, using this agreed procedure.
- Minor, supplemental and special purpose awards validation will indicate the transfer dividend, if any, (in terms of credit and exemption) with respect to existing approved awards.
- The minor, supplemental and special purpose awards should be consistent with the Institute strategic academic plan and be capable of being properly resourced within existing budgetary constraints and available physical resources.

7. Protocol

- Completed 4FMP01 submitted to the Registrar for consideration by Academic Council.
- Coursebuilder - Programme and modules set up by QA Officer.
- Coursebuilder - Programme and module contributors assigned by Head of Department
- Coursebuilder populated.
- Submission document drafted using 4FAC01 as a guide with module syllabi generated from Coursebuilder.
- Peer review of submission document.
- Hard copies of the final submission document delivered to the office of the Registrar 4 weeks in advance of the agreed panel validation/review date. Soft copy of same to be forwarded to the QA Officer.

- Programme validation

The submission for a minor/special purpose/supplementary award may be assessed by means of a validation panel or a desk based review at the discretion of the Registrar.

- The validation report will be drafted by the Quality Assurance Officer based on discussions between the validation panel and the programme design team at the panel meeting and sent for review/comment to the validation panel. Findings of the desk based review panel are reported on and submitted for consideration to Academic Council.
- The validation panel is recommended to use the following broad categories in its report,
 - **Approved;** An excellent submission not requiring modification.
 - **Approved with conditions/recommendations:** A very good submission requiring minor modification (subject re-balancing, changes in some syllabus content and learning outcomes, additional information required). The modification is to be carried out by the programme design team and documented within the response to the validation report submitted to Academic Council.
 - **Retained:** A good proposal but requiring some significant modification and additions (e.g. absent or insufficient treatment of a required subject matter). These modifications/additions to be approved by the Chairperson of the validation panel in consultation with the other panel members before submission to the Registrar for onward transmission.
 - **Returned;** A deficient proposal that needs to be reconsidered in detail by the planning board, rewritten and resubmitted. Such proposals will require a reconvened meeting of the proposers and the same validation panel if the programme is to be considered further.
- The Institute recognises that given the nature of its mission and the need to respond flexibly to the needs of the economy, of students and of the community, it may be necessary to establish courses within a relatively short timeframe. It is recognised that in such instances an accelerated process may be necessary. In these cases, the approval process may operate with appropriate levels of delegated responsibility and through parallel rather than sequential processes.
- Upon receipt of all feedback a final version of the validation report will be sent to the Chairperson and Institute Registrar for signature.
- The validation report will be published in the public domain within the QA section of the Institute's website.
- A copy of the validation report will be sent to the Head of the relevant Department with a request to respond to each of the conditions and/or recommendations contained in the report.

- The following documents will be submitted to Academic Council for consideration:
 - Validation report (including completed 4FAC02 forms where applicable)
 - Response to the validation report from the Head of Department and programme design team
 - Proposed course schedule for the award and any embedded awards contained therein.
- The programme design team has the right to appeal the decision of the validation panel to the Academic Council.
- Following consideration and if satisfied with the validation report and related response the Academic Council may make a recommendation to the President of the Institute to sign a Certificate of Approval for the programme(s). Such decisions shall be recorded in the permanent record of Academic Council meetings, and will be endorsed by Governing Body when considering minutes of Academic Council meetings.
- The QA Officer will:
 - Publish the approved course schedule for the new awards on the Institute's document management system.
 - Configure Banner, the Institute's student records system, for registration purposes etc.
- The Head of Department will:
 - Arrange for any programme/module descriptors on Coursebuilder to be updated as appropriate and approve said updates such that all programme and module descriptors are available on <http://courses.itb.ie>
 - Arrange for any necessary amendments to be made to the submission document post validation and return a soft copy of same to the Quality Assurance Officer.
- The Order in Council return to QQI (formerly HETAC) and the academic programme catalogue (4RCD11) will be updated by the Quality Assurance Officer to include the validated programme(s).
- Demand for additional resources occasioned by the new course must be agreed by the management group of the Institute before the course can be run.

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