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| **Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Leitir Ceanainn**  
Letterkenny Institute of Technology

## **Section 3**

### **Procedures and Guidelines for the Design and Validation of New Programmes**

## Procedures and Guidelines for the Design and Validation of New Programmes

The procedures outlined below will guide staff and external assessors involved in the institutional approval and validation of new programmes. These procedures and guidelines also apply to any significant changes to existing programmes.

### 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of these procedures and guidelines is to ensure the proposed programme -

- is consistent with the Institute's strategic planning and contributes to achieving the Institute's aims and objectives
- offers a valuable educational experience to learners
- is consistent with the Institute's resource planning
- takes cognisance of the National Framework of Qualifications and implements the procedures of the NQAI in relation to access, transfer and progression
- complies with HETAC standards and is in line with HETAC policy and procedures on delegated authority and quality assurance

### 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The document refers to all stages in the development of new programme proposals to validation by the Institute through the authority delegated by HETAC consistent with section 29 of the Qualifications Act.
- 2.2 Procedures for the validation of minor, special purpose and supplemental awards are included in Appendix G6.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The main elements for approving new programmes are already in place. These are -

- (a) **Specific legislative provisions** – i.e.

#### **Institutes of Technology Act 2006**

The sections of the Act were commenced by Order of the Minister for Education and Science on 1 February 2007. The Institutes of Technology Act 2006 designates the Institutes of Technology and the Dublin Institute of Technology under the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The Act substantially amends the Regional Technical Colleges Acts 1992 to 2001 and the Dublin Institute of Technology Acts 1992 to 2001 and also amends the Higher Education Authority Act (HEA Act) 1971. The Act also designates the Tourism College, Killybegs (TCK) as a school of Letterkenny Institute of Technology.

- The Act provides for new arrangements whereby the HEA, rather than the VEC or the Department of Education and Science, will approve an Institute's budget and allocate funding from the overall allocation from the Department of Education and Science.

- The Act includes a specific provision requiring Institutes to contribute to the promotion of the economic, cultural and social development of the State and to respect the diversity of values, beliefs and traditions in Irish society.

The Regional Technical Colleges Acts 1992 to 2001 and Part 2 of the Institutes of Technology Act 2006 may be cited together as the Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006.

### **Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 to 2001**

- This Act provides that one of the functions of the Institute shall be “*to provide such courses of study as the Governing Body of the college considers appropriate*”.
- This Act provides that one of the functions of the Academic Council shall be “*to design, develop and assist in implementing courses of study...*”
- This Act provides that a Governing Body “*shall determine, subject to such directions as the Minister may give from time to time, the conditions under which persons shall be admitted to the college and to any particular course of study therein*”.

### **Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999**

- One of the objects of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), established under the Qualifications Act, is to establish a standard based framework of qualifications in the State.
  - The NQAI is also required to “*determine the procedures to be implemented by providers of programmes .... for access, transfer and progression.....*”. There is a requirement placed on the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), in turn, to ensure that the procedures implemented by providers comply with these.
  - The Qualifications Act also requires HETAC “*to ensure that providers of programmes .... establish procedures for the assessment of learners which are fair and consistent and for the purposes of complying with standards..*”
- (b) **HETAC:** HETAC has published a number of policies and procedures relevant to the accreditation of new programmes. In addition to the procedures laid down in this document, the development of new programmes must be carried out in a manner consistent with these HETAC policies and procedures.
- (c) **Funding body approval:** The Higher Education Authority (HEA) sets the conditions for funding approval.
- (d) **CAO requirements:** Particulars of all *ab initio* programmes must be given to the CAO by March for inclusion in the Handbook for the academic year beginning one year from the following September, i.e. by March 2010 for the 2011/2012 academic year.

3.2 The process of design, institutional approval and validation involves:

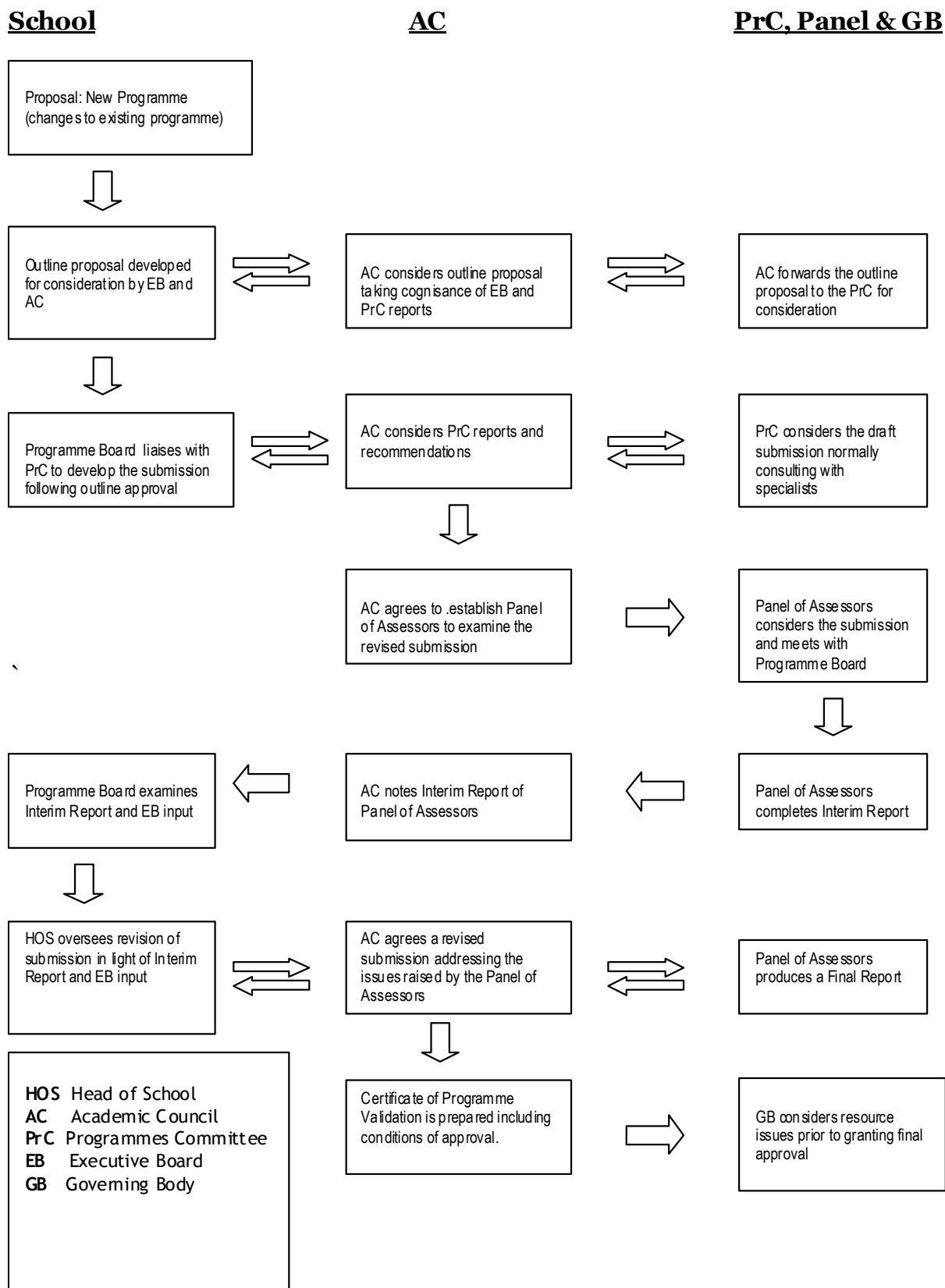
- a proposer, individual or group
- a developer, individual or group
- Heads of School/Department
- Academic team to deliver the programme, organised as programme board or otherwise
- Academic Council of the Institute

- Registrar
- Governing Body
- HETAC
- HEA
- CAO [affects lead-in time only and for *ab initio* programmes only].

#### 4. PROPOSALS ON NEW PROGRAMMES

- 4.1 Proposals on new programmes can emanate from many sources. These may include proposals for new programmes, proposals for changing existing programmes and proposals for discontinuing existing programmes.
- 4.2 Proposals must be considered both on their own merit and within the framework of overall Institute strategy.
- 4.3 The most frequent source and channel for individual proposals on programme development is likely to be academic staff through structured meetings at programme level and Heads of School/Department. New proposals may also be introduced directly through the Academic Council.
- 4.4 The Institute requires that proposers of new programmes to submit an outline of the programme for approval prior to the development of a full submission. This outline approval arrangement facilitates time management during the process.
- 4.5 The outline proposal should be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Executive Board and the Academic Council. The process from developing an outline proposal to submission for institutional approval and validation is summarised in Figure G1 overleaf.
- 4.6 The Executive Board will examine the outline proposal in terms of the Institute's strategic planning and the Institute's resource planning. The Executive Board will compile a report which will be forwarded by the Registrar together with the outline proposal to the Academic Council.
- 4.7 The proposal for outline approval must conform to the requirements of the validating body on new programme evaluation. The outline should include the following:
- ***Demand from industry***
  - ***Demand from prospective learners***
  - ***Institute and School/Department Strategy***
  - ***Aims and learning outcomes - general details***
  - ***Programme design - subjects, learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment methodologies***
  - ***Programme schedule - examination subjects, component subjects, contact hours, credit rating and level, marks per subject***
  - ***Resources - accommodation implications, staffing implications.***
  - ***Similar programmes at other institutions***

**Figure G1** New Programme Development



The outline proposal shall not include detailed syllabi, readings lists, equipment lists etc.

- 4.8 The Academic Council will normally refer the outline proposal for consideration to the Programmes Committee. The Academic Council will decide whether to grant outline approval to the proposed programme based on its own deliberations and any recommendations of the Programmes Committee taking cognisance of the report from the Executive Board.
- 4.9 The Academic Council may attach conditions to the outline approval of a new programme proposal.
- 4.10 A proposed programme that is granted outline approval will be identified with a specific school/department and provision will be made for structured meetings of the academic staff involved. In the case of a multi-disciplinary programme, one of the schools concerned will be identified as the base school and staff from the various disciplines will be included in the programme board. In the case of a proposed new programme, such groupings will be provisional pending validation of the programme and finalisation of the staffing arrangements.
- 4.11 The Governing Body will be informed of proposals granted outline approval and will be updated on the progress of proposals through each further stage in the process.

## **5. STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR VALIDATION**

- 5.1 The arrangements and the personnel for the necessary research and for the preparation of the submission for programme approval will be determined through a consultation process involving the relevant Heads of School/Department and the provisional programme board.

While the research, preparatory work and drafting may be shared, one person will normally assume a co-ordinating and editing role.

In Appendix G1 programme design guidelines for developing programme content for institutional approval and validation are presented.

- 5.2 A new programme proposal with outline approval will normally be developed by the provisional programme board into a full programme in close liaison with the Programmes Committee taking cognisance of any conditions imposed by the Academic Council.
- 5.3 The Programmes Committee will examine the proposal against the Institute's guidelines and the procedures and guidelines of the approved validating body (see Appendix G1).
- 5.4 The Programmes Committee, with the approval of the President, will normally consult with an External Specialist(s). The Programmes Committee and where appropriate, the External Specialist(s), will normally hold at least one meeting with the provisional programme board. A Template for Appraisal of New Programme Proposals by External Specialist(s) is included in Appendix G3.
- 5.5 The Programmes Committee will provide an update on new programme proposals to the Academic Council. The committee will also provide feedback directly to the provisional programme board. This stage of the process may be iterative with the Programmes Committee making recommendations to the provisional programme board and the provisional programme board resubmitting amended drafts to the committee.

- 5.6 When the committee is satisfied that the proposal document meets the requirements of both the Institute and HETAC, the committee will ask the Academic Council, with the approval of the President, to convene a Panel of Assessors to examine the programme further.
- 5.7 The composition of this Panel is outlined in Appendix G2. The Academic Council, through the Registrar, will facilitate the Panel's consideration of the proposed programme prior to meeting with Institute staff. The Panel of Assessors will examine the proposal in terms of HETAC requirements (referred to in Appendix G1), or other appropriate validating body, and also the National Framework of Qualifications. The Assessors' Guide for New Programme Evaluation is presented in Appendix G3.
- 5.8 The Panel may present a short report at the end of their visit to the relevant Head of School, Registrar, and President (or their nominees). The secretary to the Panel, in conjunction with the Chair, will compile an agreed interim report for the Panel and will forward it to the Registrar. The recommendations will comprise both matters for consideration at School level and matters for consideration at Institute level. A pro-forma Report of the Panel of Assessors is included in Appendix G4.
- 5.9 The Registrar will bring the interim report of the Panel of Assessors to the notice of the Academic Council. Where the Panel recommend a re-submission the Institute's procedures commencing at 5.3 will apply.
- 5.10 The Head of School in conjunction with the provisional programme board will address the Panel's recommendations on School issues. The Executive Board will consider any recommendations from the Panel that have Institute wide implications. At this juncture the Executive Board will also check that the proposal continues to comply with the Institute's strategic planning and resource planning. The relevant Head of School will ensure responses to the Panel's interim report are brought before the Academic Council.
- 5.11 The Registrar will liaise with the Chair of the Panel, on behalf of the Academic Council, to ensure the issues raised by the Panel have been addressed. The Academic Council, through the Registrar, will forward the submission amendments and the Institute's responses to the Chair of the Panel of Assessors for consideration by the Panel.
- 5.12 In cases where the Panel needs to meet as a group, or meet again with the programme board, the Registrar will facilitate the required meeting(s).
- 5.13 The secretary to the Panel, in conjunction with the Chair, will complete an agreed Final Report of the Panel of Assessors. The Academic Council will consider this final report and may request additional changes to the submission document.
- 5.14 Where the Academic Council recommends the programme, the President will complete the Certificate of Programme Validation, typically for a five year period, including any special conditions approved by the Academic Council.
- 5.15 The Certificate of Programme Validation will be placed on the agenda of the Governing Body. The President, following consultation with senior management will bring any relevant matters to the attention of the Governing Body such as directions of the Minister, conditions attached to validation, information on resources, etc.

- 5.17 At this stage the Registrar will request HETAC to add the newly validated programme to the Order in Council that specifies the programmes for which the Institute has obtained delegated authority. This request will include the programme schedule and the Certificate of Programme Validation.
- 5.18 The Registrar will maintain a file on each proposal for programme approval. When funding approval, if necessary, has been obtained from the HEA, the Registrar, in conjunction with the appropriate Head of School/Department, will prepare a submission for final Governing Body approval to implement the programme. This submission will certify that all necessary approvals have been received and will identify resource requirements and how it is proposed to meet them within available resources.
- 5.19 No offers of places will be made on a programme through its inclusion in the Institute prospectus or through the CAO or otherwise without this final Governing Body approval.
- 5.20 The Academic Council will review adherence to conditions of programme approval up to completion of the new programme by the first cohort of learners.

## **6. PROSPECTUS**

Preparation of the Institute prospectus is a matter for Institute management. Management will ensure that the prospectus:

- gives an accurate description of each programme on offer taking into account that it represents the offer part of a potential contract
- does not include a programme which has not been properly and fully approved
- does not contain entry conditions not determined by the Governing Body or contrary to Ministerial directions.

### Appendix 3.1

#### PROPOSED PROGRAMME CONTENT

1. The procedures and guidelines for the design and institutional approval of new programmes must be rigorous and effective in order to develop coherent new programmes of study. Effective procedures and guidelines will smooth the internal approval and validation processes and bring about programmes that are amenable to effective monitoring and review. The importance of designing in standards, quality and the means for quality enhancement cannot be over emphasised.

The following points should be addressed in the design of new programmes:

- compatibility with the Institute's strategic planning and mission;
- impact on the programmes currently offered by the Institute and particularly the proposing school;
- the intended aims and learning outcomes of the programme;
- whether the programme is consistent with the requirements of the approved validating body;
- the support for the programme from industry, commerce, government agencies and associated professional bodies;
- demand by employers for graduates, the opportunities that graduation offers learners, and the demand for the programme from a sufficient cohort of appropriately qualified learners;
- the level of the programme, the degree to which the programme challenges the learner, and where the programme sits within the National Framework of Qualifications;
- mode of delivery of the programme (full-time, part-time etc.) and the time to completion of the programme;
- the development of the curriculum – through appropriate learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment techniques – imposing increasing demands on the learner as they progress through the programme;
- resources necessary and available to run the programmes – accommodation available and required, lecturing staff available and required, technical and administrative staff available and required, equipment available and required, library and information technology resources available and required, and staff development required for each year of the proposed programme;
- an award title and at a level in keeping with the intended learning outcomes;
- sufficient emphasis in promoting the intended learning outcomes; details showing how learners will demonstrate the achievement of these learning outcomes together with the means of assessing these outcomes;
- an appropriate balance in regard to the breadth and depth of individual curricula and the academic and practical requirements of the programme;
- the personal development of the learner must be central to the programme and balanced carefully with the intended academic outcomes of the programme;
  - the appropriateness of the total contact hours and the breakdown of these hours into lectures, practical, tutorials etc.;
- the workload of the learner in terms of assessment requirements, reading, researching, studying etc.;
- how the programme fits into the Institute's quality assurance process.

2. The HETAC document Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010 includes the following sections regarding the validation of new programmes:

***Development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes***

*Validation is only possible where the following are explicitly specified:*

- *the target learners' prerequisite learning and any relevant assumptions about programme participants;*
- *the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational objectives of the programme .*

*Validation requires evidence that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards and the relevant NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) award-type descriptor(s) (see Assessment and Standards 2009.)*

*Since awards standards are cumulative, the programme's prerequisite learning specification (access learning requirements) must include the knowledge, skill and competence specified at lower NFQ levels in the applicable awards standards for which the programme does not provide learning opportunities. This is especially important for conversion programmes at higher levels in the NFQ.*

***Careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content***

*Validation requires evidence that target learners may achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. The following points elaborate on the specific evidence that should be presented.*

1. *The programme's content and learning environment must be appropriate to the programme's intended learning outcomes.*
  - (a) *The programme's staff (assessors, teachers, etc.) as a group must be competent to enable learners to develop the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners' achievements as required by HETAC's Assessment and Standards 2009;*
  - (b) *The programme's learning environment (physical, social, and intellectual) including resources and supports should be consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes; the places at which instruction is to be provided should be specified and suitable;*
  - (c) *Programme content including reading lists, lecture notes, and any other material used by the programme should be appropriate;*
  - (d) *The programme's provisions for people with disabilities should be appropriate (see the various guidelines published by AHEAD [www.ahead.ie](http://www.ahead.ie));*
  - (e) *If the programme will be accessed by international students make appropriate provisions. See Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions (IHEQN) 2009.*

2. *The programme should involve authentic learning opportunities to enable the achievement of the intended programme learning outcomes.*
  - (a) *The programme's strategy for enabling learners to move from the minimum access standard to the minimum intended programme learning outcome should be explicit, realistic and viable. The programme should be provided in a way that its intended learning outcomes can be reliably and efficiently attained by the learners. It is to be expected that all learners who are judged qualified to access a particular programme should be able to graduate from that programme subject to their making a reasonable effort and complying with the programme's conditions.*
  - (b) *The programme and module assessment strategies (for both formative and summative assessment [see Assessment and Standards 2009]) should be both clear and appropriate;*
3. *The programme (as a process and considering its intended learning outcomes and other educational objectives) should compare well against appropriate benchmarks:*
  - (a) *The programme (characterised by its curriculum, assessment strategies, learning environment, prerequisite learning and minimum intended learning outcomes) should be comparable with other programmes (at the same level) in similar fields of learning which are designed to prepare graduates for similar roles. Comparisons in should also be made with programmes at higher and lower NFQ (or equivalent) levels and the proposed programme's intended learning outcomes should be appropriately situated relative to those of the benchmarking programmes.*
4. *The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression should be consistent the procedures described in the NQAI document Policies, actions and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners.*
  - (a) *If, for example, the programme is designed to meet the educational requirements of a regulated profession or recognised professional body this should stated explicitly.*
  - (b) *The presentation of the programme should not lead learners to presume that successful completion of the programme will entitle them to enter a particular profession or progress to another programme unless this is actually the case.*
  - (c) *The programme's use of ECTS (credit) and provisions for Recognition of Prior Learning should be consistent with:*
    - i. *NQAI Principles and operational guidelines for the implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training 2006*
    - ii. *NQAI Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training 2005*
5. *The programme should meet genuine education and training needs.*
  - (a) *The provider should have evidence that the programme meets the target learners' education and training needs and those of wider society.*

- (b) *The programme as a process and the intended programme learning outcomes should be adequately informed by the views of key stakeholders such as learners, employers, relevant advisory bodies, social and community representatives.*
- (c) *The provider should compare its programme with other similar programmes already in place in order to ensure that it is genuinely competitive and to avoid wasteful or redundant provision.*
6. *The programme should be viable.*
- (a) *The provider should have a viable business-plan for the programme. This is important for several reasons. For example if the programme assumes a certain cohort size it may not function as planned if either insufficient or excessive numbers are recruited.*
- (b) *The provider should have satisfactory contingency arrangements for adapting to changing circumstances or coping with failure of the programme (having due regard for the interests of learners).*
- (c) *The programme should be consistent with the provider's mission and strategy.*
7. *All programmes should have procedures for assessment of learners which should be consistent with HETAC's Assessment and Standards 2009.*
- (a) *A programme assessment strategy should be provided for the programme as a whole and module assessment strategies for each of its constituent modules.*

*The points above also cover the ESG guideline on the "availability of appropriate learning resources (ESG)". Learning resources include information resources (such as libraries and online databases); physical resources (such as laboratories, equipment, study areas and studios) and human resources (such as tutors, counsellors, advisors and peers where applicable).*

### ***Specific needs of different modes of delivery and types of higher education***

*Modes of delivery include for example full time, part-time, distance learning, e-learning. Types of higher education include for example academic, vocational, professional. Such needs should be addressed appropriately by all programmes. This is a cross-cutting criterion.*

3. A number of HETAC documents are critical to the design, institutional approval and validation of programmes. These documents include –
- HETAC Standards
  - HETAC Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010
  - HETAC General Programme Validation Manual 2010
  - HETAC Assessment and Standards 2009
  - HETAC Accreditation Submission Document for Taught Programmes 2005
  - HETAC Policy Document Prior Experiential Learning

It should be noted that that these documents are accessible via the HETAC web site: [www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie).

- 3.1 The HETAC *Accreditation Submission Document for Taught Programmes 2005* will be employed as a template for all new programmes being developed. The Academic Council will be responsible for ensuring that new programme submissions address the requirements of this document.
- 3.2 Programme proposers will also have access to previous programme proposal documents to ensure good practice is captured and with the aim of engendering continuous quality improvement.
4. The programme design team must also familiarise themselves with curriculum development methodologies. The design process should begin with specifying programme aims.

### Aims

The programme aims are normally general in nature and reflect the overall purpose of the programme. The aims indicate the flavour and direction of the programme. The formulation of the programme aims is fundamental to the development of the more specific subject aims. It is important that the themes reflected in the programme aims are carried forward into the subject/module aims. Subject aims are often written in language such as

*Give an understanding ...*

*Give an appreciation ...*

*Develop skills in ...*

*Develop confidence in ...*

Because of the nature of aims it can be difficult to confirm that the programme and subject aims have been met. Aims are not sufficient to convey to the lecturers or the learners what the intended learning is.

### Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for each subject/module should reflect the cognitive content and skills content in the learning. Learning outcomes should be written in terms of what the learner will be able to do on completion of the subject/module. It is important in writing learning outcomes that cognisance is taken not only of what a successful learner will be able to do but also care must be taken that this behaviour should be measurable where possible. In the examples below the second set of learning outcomes are more amenable to assessment.

*On completion of this subject/module the learner will be able to:*

*Understand the workings of ...*

*On completion of this subject/module the learner will be able to:*

*Give examples of ...*

*Define in his/her own words ...*

*Distinguish between ...*

The number of learning outcomes will be a function of the programme aims.

### Assessment

Learning outcomes should drive the assessment procedures; assessment should be designed to assess the learning outcomes in as realistic a way as possible. Assessment criteria should be developed that take into

consideration the learning outcomes, programme and subject content, together with the level of the programme.

## Appendix 3.2

### Composition of Panel of Assessors for New Programmes

#### 1. **Chairperson**

A senior academic familiar with programme evaluation in the HETAC sector from either the HETAC sector or University sector.

**or**

A senior individual from industry/services/professions, familiar with programme evaluation in the HETAC sector.

#### 2. **Typical Membership**

Five members as follows

(i) Three academics

two from HETAC sector,  
one from University sector;

or

one from HETAC sector,  
two from University sector.

(ii) One from industry/services or professions sector.

(iii) Registrar from HETAC sector.

Note 1: The academic council may approve a different balance of membership vis-à-vis representatives from academia and the industry/services or professions for particular programmes.

Note 2: A senior academic from the Institute will act as secretary to the Panel of Assessors.

Note 3: Additional specialists may be added to the Panel at the discretion of the Academic Council.

Note 4: Efforts should be made to ensure gender equity in the composition of the new programme evaluation Panel.

### Appendix 3.3

#### Letterkenny Institute of Technology Assessors' Guide for New Programme Evaluation

#### 1. Aims and Objectives of New Programme Evaluation

##### 1.1 **Aims**

The Evaluation of a New Programme is concerned with the total design and proposed implementation of the programme with particular reference to its aims and learning outcomes, subject content, facilities required and staff deployment.

##### 2.2 **Objectives**

- 1.2.1 Evaluate the aims and general learning outcomes of the programme in the context of the relevant HETAC standard.
- 1.2.2 Evaluate the learning experience to be provided in terms of learning outcomes, syllabus content, teaching methods, and curriculum.
- 1.2.3 Evaluate the assessment instruments proposed and ensure they are in line with HETAC policy on fair and standard compliant assessment of learners.
- 1.2.4 Evaluate the curricula vitae of academic staff to be deployed in teaching the programme.
- 1.2.5 Evaluate the physical facilities being provided.
- 1.2.6 Assess whether the processes in place for access, transfer and progression are in line with the policies of HETAC and the NQAI.

#### 2. Proposed Programme Document

The Proposed Programme Document should contain detailed information on the proposed educational programme as follows:

##### (1) **Aims and General Learning Outcomes**

This section should consist of a general statement of intent relating to the goal of the programme of learning, with particular reference to career/employment related applications.

##### (2) **Learning Experience and Assessment**

###### (a) **Learning Outcomes**

The decisions on the goals of a programme of learning in the form of a statement of detailed outcomes can be a most important step, as the definition of the outcomes can be used to guide the construction of the whole programme.

###### (b) **Syllabus**

This should consist of a description of the content of the programme of learning.

###### (c) **Teaching/Learning Methodologies**

A description of the methods and materials to be used in the programme of learning.

###### (d) **Assessment Methodologies and Instruments**

This should consist of a description of the techniques to be used to measure the degree to which the learning outcomes have been realised e.g., assignments, objective tests, final examinations, open book examinations, oral/aural examinations, continuous assessment, etc.

**(3) Curriculum and Time/Staff Allocation**

A table giving details of the contact-hours to be devoted to each subject in terms of the breakdown of this between laboratory, practical, workshops, studio, tutorials, lectures, etc. should be given. The staff member(s) to deal with each subject should be listed.

**(4) Physical Facilities**

This should give as much detail as is deemed appropriate to enable an evaluation to take place of laboratory/studio/workshop/other accommodation facilities to be available to learners participating in this programme. This does not imply a list of individual items of equipment.

**(5) Curricula Vitae**

The curricula vitae of the staff to teach on the programme should be provided.

**(6) Draft Programme Schedule**

A draft programme schedule to include listings of Examination Subjects, component subjects, contact hours, credit ratings, marks per subject in accordance with HETAC requirements.

3. **Subject Matter of New Programme Evaluation**

The Panel of Assessors must be satisfied that the proposal adequately addresses the following criteria:

**(1) Education and Training Requirements**

The programme is consistent with the Institute's mission, avoids redundant provision and makes efficient use of resources (collaborating where this is beneficial).

Particular elements for consideration:

- compatibility with the Institute's Strategic Plan and mission
- compatibility with School and Department Planning
- demand by employers for graduates of a programme of this nature
- opportunities graduation offers learners
- support for the programme from industry, commerce, government agencies and associated professional bodies
- consultation on the proposal with relevant stakeholders and peers
- research on similar or related programmes offered by other providers
- impact on the programmes currently offered by the Institute and particularly the proposing School

**(2) Unity**

There should be an underlying unifying theme and the modules should be bonded by interactions which are either implicit or explicit. The proposal should demonstrate how the standard (of knowledge, skill and competence), determined by HETAC for the named award to which the programme proposes to lead, evolves throughout the programme as a whole.

Particular elements for consideration:

- the level of the programme, the degree to which the programme challenges the learner
- an appropriate balance in regard to the breadth and depth of the individual curricula and the academic and practical requirements of the programme
- sufficient emphasis on promoting the intended learning outcomes together with details of how achievement of the learning outcomes will be measured
- the development of the curriculum imposing increasing demands on the learners as they progress through the programme
- the personal development of the learner must be central to the programme

### **(3) Teaching and Learning**

The proposed approach to teaching and learning should be clearly indicated and justified.

Particular elements for consideration:

- the development of the curriculum – through appropriate learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment techniques – imposing increasing demands on the learner as they progress through the programme
- the appropriateness of the total contact hours and the breakdown of these hours into lectures, practical, tutorials etc.

### **(4) Learner Assessment**

The learner assessment methods should be fully elaborated and consistent with HETAC's policy on fair and consistent assessment. The assessment methods should be capable, among other things, of demonstrating attainment of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by HETAC, for the related award.

Particular elements for consideration:

- the workload of the learner in terms of assessment requirements, reading, researching, studying etc.
- planned feedback to learners on assessments
- assessment schedule, assessment criteria, and referencing protocols
- procedures for promoting the timely submission of assessment material

### **(5) Resources**

The proposed staffing levels should be appropriate and the levels of qualifications and competence of the staff sufficient to deliver the programme.

The necessary facilities should be available in terms of accommodation, equipment, and library and information technology resources to support the proposed programme.

### **(6) Quality Assurance**

The proposal should demonstrate how the Institute's quality assurance procedures have been applied in the development of the proposed programme and that satisfactory procedures exist for the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes.

### **(7) Programme Title and Award Title**

The award title should be consistent with the named awards determined by HETAC. The programme title should be clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.

Particular elements for consideration:

- an award title at an appropriate level and in keeping with the intended learning outcomes

**(8) HETAC Standards**

The learning outcomes of the programme must be stated in such a way that compliance with the appropriate HETAC standard is demonstrated.

**(9) Access Transfer and Progression**

Programmes submitted for accreditation should incorporate the procedures for access transfer and progression that have been established by the NQAI. Consistent with the policy of HETAC, awards should accommodate a variety of access and entry requirements.

**Appendix 3.4**

**Letterkenny Institute of Technology**

**Report of the Panel of Assessors**

**PART 1**    **GENERAL INFORMATION**

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT:

DATE OF VISITATION:

PROGRAMME EVALUATED:

MEMBERS OF PANEL OF ASSESSORS:

SECRETARY TO PANEL:

INSTITUTE STAFF:

**PART 2      FINDINGS OF ASSESSORS**

The Panel of Assessors are satisfied that the proposal adequately addresses the following criteria:

**(1)      Education and Training Requirements**

The programme is consistent with the Institute's mission, avoids redundant provision and makes efficient use of resources (collaborating where this is beneficial).

**(2)      Unity**

There is an underlying unifying theme and the modules are bonded by interactions which are either implicit or explicit. The proposal demonstrates how the standard (of knowledge, skill and competence), determined by HETAC for the named award to which the programme proposes to lead, evolves throughout the programme as a whole.

**(3)      Teaching and Learning**

The proposed approach to teaching and learning is clearly indicated and justified.

**(4)      Learner Assessment**

The learner assessment methods are fully elaborated and consistent with HETAC's policy on fair and consistent assessment. The assessment methods are capable, among other things, of demonstrating attainment of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by HETAC, for the related award.

**(5)      Resources**

The proposed staffing levels are appropriate and the levels of qualifications and competence of the staff is sufficient to deliver the programme.

The necessary facilities available in terms of accommodation, equipment, and library and information technology resources are satisfactory to support the proposed programme.

**(6)      Quality Assurance**

The proposal demonstrates how the Institute's quality assurance procedures have been applied in the development of the proposed programme and satisfactory procedures exist for the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes.

**(7)      Programme Title and Award Title**

The award title is consistent with the named awards determined by HETAC. The programme title is clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.

**(8)      HETAC Standards**

The learning outcomes of the programme are stated in such a way that the compliance with the appropriate HETAC standard is demonstrated.

**(9)      Access Transfer and Progression**

This programme incorporates the procedures for access transfer and progression that have been established by the NQAI and is consistent with HETAC policy in accommodating a variety of access and entry requirements.

**PART 3**      **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the attention of the Academic Council:

The Panel of Assessors advises the Academic Council that the Institute and the School/Department should take cognisance of following recommendations:

The Panel of Assessors advises the Academic Council that approval of the programmes subject to general conditions of approval together with the following additional conditions:

**PART 4**      **PROPOSED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE(S)**

**Appendix 3.5**

Template for Appraisal of New Programme Proposals  
(External Specialists)

The Institute’s quality assurance procedures make provision for input from external specialists in the initial assessment and development of new programme proposals. An impartial appraisal of new proposals is important in expediting the development phase and helps in smoothing the validation process.

This template was designed to facilitate focussed feedback from specialists and to make their task less onerous. Additional comments on the proposal are very welcome.

- 1. Proposed Programme Title: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Name of External Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. External Specialist’s Post: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. External Specialist’s Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Demand from employers for graduates of this programme and support for the programme from industry, commerce, government agencies and associated professional bodies:
6. Demand from potential learners:
7. Appropriateness of the award title and award level:

8. Overall balance in regard to the breadth and depth of the programme resolved against the relevant HETAC Standard and the challenge the programme will present for the learners:

9. Breadth and depth of individual modules/subjects:

10. The personal development of the learner balanced against the intended learning outcomes of the programme:

11. Total contact hours and the breakdown of these hours into lectures, practicals and tutorials:

12. Appropriateness and balance of the assessment techniques in promoting and measuring achievement of the intended learning outcomes:

13. Additional Comments:

14. Name/Signature of External Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3.6

#### The Validation of programmes leading to Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental Awards

- I. This policy is based on the fact that the Institute has received delegated authority status from HETAC.
- II. These awards generally form part of an Institution's Continuing Education programme or they may be used to develop exit awards for learners who have accumulated credit either on full-time, continuing or professional education programmes; or they may involve programmes that have been specially designed for business, industry or the community (by the institute or provided through the institute for a professional awarding body); or they may be used to validate vendor awards.
- III. In keeping with the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, the formal recognition of these awards will permit these programmes to be used as part of individual life-long learning agendas to earn credit either directly through ACCS or as exemptions through RPL (recognition of prior learning) or WBL (work based learning) policies.
- IV. In the case of ACCS programmes learners will receive the academic credits associated with modules drawn from the "Approved Programme Schedules" of the Institute. Where modules are designed and provided, which are not attached to an "Approved Programme Schedule" the number of credits and their level will be agreed with Academic Council under this validation process. In some cases, sufficient credit may be earned to merit either Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental awards. A decision to grant such an award will be the responsibility of the Academic Council and will conform to national nomenclature agreed/determined from time to time with/by HETAC.
- V. In some cases it will not be possible to assign either Level or Credit to some programmes leading to Special Purpose Awards. This is particularly true of Professional Body and vendor awards (eg. IPD, MII, ACCA, APICS, IPVA, MOUS, ECDL, CISCO etc.). In some of these cases HETAC is in negotiation with the Professional Body with regard to mutual recognition agreements. Institutes cannot, through their procedures, anticipate or pre-empt these negotiations. Validation processes in such cases, therefore, are restricted to an examination of curriculum (as provided by the professional body), ability to provide/support the programme and relevance of the Professional award to learners. These determinations are to be made in the context of the Institute's Strategic Plan. The validation procedures should identify potential progression opportunities for holders of this award. Once validated, the programme can legally become part of the suite of programmes offered by the Institute. Credit and Level determinations will then be carried out if and when the award is proffered for transfer or progression purposes. The Special Purpose Award in cases such as this will retain the title of the Professional Awarding Body but will be classified by the Institute under the General Heading of '**Continuing Education – Special Purpose Awards**'.
- VI. The quality assurance policies of the Institute, agreed with HETAC, apply to all programmes leading to these awards. However, the necessity to have a fast turn around in the planning, design and validation of continuing education programmes require a specific set of procedures. Given the fact that most Continuing Education programmes are stand alone, they may need to be validated outside the usual "Approved Programme Schedule" process. Information on validated short programmes should indicate the transfer dividend, if any, (in terms of credit and exemption) with respect to existing "Approved Programme Schedules" in the Institute.

- VII. Programmes which fall under this policy and procedure include:
- i. Professional Body Programmes (*Special Purpose Awards*)
  - ii. New Exit Awards – which carry significant learning and ACCS credit (*Minor Awards*)
  - iii. Programmes which were previously granted a College “Certificate of Attendance”/ “Certificate of Participation” (*Special Purpose Awards*)
  - iv. Vendor Programmes (e.g. Microsoft, Novelle, Intel, Cisco, Lotus, Sun, ECDL etc) (*Special Purpose Awards*)
  - v. Community education programmes (*Minor or Special Purpose Awards*)
  - vi. Industry specific programmes (*Minor or Special Purpose Awards*)
  - vii. Any short programme (210 hours or less) for which academic credit or exemption can be obtained (*Minor or Special Purpose Awards*)
- VIII. Excluded from this policy are so-called “recreation or leisure” programmes. These do not carry academic credit or **any form** of Institutional, or other, certification (see Section 15 (2)(a) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999).
- IX. Under this policy, all programmes must clearly articulate learning outcomes and provide, where relevant, a statement of the number and level of credits available on successful completion of the programme. In general, credits, where awarded, should comply with the ACCS/ECTS system.
- X. The primary filter in assessing whether a proposal should go forward for Academic Council approval is at Departmental level. The new programme should be consistent with the Department’s planning and the Institute’s strategic planning and be capable of being properly resourced within existing budgetary constraints and available physical resources.
- XI. Proposals should be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Executive Board and the Academic Council. The Academic Council will consider the response of the Executive Board and may refer the proposal to the Programmes Committee to be examined for validation.

### **The Programmes Committee**

- I. The Programmes Committee, with the approval of the President, will normally consult with an External Specialist(s). The Programmes Committee and where appropriate, the External Specialist(s), will normally hold at least one meeting with the provisional programme board. The criteria for examining the proposal are:
- Market demand
  - Learner profile/entry requirements
  - Ability of the Department to resource the programme :
    - staff
    - accommodation
    - equipment
    - administration
    - publicity
  - Support for the programme (industry/business/community)
  - Learning outcomes

- Programme content
  - Learning Modes
  - Assessment strategies
  - Duration
  - Level/Credits
  - Transfer/Progression opportunities
- II. The Programmes Committee can make one of the following recommendations:
- a) that the programme be validated
  - b) that the programme be redesigned and resubmitted after further developmental work
  - c) that the programme should not be approved by the Academic Council at this time.
- III. Recommendations of the Programmes Committee are forwarded to the Academic Council for consideration.
- IV. Demand for additional resources occasioned by the new programme must be agreed by the Executive Board of the Institute before the programme can be advertised
- V. Where a Minor, Supplemental or Special Purpose award is recommended, the Registrar, on behalf of the Academic Council, will notify HETAC and request that the award be added to the list of awards delegated to the Institute.
- VI. The Certificate of Programme Validation will be placed on the agenda of the Governing Body. No offers of places will be made on a programme without final Governing Body approval.



**Part C Demand for Programme**

- 1. Summary statement of demand for the programme (please attach relevant documents detailing market or other surveys carried out by you or used by you or copies of correspondence from programme sponsors/external proposers).

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....

- 2. If the programme has been running but did not receive HETAC recognition in the past – but received a Professional Body Award, A vendor Award or College Certificate of Attendance/Completion please indicate this below and give details of the numbers registered over the past three years.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

- 3. Support for the Programme from industry/business/community

.....  
 .....  
 .....

(Attach copies of relevant documentation/letters of support etc)

**Part D Admission Requirements/Equivalencies**

- 1. Minimum entry requirements

.....  
 .....

**Part E Programme Description** (Use additional pages as appropriate).

***Where Professional Body Programmes or Vendor programmes are involved refer in part E to syllabi and programme documents provided by the Professional Body or Vendor which must be attached as an appendix to the submission***

- 1. Learning Outcomes

- i. ....
- ii. ....
- iii. ....
- iv. ....

Part E Module Description (use additional pages as appropriate)

2. Learning Outcomes

- i. ....
- ii. ....
- iii. ....
- iv. ....

3. Module Content

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4. Required reading or other learning media

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.....  
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5. Recommended reading or other learning media

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6. Assessment methods (including WBL, assignments, essays, projects, practical, formative testing, summative testing etc.)

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.....

**Part F Resource Requirements**

- 1. Accommodation
- 2. Staff requirements
- 3. Award Sought

                                             
Minor                      Special Purpose                      Supplemental

4. Justification for seeking an award

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.....

**Part G: Progression or Transfer Opportunities**

In This Institute/Elsewhere:

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.....



## Appendix 3.7

## Ordú na Comhairle Order of Academic Council

Dearbhaímse, Pól ó hAnnagáin, go bhfuil Comhairle Acadúil na hInstitiúide sásta gur féidir le foghlaimeoirí ar an gclár thíosluaite an t-eolas, scil nó inniúlacht atá ag teastáil chun críche na dámhachtana thíosluaite a bhaint amach. Dearbhaím freisin go bhfuil an clár creidiúnaithe don dámhachtain sin faoi Alt 25 d'Acht na gCáilíochtaí (Oideachas agus Oiliúint) 1999, faoi réir na gcoinníollacha atá greanta ar an dTeastas Creidiúnaithe Cláir a ghabhann leis seo, i leith foghlaimeoirí a nglacfar leo idir na dátaí a léirítear.

I, Paul Hannigan, declare that the Institute's Academic Council is satisfied that learners on the programme referred to below may attain the knowledge, skill or competence required for the purpose of the award mentioned below, and that the Council has accordingly validated the programme under Section 25 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999, for that award, subject to the conditions set out in the Certificate of Programme Validation overleaf, in respect of learner intakes within the dates indicated.

Soláthraí Provider	<b>Letterkenny Institute of Technology</b>
Teideal na Dámhachtana Title of Award	
Leibhéal, Cineál Dámhachtana, sa Chreat-Oibre Cáilíochtaí Náisiúnta Level, Award-type, in National Framework of Qualifications	
Caighdeán an Chláir Programme Standard	
Teideal an Chláir Title of Programme	
Cód an Chláir Programme Code	

Paul Hannigan, President

Dáta:

## letterkenny Institute of Technology Certificate of Programme Validation

**PROVIDER****Letterkenny Institute of Technology**

Approved Location(s)

***Letterkenny Institute of Technology***

Title of Award

Programme Title

**National Framework of Qualifications****Level and Award-type****From 1 September 2009 to next periodic  
programme evaluation****Intakes Approved****ECTS Credits****Programme Code****PART 2*****INSTITUTE'S GENERAL CONDITIONS OF VALIDATION***

No significant changes may be made to the validated programme without the prior approval of the Academic Council.

The School should notify the Academic Council of staff changes that relate to the programme, as they occur.

The entry requirements to the programme shall be those approved by the Academic Council and be in line with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland's procedures for access, transfer and progression.

Examinations leading to the award will be externally monitored by Extern Examiners appointed by the Academic Council and consistent with the policy for fair and consistent assessment as determined by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council.

The School should submit to the Academic Council, within six months of the date of issue of this Certificate and from time to time as may be required, a progress report on its compliance with any conditions attaching to the programme validation.

The Institute will ensure that appropriate human and physical resources are available for the provision of the programme.

**Date of validation:****Signature:**