An Roinn Leanaí,
Míchumais agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

# Additional Information for Programme Applicants

The Qualifications Advisory Board has been set up by the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs of a Qualifications Advisory Board to manage the review of Initial Professional Education (Level 7 and Level 8) Degree Programmes for the Early Learning and Care (ELC) Sector in Ireland.

In April 2019, Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Professional Education (Level 7 and Level 8) Degree Programmes for the Early Learning and Care (ELC) Sector in Ireland (PACG) were agreed by the two Ministers and published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills. The PACG are available here.

The functions of the QAB are to:

- Review programme proposals and establish their coherence with the PACG;
- Oversee a quality assurance process to support the development and implementation of new programmes leading to professional awards, including the establishment of expert panels to visit course providers to review implementation of the new programmes;
- Advise the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth whether a programme, once validated as a professional award, can be considered for inclusion on a revised list of professional qualifications for the Early Learning and Care sector.

The QAB has convened a panel of early education experts to inform its decisions and each programme will be reviewed by two independent reviewers who will report their findings to the Board.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. Who are the members of the Qualifications Advisory Board?

A. The members of the Qualifications Advisory Board are nominees from the Department of Education and Youth (DEY), the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE), Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), Irish Universities Association (IUA), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) who have experience and expertise in the development and delivery of programmes leading to higher education awards, and the validation of such programmes and knowledge or experience appropriate to the development of academic programmes in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care. Members of the Board are not employed or engaged on or associated with any programme which may be the subject of a request for approval from the Board.

The independent chairperson is Dr. Máire Mhic Mhathúna.

### Q. Do I send in my application for review electronically or by hard copy?

A. Please furnish your application to the QAB electronically to QAB@dcde.gov.ie.

### Q. Do I need to send details of all modules being undertaken?

A. Yes, the reviewers need to see the content of the modules in place.

### Q. Do I need to include Curriculum Vitae's for staff?

A. Yes, you need to send in information relating to staff qualifications and experiences. However, under GDPR rules please ensure all identifiable personal information is redacted such as addresses and telephone numbers.

### Q. Can the Qualifications Advisory Board review our Level 6 programme also?

A. No. The Qualifications Advisory Board only has responsibility to review Level 7 and Level 8 Programmes.

**Q. We offer the same programme at different sites. Do we need to submit an application for each site of delivery?**

A. Yes. While the same academic programme may be delivered across multiple sites, there may be differences in programme delivery, e.g. staff delivering the programme, the environment for learners etc.

**Q. I am unclear about the requirement for professional placement as to what constitutes 35% of placement?**

A. This refers to 35% of the programme hours being assigned to students to engage in direct placements with young children. This does not include placement tutorials, lectures or administrative events that prepare students for placement. It may include placement with a relevant professional body or department, such as the County Childcare Committee, DCDE etc.

**Q. Will I be told the names of the reviewers of my programme?**

A. To protect the integrity of each programme review the names of individual reviewers will not be made known to applicants. The names of all reviewers will be published on the Department of Children, Disability and Equality Website on the QAB page.

**Q. I have already submitted my programme but plan changes to it. Do I need to advise the QAB of this?**

A. If subsequent to this approval you decide not to run the programme, to withdraw it, or to modify it, you must inform the QAB so that its records may be kept up to date. If in the opinion of the QAB this programme is modified in any substantial way it will be necessary for you to resubmit the programme for consideration, clearly highlighting the changes made to the approved programme, and the revised programme will not be regarded as meeting the requirements of the PACG until this has been deemed to be the case by the QAB.

**Q. The name of our programme has changed but the content is the same. Do I need to advise the QAB of this?**

A. Yes. A name change is a material change to a programme. Please see above answer.

**Q. Is there specific text we can use to indicate QAB approval of our ECEC programme on our on webpages?**

A. Yes. The Board have agreed that the following text should be used Board:

***This programme is approved by the Qualifications Advisory Board (instituted to review Level 7 and Level 8 Degree Programmes for the Early Learning and Care Sector) as meeting the requirements of the Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines standards.***

**Q. If my application was unsuccessful is there a cost in resubmitting my application?**

A. No, there is no cost to re-submitting your application.

**Q. Will the result of my programme review be made public?**

A. The names of all Institutes and programmes who meet the criteria of the PACG will be published on the DCDE website. The names of programmes that do not meet the criteria of the PACG will not be published and the details of these programmes will only be known to the applicant provider.

**Q. I have received the result of my programme review and I am unsure what to do next? Who can I talk to?**

A. You can contact the QAB in the first instance and they will advise you further. They can be contacted directly by emailing QAB@dcde.gov.ie

**Q. Can I speak to the reviewers directly about my programme submission?**

A. No, this is not possible. All communications need to go directly through the secretariat at the QAB using the contact details of QAB@dcde.gov.ie

**Q. What can I do if I do not agree with the Reviewers Report?**

A. There is an internal and external review process in place. Details of this process are available here.

**Q. I have already submitted a programme for 2021 prior to an internal programmatic review Do I have to resend after this review if changes are made?**

A. Yes, however please identify the changes clearly to the original programme and this should speed up the process of your subsequent application.

**Q. How often does the QAB meet to review applications?**

A. The QAB will meet three times per year and more often as required.

**Q. What are the closing dates for submission of programmes?**

A. Applications will be accepted during the following periods:

- 1 September to 1 December
- 1 February to 30 April

Applicants can submit their programmes earlier than these closing dates if they wish. All applications will be reviewed on a first come first served basis.

**You may be interested in our webinar for applicants which is available here.**