



New Programme Design and Validation Procedure

Revision: 1.01
Issued: 27th July 2021

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1. REVISION HISTORY AND APPROVAL

Revision	Nature of change	Approval	Date
1.0	First Issue	JL	27/07/21

2. PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

- 2.1. Where the need for a new programme is communicated to the Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy, a discussion with the proposer will take place to address the rationale and viability of the proposal.
- 2.2. The Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy will address the proposal against the College's 5 year strategic plan, mission, vision and values and consult with the College Board regarding the opportunity.
- 2.3. If satisfied that the proposal represents a viable opportunity for the College, preliminary approval to proceed will be granted by the Board and a responsible individual identified to move forward with programme development.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy will establish a Steering Committee to prepare a draft programme outline and quality assure the proposed programme, i.e. that it meets all validating and accrediting body requirements, is compliant with internal, regulatory and professional requirements.
- 3.2. The Steering Committee will appoint a chair and consist of the following members:
 - 3.2.1. Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy
 - 3.2.2. Academic Quality Assurance Co-Ordinator
 - 3.2.3. Proposer
 - 3.2.4. Proposed Programme Leader
 - 3.2.5. Representative from Marketing
 - 3.2.6. Representative from Programmes Office
 - 3.2.7. Link Tutor
 - 3.2.8. Clinical Manager
- 3.3. The Link Tutor sets out the timeline and tasks for external validation.
- 3.4. The Academic QA Co-Ordinator creates a project management tool, e.g. GAANT Chart, to manage the timeline for both internal review and external review stages of development.
- 3.5. The Academic QA Co-Ordinator sets a schedule of Steering Committee meetings in line with the tasks due and the associated timeline.
- 3.6. The Steering Committee will request the following reports/resources to inform the proposal:
 - 3.6.1. Market Analysis (Marketing, to include consultation with prospective employers)
 - 3.6.2. Review of resources: venues, staffing (Venue and Contracts Manager), clinical (Clinical Manager), cost of programme development. Resources specific to transnational provision must be clearly outlined.
 - 3.6.3. Subject matter expert feedback
 - 3.6.4. The learner experience feedback
 - 3.6.5. Due diligence reports in respect of collaborative/joint award provision
- 3.7. The Steering Committee will initiate the development of a comprehensive programme proposal to include:
 - 3.7.1. Proposed validating body/bodies
 - 3.7.2. Budget for development and delivery of the programme (e.g. fees, costs, etc.)
 - 3.7.3. Demand from certain professions and/or groups in society
 - 3.7.4. Demand from prospective learners; potential learner profile
 - 3.7.5. Demand from the profession
 - 3.7.6. Programme 5-year plan e.g. step-up resourcing plan
 - 3.7.7. Admission criteria
 - 3.7.8. Delivery language (Irish, English, German)
 - 3.7.9. Learner requirement for language competence (e.g. IELTS)
 - 3.7.10. Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression
 - 3.7.11. Aims and learning outcomes at the programme level (general details) and how these

- align to the requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- 3.7.12. Programme design - a broad outline of proposed modules, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methodologies, programme assessment strategy, clinical elements.
 - 3.7.13. Programme schedule - proposed contact hours and level of award as well as the specified credits in line with award/validating body e.g. QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (2017), Section 3.8.
 - 3.7.14. Mode of delivery and learning environment (taught programme, online delivery, blended learning, including suitable learning platforms)
 - 3.7.15. Proposed accrediting body and their respective accreditation requirements
 - 3.7.16. Self-assessment outlining how core validation criteria are met (QQI 2017/QP.17-V1.03)
 - 3.7.17. Programmes related to collaborative, transnational or joint award provision follow the requirements as outlined in the Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Policy and the relevant validating body requirements in this regard.
 - 3.7.18. Resources - staffing, physical, administration (including CVs for proposed staff)
 - 3.7.19. Venues
 - 3.7.19.1. Multiple sites for delivery of the programme
 - 3.7.19.2. Assessment of suitability of delivery sites
 - 3.7.19.3. Assessment of consistency of delivery at each site
 - 3.7.19.4. Assess the impact of this cohort for formal public announcement of all awards made (i.e. size of the conferring/graduation venue to accommodate these learners).
 - 3.7.20. For the purposes of collaborative and joint award programmes, Programme Agreements will be produced as part of this process, for example, a Consortium Agreement.
 - 3.7.21. For collaborative programmes, the above will be developed with the collaborative provider where possible and a review of QA procedures, provider roles and responsibilities in respect of the collaborative provision will be produced. This will only progress upon approval from the College Board in respect of the due diligence completed and upon approval from the relevant validating body. Please see Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Procedures for more information.
 - 3.7.22. The proposal should comply with QQI requirements for programme naming (Policy and Criteria for Making Awards 3.1.b.i-iv, 2017 – QP 11.1)

4. INTERNAL EVALUATION OF NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

- 4.1. The New Programme Proposal, including due diligence reports and consortium agreements where required, is submitted to the Senior Management Team via the Steering Committee Chair or their delegate.
- 4.2. The Senior Management Team assesses the proposal and evaluates any impact on College departments and revises the report accordingly. This Internal Evaluation Report is then issued to the College Board.
- 4.3. The College Board examines the proposal in terms of College Strategy including alignment with the Mission Vision and Values. The College Board compiles a short report of recommendations which is then forwarded, together with the proposal, to the Academic Council for action.
- 4.4. The Academic Council will evaluate the proposal by considering:
 - 4.4.1. The evidence of market demand, the expected course fees and the ability of the target market to meet the required price point

- 4.4.2. Academic expertise and leadership required (if not currently available within the College, where it might be sourced. This includes expertise required specific to the mode of delivery, for example, online or blended delivery).
- 4.4.3. Potential and desirable collaborations with employers, practice placement host organisations (where relevant) and/or professional bodies
- 4.4.4. The implications for quality assurance and how these can be addressed
- 4.4.5. The core validation criteria have been met sufficiently
- 4.4.6. Ability to meet requirements for collaborative, transnational and joint award provision where necessary.
- 4.5. The Academic Council, having considered the outline of the proposed course may:
 - 4.5.1. return the report/proposal to the Senior Management Team and/or College board for reconsideration/revision
 - 4.5.2. seek clarification from the Steering Committee
 - 4.5.3. establish an Academic Council sub-committee. Members appointed to this sub-committee will have experience/expertise in the subject matter of study outlined in the proposed new programme and/or programme development experience.
- 4.6. Once a decision has been made to appoint a sub committee, they will progress to development of the sanctioned programme.
- 4.7. Where draft proposals are approved by the Academic Council, any Consortium Agreements will be submitted to the relevant validating body for review.
- 4.8. The Academic Sub Committee will be managed through the Chair of the Steering Committee who will attend all meetings and report back to the Steering Committee.
- 4.9. The Academic QA Co-Ordinator will induct the Academic Sub Committee to the project management tools, timelines and programme brief to enable the development of a high quality curriculum.
- 4.10. The Chair of the Steering Committee, or their delegate, will update the College Board, Senior Management Team and Academic Council at regular intervals as set out by the Academic QA Co-Ordinator's timeline.
- 4.11. Upon completion of the complete proposal, including any required Programme Agreements, the Chair of the Steering Committee will submit the final draft to the College Board, Senior Management Team and upon approval, prepare for phase 1 of the external review phase. Where changes are made to the Consortium Agreement an updated version of this is submitted to the relevant validating body clarifying approval from the College Board.
- 4.12. Following approval of the Consortium Agreement by the validating body, the College Director, or their nominee, will sign the approved agreement along with other consortium members. This establishes that it has come into effect and is binding on the College and its partners.
- 4.13. In all cases, whether the proposal, at any stage, is approved or rejected, the files from proposal to completion are retained by the Academic QA Co-Ordinator within the CRM.
- 5. EXTERNAL REVIEW, PHASE 1: INDEPENDENT EVALUATION (A) EXTERNAL CONSULTANT**
 - 5.1. The Chair of the Steering Committee will send the final draft new programme proposal, along with any reports from the College Board, Senior Management Team and Academic Council, to the PCI College External Consultant.
 - 5.2. In the case of programme proposals for online or blended modes of delivery, the above mentioned documentation will also be sent to the PCI College External E-Learning Expert.
 - 5.3. The PCI College External Consultant will review the proposal by considering:
 - 5.3.1. The programme aims and their relevance to the profession
 - 5.3.2. The programme assessment strategy and it's alignment with academic and professional benchmarks
 - 5.3.3. The clinical elements and their suitability for learner progression

- 5.3.4. Delivery modes and the application of the Universal Design for Learning principles
- 5.3.5. Necessary learner supports
- 5.3.6. Collaborative and transnational arrangements, where applicable
- 5.4. The PCI College External E-Learning Expert will review the proposal by considering
 - 5.4.1. The pedagogical principles relevant to e-learning
 - 5.4.2. The design of the programme and its fit to e-learning, including alignment with sound design principles
 - 5.4.3. The programme assessment strategy and its suitability for e-learning
 - 5.4.4. The resources required for delivery and the optimal transformation of instructional materials from face-to-face to e-learning
 - 5.4.5. Supports required for e-learners
 - 5.4.6. Necessary learner supports/resources
 - 5.4.7. Considerations for equal opportunities for learners due to e-learning approach
 - 5.4.8. Collaborative and transnational arrangements, where applicable
- 5.5. The PCI College External Consultant/ External E-Learning Expert will prepare a report for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- 5.6. Where there are recommendations, these will be carefully considered and either incorporated into the programme proposal draft or a rationale provided as to why they are not being adopted.
- 5.7. The programme draft, with changes/rationale for rejection of changes, will be submitted to the College Board and Academic Council for final approval.
- 5.8. Upon approval, the final draft will be prepared for phase 2 of the external review phase.

- 6. EXTERNAL REVIEW, PHASE 2: INDEPENDENT EVALUATION (B) ACCREDITING BODY**
- 6.1. Where applicable, the proposal will be submitted to the relevant accrediting body for review and feedback.
- 6.2. Where there are recommendations, these will be carefully considered and either incorporated into the programme proposal or a rationale provided as to why they are not being adopted.
- 6.3. Proposed changes will be discussed with collaborative providers, where applicable, and representative changes made to programme agreements as a result.
- 6.4. The programme draft, with changes/rationale for rejection of changes, will be submitted to the College Board and Academic Council for final approval.
- 6.5. Upon approval, a final draft will be prepared for phase 3 of the external review phase.

- 7. EXTERNAL REVIEW, PHASE 3: EXTERNAL VALIDATION**
- 7.1. Preparation and Submission of Validation Documentation
 - 7.1.1. The PCI College Link Tutor will prepare the necessary documentation for programme validation using the templates and timelines associated with the relevant validating body and as set out on the Academic QA Co-Ordinator's project management tool, e.g. Academic Provision Approval Committee Form (Middlesex University), General Programme Validation Template (QQI).
 - 7.1.2. The PCI College Link Tutor will reflect the appropriate QQI/QAA standards and NFQ level indicators within this documentation and also demonstrate how Assessment and Standards have been met (QQI, 2013, QAA 2018)
 - 7.1.3. The mode of delivery will be included with specific attention given to special provisions required for the delivery of blended learning programmes.
 - 7.1.4. The minimum intended learning outcomes of the programme and the individual modules will be clearly articulated with a demonstrable alignment of assessment criteria with the minimum intended module learning outcomes.
 - 7.1.5. The cyclical nature of the proposed validation will be represented within the 5 year plan for the programme.

- 7.1.6. The PCI College Link Tutor will provide sample materials for consideration where required, for example, programme handbooks, grading rubrics, lesson plans, module materials, etc.
 - 7.1.7. The documents required for external validation will be submitted by the PCI College link Tutor to the Academic Council and College Board for final approval.
 - 7.1.8. The documents are considered using the criteria outlined in section 3.4 and if approved, submitted to the relevant validating body.
 - 7.1.9. For QQI validated programmes, the PCI College Link Tutor will prepare a report on the evaluation of the relevant programme against the applicable validation policies and criteria. This report must address whether the proposed programme meets the validation criteria in general and in detail. (QQI, 2017).
 - 7.1.10. Signed programme agreements will be included in validating body communications, where applicable. The Consortium Agreement acts as the formal legal agreement between PCI College and the collaborating organisation and sets out the defined responsibilities for each party involved in respect of different aspects of programme development and provision and their commitment to work collaboratively in the best interests of learners.
- 7.2. External Validation: Middlesex University
- 7.2.1. All programmes proposed for Middlesex Validation undergo external independent review.
 - 7.2.2. Once a programme proposal has been approved for a validation event by Middlesex University, a Validation date is set, and an external panel is convened. The Panel is appointed by Middlesex University and usually comprises the following members:
 - 7.2.2.1. Officer (In the case of an enhanced validated partner event, the Officer may be a member of staff of the partner institution)
 - 7.2.2.2. Chair and a University representative
 - 7.2.2.3. Professional statutory and/or regulatory body representative(s) Co-Chair as appropriate
 - 7.2.2.4. One/two External Assessors using the criteria in Guidance 3v:
 - 7.2.2.5. Learner representative
 - 7.2.3. In addition the following attend the Validation or Review event for meetings with the panel:
 - 7.2.3.1. Senior Faculty staff – the Dean of Faculty and/or the relevant Deputy Dean (and other(s), such as the Head of Department, as relevant). If the proposal is heavily cross-curricular, senior staff from the other Faculties are also involved
 - 7.2.3.2. Programme team – the team usually includes: the Director of Programmes, Programme Leader and members of team. If relevant: the Liaison Manager from Library and Student Services, key technicians, administrators, English Language Learning Support and Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement staff, careers manager and external institutions/businesses or other University staff
 - 7.2.3.3. For review events, the panel will also meet with learners, who should represent a cross-section of the current cohorts including overseas campuses and where possible, graduates of the programme.
 - 7.2.4. and for collaborative events...
 - 7.2.4.1. senior staff and the Principal (or representative) of the institution (as appropriate)
 - 7.2.4.2. programme team, including the University and Institution Link Tutors
 - 7.2.5. The Panel is chaired by Middlesex University who liaise with the college via the PCI College Link Tutor.

- 7.2.6. The PCI College Link Tutor is delegated with arranging the site visit as part of the validation event and convening all PCI College staff, to include, senior management, programme team, programme staff, learners, assessors.
- 7.2.7. All documentation required by the event will be organised by the PCI College Link Tutor, or their delegate.
- 7.2.8. During the validation event, all attendees will be interviewed as per the agenda set by Middlesex University.
- 7.2.9. Following the validation event, the Panel will provide a verbal report and inform PCI College of the provisional validation outcome:
 - a) Approved with no conditions or recommendations
 - b) Approved with no conditions but possibly recommendations*
 - c) Approved with conditions **and possibly with** recommendations*
 - d) Rejected and referred back for further work.*b & c can be approved for less than the standard six years
- 7.2.10. A written validation report with the final decision will be provided by Middlesex University following the validation event.
- 7.2.11. The College Board considers any recommendations/conditions from the Validating Panel that have College wide implications and communicates these to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee considers all other recommendations/conditions from the validating body and communicates these to the Academic Council.
- 7.2.12. The PCI College Link Tutor liaises with the Chairperson of the Panel of Assessors, on behalf of the Steering Committee, to ensure that the issues raised by the Panel have been satisfactorily addressed.
- 7.2.13. Upon approval of programme validation by Middlesex University, the Academic Council monitors adherence to the conditions of course approval up to the completion of the new programme by the first cohort of learners.
- 7.2.14. PCI College may initiate Middlesex University procedures for appealing a validation outcome.
- 7.3. External Validation: QQI
 - 7.3.1. All programmes proposed for QQI Validation undergo external independent review.
 - 7.3.2. An External Review Panel will be appointed to undertake this review.
 - 7.3.3. Where PCI College is delegated the responsibility to appoint the independent panel by QQI, the PCI College Link Tutor will undertake this task and ensure that evaluators:
 - 7.3.3.1. Are entirely independent of PCI College.
 - 7.3.3.2. Are required to state any conflict of interest.
 - 7.3.3.3. Are comprised of at least three members.
 - 7.3.3.4. Must have sufficient competence to evaluate the programmes as proposed.
 - 7.3.3.5. Possess special expertise in the programme or aspects of operation of the programme.
 - 7.3.3.6. Include a learner representative.
 - 7.3.3.7. Are sufficiently trained where required.
 - 7.3.4. The External Independent Review:
 - 7.3.4.1. Is conducted according to QQI programme evaluation criteria policies and procedures
 - 7.3.4.2. Is decided on the validity of any proposed programme will attend to "The Core Validation Criteria" as outlined in unit 17 of Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training" (2017). Copies of same will be furnished to the review panel

- 7.3.4.5. Is undertaken by independent evaluators.
- 7.3.4.6. Involves a site visit.
- 7.3.4.7. Involves interviews with leadership, the programme personnel and other relevant stakeholders including learners
- 7.3.4.8. Produces an Independent Evaluation Report outlining:
 - Satisfaction
 - Satisfaction subject to special conditions
 - Non-satisfaction.
- 7.3.5. The College Board considers any recommendations/conditions from the Internal Evaluation Report that have College-wide implications and communicates these to the Steering Committee.
- 7.3.6. The Steering Committee considers all other recommendations/conditions from the Report and communicates these to the Academic Council.
- 7.3.7. The PCI College Link Tutor liaises with the Chairperson of the Independent Review Panel, on behalf of the Steering Committee, to ensure that the issues raised by within the Report have been satisfactorily addressed and a formal response will be provided.
- 7.3.8. The Independent Evaluation Report and the PCI College response will be considered by QQI, in line with QQI Validation Conditions, Unit 9 and Unit 6 (QQI, 2017).
- 7.3.9. QQI will inform PCI College in writing within 25 weeks of the determination of the application:
 - 7.3.9.1. Validate the proposed programme subject to conditions
 - 7.3.9.2. Validate the proposed programme or a stand alone part of it that is a programme, subject to conditions including special conditions;
 - 7.3.9.3. Refuse validation of the proposed programme
- 7.3.10. Upon approval of programme validation by QQI, the Academic Council monitors adherence to the conditions of course approval up to the completion of the new programme by the first cohort of learners.
- 7.3.11. PCI College can follow QQI procedures for appealing a validation outcome.

8. CHANGES TO A VALIDATED PROGRAMME

- 8.1. Changes identified to a programme are conducted as per our quality system. Accompanying these changes will be a review of the quality policies/procedures themselves for continuous improvement.
- 8.2. Minor Changes
 - 8.2.1. Proposals for minor changes to a programme must be submitted to the Academic Council by the relevant Programme Leader for review and approval.
 - 8.2.2. The proposal must be accompanied by a clear rationale as to why the change is required, the impact of the proposed change and an action plan for how to implement same, including a communication plan to relevant stakeholders.
 - 8.2.3. Minor programme changes will be approved/revised or rejected by the Academic Council and communicated to validating and accrediting bodies where required.
- 8.3. Major Changes
 - 8.3.1. Proposals for major changes to a programme must be submitted to the Academic Council by the relevant Programme Leader for review and approval.
 - 8.3.2. Upon approval, an internal collaborative review will be instigated leading to review, revalidation or differential validation.
 - 8.3.3. The internal collaborative review will be lead by the relevant Programme Leader and consider the following:
 - 8.3.3.1. The differences between the proposed programme and validated programme.

- 8.3.3.2. A detailed rationale for the changes being proposed.
- 8.3.3.3. An analysis of the changes with reference to impact on the original programme and existing QA policies.
- 8.3.3.4. The implication of review, revalidation or differential validation is explored through self-assessed piloting.
- 8.3.4. Major programme changes will be approved or denied by the Academic Council and communicated to validating and accrediting bodies where required.
- 8.3.5. Middlesex University require faculty change approval and then APAC approval, followed by a Validation/Review event for major changes.

9. LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Linked Policies	<p>Access Applications and Admissions Policy Blended Learning Policy Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Policy New Programme Design, Development and Validation Policy Ongoing Programme Monitoring Policy Revalidation Policy Recognition of Prior Learning Policy QA Management Policy Transfer and Progression Policy</p>
Linked Procedures	<p>Access Applications and Admissions Procedure Blended Learning Procedure Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Procedure New Programme Design, Development and Validation Procedure Ongoing Programme Monitoring Procedure Revalidation Procedure Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Transfer and Progression Procedure</p>