

Policy Identifier: Quality Assurance Procedure for Review of Validated Programmes

Policy Title:	Quality Assurance Procedure for Review of Validated Programmes
Description:	This document sets out broad procedural guidelines for the preparation and conduct of programme (or course) reviews in Marino Institute of Education, an associated college of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin.
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Quality Assurance Procedure for Review of Validated Programmes

1 Context

Marino Institute of Education (The Institute, MIE) is an associated college of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereafter referred to as Trinity) and is considered a linked provider for the purposes of Quality Assurance. Trinity is the Designated Awarding Body (DAB) of validated MIE courses. MIE has processes in place to quality assure its validated programmes both on an annual and cyclical basis. Policies and procedures for quality assurance¹ may be amended on a periodic basis in response to external triggers, changes in legislation, or professional accreditation requirements.

The periodic review of validated programmes is to consider the following:

- i. Strategic context
- ii. Planning and management
- iii. Programme content and structure (including off-campus learning)
- iv. Research-informed teaching and practice
- v. Monitoring and feedback
- vi. The experience of students and staff
- vii. Resources and facilities

2 Purpose

This document sets out broad procedural guidelines for the preparation and conduct of programme (or course) reviews in MIE, an associated college of Trinity. The purpose of the programme review is to:

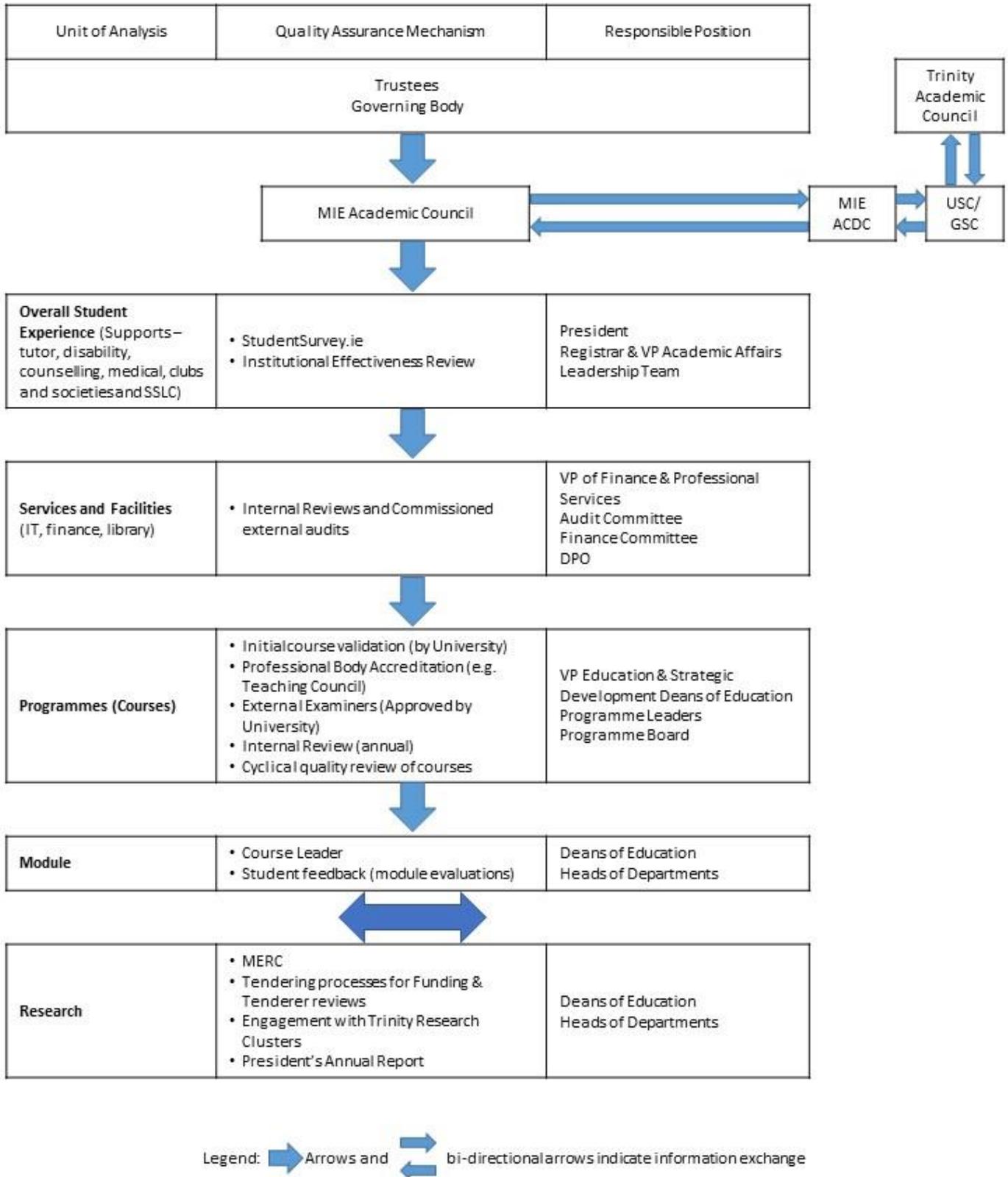
- i. Facilitate a critical self-assessment of the programme by the programme leader, the relevant Dean, the Vice President for Education and Strategic Development and the Academic Council²;
- ii. Provide an opportunity for the overall evaluation of the programme, with a range of inputs and analyses, including feedback from students, employers, professional bodies and other stakeholders;
- iii. Benefit from constructive commentary by reviewers external to the Institute who are experts in their field at a senior academic level;
- iv. Provide an opportunity to review the content, relevance, curriculum design and delivery of the programme in light of similar programmes nationally and internationally.

Cyclical programme reviews will complement other quality assurance processes outlined in Figure 1 below.

¹ See [Quality Policy Statement](#)

² See [Academic Council Terms of Reference](#)

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Abbreviations: DPO: Data Protection Officer. GSC: Graduate Studies Committee. IT: Information Technology. MERC: MIE Ethics in Research Committee. MIE ACDC: MIE Associated College Degrees Committee. SSLC: Staff-Student Liaison Council. Trinity LPWG: Trinity Linked Provider Working Group. USC: Undergraduate Studies Committee. VP: Vice President

Figure 1: Overview Quality Assurance Related to Programmes (Courses).

3 Definitions

Course: This term is used as a synonym for programme in this document.

Designated Awarding Body (DAB): An established university, such as Trinity.

Linked Provider: A provider of programmes that is not a DAB but enters into an arrangement with a DAB and provides a programme of education that satisfies the prerequisites for an award of the DAB. MIE is a linked provider of Trinity.

Programme: A programme is a syllabus or curriculum that consists of several modules, the successful completion of which leads to an award.

Validated Programme: A programme that has been validated by Trinity as the DAB, for offering in the Linked Provider, MIE, for which successful candidates are awarded a degree or professional diploma.

4 Validated Programmes

Trinity currently accredits a range of programmes in MIE. These include Foundation, Undergraduate, Postgraduate Diploma, Bachelor and Master Degree programmes. A complete list of programmes is available on the [MIE website](#).

5 Frequency

MIE programmes will be reviewed internally on an annual basis³. A full external review of programmes in MIE will typically be done on a 5-7 year cycle basis. A programme may be reviewed more frequently than every 5 years if recommended by the external examiners, by the President of the Institute or by the Chair of the MIE Associated Colleges Degrees Committee (MIE ACDC⁴ - the inter-institutional governance committee with respect to validated programmes). Programme reviews may be organised and scheduled by an Academic Department or thematically (undergraduate/postgraduate).

To ensure that MIE programme reviews do not occur in isolation, outcomes should form part of broader review and consideration within Trinity. To this end, items requiring discussion at either the Undergraduate Studies Committee or Graduate Studies Committee will be facilitated via the MIE ACDC⁴ through the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Graduate Studies respectively. In relation to the School of Education, MIE programme reviews should feed into, and form part of, quality reviews of the School of Education. This process will be facilitated through the Head of School

³ See [MIE Schedule of Reviews](#)

⁴ See [MIE Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference](#)

and/or the School representative on the MIE ACDC⁵. The timing of the cyclical reviews will be cognisant of the timing of accreditation by external bodies (e.g. Teaching Council).

6 Procedure for a Programme Review

- 6.1 The [Registrar's Office](#) will write to the relevant Dean and Course Leader typically 18 months prior to the review to notify them that the programme is scheduled for review and to request nominations for reviewers.
- 6.2 The [Registrar's Office](#) will make initial contact with potential nominees to check their interest and availability to participate in the review. Nominees should not have a close personal or professional association with the Institute or with programme staff to avoid an actual or perception of a conflict of interest.
- 6.3 The list of nominees is informed by the scope of the review and the Terms of Reference for the review ([Appendix 1](#)). Nominees should be balanced in terms of geography (one member of the team should be based in Ireland and have a track record of working within the Irish education system), gender and experience. They should come from top ranked Universities and should have expertise in programmes similar to the programme under review. For the Bachelor of Education through the medium of Irish programme at least one member of the team should have the language competence to review all modules offered.
- 6.4 A programme review panel will be set up. The panel will include external experts independent of Trinity and MIE. This is a key element in the formal approval process. The panel will consist of at least four persons: Two external academic assessors; a representative of potential employers or an alumnus/alumna who has graduated from the Institute at least five years previously; and an external assessor from a complementary professional discipline. An independent rapporteur (at the level of Assistant Registrar) will be recruited to act as secretary to the panel (see role in [Appendix 2](#)).
- 6.5 The review will be initiated by MIE's Quality Officer and overseen by the [Registrar's Office](#).

7 Data

The review will be conducted using the following data

- i. Programme proposal as initially approved
- ii. Course Handbooks

⁵ See [MIE Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference](#)

- iii. Module specifications
- iv. Questionnaires to staff and students. [Trinity's Quality Office](#) has [resources](#) for developing evaluation questionnaires for staff and students.
- v. Meetings with students and staff
- vi. Examination papers and assignment requirements
- vii. External Examiners' reports
- viii. External Accreditation reviews (Teaching Council)
- ix. Other material deemed relevant by the Course Leader.

8 Core Elements

The programme Review should address the following core questions:

8.1 Content

- i. Does the design of the programme, when tested with student inputs, ensure that all its modules contribute sufficiently to the learning outcomes for the whole programme and are fit for purpose with respect to content, level and the stage of the programme at which they are offered?
- ii. Is there a clear programme description, specifications for each module, coordinated intended learning outcomes, and explicit teaching/learning assessment strategies that serve to ensure the achievement of the final learning outcomes for the whole study programme as well as for each module?
- iii. What are the detailed requirements of external professional and regulatory bodies; and what are any relevant national and international standards and regulations for professional and legal recognition of graduates that need to be taken into consideration?
- iv. To what extent does the programme reflect the latest developments in the field?
- v. What advisory bodies or accrediting organisations (e.g. [The Teaching Council](#)) have input into the content of the programme?
- vi. Does the content of the programme accurately represent the knowledge, skills and competence that the "ideal graduate" should achieve upon successful completion of the course?
- vii. Are the reading lists up-to-date and do they include material by relevant Irish and international researchers in the field?

8.2 Learning Outcomes

- i. Are programme learning outcomes aligned with the relevant award standard of the [National Framework for Qualifications](#) and to the award type descriptors?

- ii. Does each module in each year have clearly stated learning outcomes for students?
- iii. What, if any, additional learning outcomes (e.g. generic skills) could be added across the programme?
- iv. What, if any, learning outcomes could be removed from the programme?

8.3 Teaching Methods

- i. What teaching strategies are used to enhance student learning for the desired learning outcomes?
- ii. How are the teaching strategies selected to promote deep learning and self- directed learning rather than surface learning and dependent learning?
- iii. How do these teaching strategies recognise and reward a diversity of learning styles?
- iv. How are students encouraged to develop skills of criticality and analysis?

8.4 Assessment Methods⁶

- i. Do the assessment methods accurately measure the extent to which students have achieved the desired learning outcomes?
- ii. How are the assessment methods selected to include formative and summative assessments which provide regular and timely feedback to students on their learning?
- iii. How do these assessment methods recognise and reward a diversity of learning styles?
- iv. How have reports from external examiners influenced the programme?

8.5 Work Placement/Research Project:

- i. Are the requirements for placements and provisions for the care and monitoring of relevant students explicit?
- ii. Are provisions for the recognition of credits (and/or arrangements for assessments) for such programme elements explicit?
- iii. What supports are in place to help students achieve success in their work placement/research project?
- iv. How are consistency and rigour in grading ensured in the work placement/research project?

8.6 Student Feedback

- i. What provision is in place to evaluate the programme internally at module level and at programme level?

⁶ See [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#) Policy

- ii. How have the data from such evaluations informed the programme development?
- iii. Are records of proceedings maintained? Do classes/students always receive reports on significant issues that emerge in feedback? And are all related action items tracked until they are resolved or otherwise formally responded to?
- iv. Are easily solvable issues identified informally and addressed as early as is feasible during each semester/term?
- v. Are students, or the next cohort of students, kept updated on progress and actions arising from student feedback?

8.7 Other Matters to be Considered

- i. Does the programme committee have access to data arising from all modules of the programme (survey outcomes [including for placement modules], grade distribution data, progression rates etc.)?
- ii. Are progression and possible career paths, including options for professional membership or recognition, made clear?
- iii. Are specific meetings, or sufficient dedicated time, devoted to the consideration of monitoring outputs (grade profiles and comparative data, external examiner reports, survey results, performance and trend data etc.), feedback from employers (perhaps augmented by the opinions of employers who are board members), and the consideration and approval of (annual) reports to MIE ACDC⁷?
- iv. Are there options taken into account to allow for recognition of prior learning or transfers (mid-programme) to/from other programmes?
- v. Does the programme design take account of matters related to facilitating student [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#), as well as (and as appropriate) the requirements of students with special needs, international students, other special categories of students and of different modes of delivery (e.g. full-time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning)?

8.8 When completed by the programme review panel, the review report will be given to the Registrar and Vice President Academic Affairs, who will make an initial response in consultation with the programme coordinator. The initial response will be confined to factual accuracy corrections only. A formal response to the final report will be included in the copy of the report that is submitted through the approval process.

⁷ See [MIE Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference](#)

8.9 The MIE Registrar tables the review report at the Academic Council⁸ in the Institute along with the initial response. The Academic Council⁸ will consider the report and may discuss proposals for programme changes that will need to be considered by the MIE ACDC⁹.

8.10 The review report (with responses, as appropriate, from the MIE Registrar and Academic Council⁸) will be presented to the Trinity Quality Committee through the MIE ACDC⁹. Subsequently the report will be submitted for approval to the Trinity Academic Council. The President or her nominee retains monitoring oversight and ensures that recommendations for programme change are implemented. A formal update to the MIE ACDC⁹ will be provided after one year with an informal update after six months.

9 Teaching Council Accreditation Reports for MIE Programmes

Details of accreditation reports conducted by the Teaching Council are archived on this [webpage](#).

10 Related Documents

10.1 [Code of Governance](#)

10.2 [Matters Reserved for the Governing Body of MIE](#)

10.3 [Academic Council Terms of Reference](#)

10.4 [MIE Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference](#)

10.5 [Quality Policy Statement](#)

10.6 [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)

10.7 [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#)

⁸ See [Academic Council Terms of Reference](#)

⁹ See [MIE Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference](#)

Appendix 1 General Terms of Reference for Cyclical Programme Reviews

The Terms of Reference outlined below are generic to any programme and may be further specified prior to a quality review in agreement with the Course Leader/Dean/Registrar and Vice President of Academic Affairs/President.

The review team is invited to assess and make recommendations to the Institute under the following categories:

- i. To provide assurance to the Governing Body¹⁰, students and other external stakeholders that the academic standards on the programme align with the relevant level on the [National Framework of Qualifications](#);
- ii. To assess the strategic direction of the programme in the context of the [Strategic Plan](#), internal and external developments and, when necessary, to facilitate large-scale changes or discontinuation.
- iii. To review the effectiveness of the programme's governance, management and administration structures in delivering and supporting the achievement of its [Strategy and Mission](#);
- iv. To assess the quality of the programme's teaching and learning provision, learning resources and learning environment, both internal and external to campus, that underpin the delivery of the curriculum and the attainment of the Trinity graduate attributes;
- v. To review the resources available to the programme to deliver on its academic mission such as financial, facilities, human.

¹⁰ See [Code of Governance](#) and [Matters Reserved for the Governing Body of MIE](#)

Appendix 2: Role of the Rapporteur

An independent rapporteur (at the level of Assistant Registrar) will be recruited to act as secretary to the panel. They are not a member of the Review Team and do not have a role in drafting the review recommendations.

The role of the independent rapporteur is

- i. To accompany the external reviewers throughout the review and attend all meetings during the site visit;
- ii. To facilitate the review process and ensure that meetings run to schedule;
- iii. To act as liaison between the reviewers, the area under review and the [Registrar's Office](#);
- iv. To ensure that requests for additional documentation or meetings by the reviewers are met in a timely fashion;
- v. To provide the university and sectoral/national context to the reviewers when required;
- vi. To ensure that there is clarity amongst the reviewers regarding deadlines for submission of the draft and final reports and that there is agreement as to who will collate and send the final report to the Institute.