QHub

Providers' User's Manual - Programme Validation

Contents

Introduction:

QHub is a new portal for users of QQI quality assurance and other services. In time it will be a 'one stop shop' for providers and other users who need to access QQI services including:

- Programme Validation – new programmes, revalidation, extensions, closures
- QA Approval – new providers (initial access) and current providers (reengagement)
- Institutional Review
- Certification
- Monitoring of data – institutional and programmatic
- Corporate fitness checks
- Other services yet to be rolled out e.g. International Education Mark, Listed Awarding Bodies etc.

These services will be made available on an incremental basis, starting with programme validation which was rolled out in June 2020. Certification services, already well established, will continue as is but access to the system will be incorporated into QHub.

All systems will avail of a single sign on (SSO); i.e. a username and password will allow a user access to all services for which that user has permission without having to log in twice.

In addition, all usernames will be associated with an Office365 email address (e.g. 38123B@qbsonline.ie or PH78903@qbsonline.ie) which can be used for communication between QHub (QQI) and the user.

Document management: - QHub incorporates SharePoint, a document management system. So any documents uploaded to QHub as part of an application will be securely and confidentially stored while also associated with the application data.

Links to websites: QHub data and documents will be available for publication through QQI managed websites i.e. Irish Register of Qualifications irq.ie, the QQI public website www.qqi.ie and the searchable directory QSearch qsearch.qqi.ie

How do I find QHub?:

QHub can be accessed from the Login button on the QQI public website as shown below.
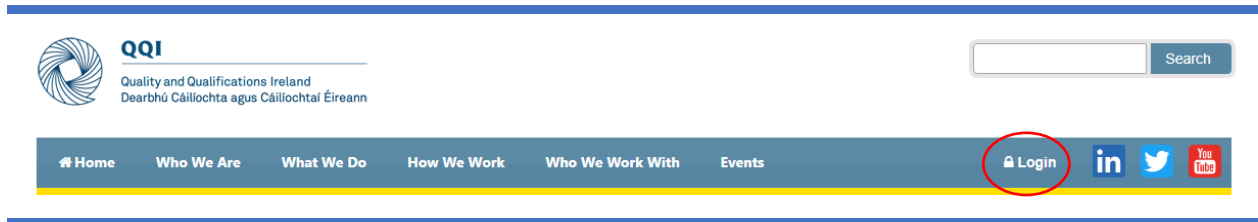
This link will bring you to a further login page where, for now, you choose which system you wish to log into. Each of these can be saved as favourites or shortcuts in your browser if you wish. As all systems get integrated into QHub, this page will become redundant. [1]

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[1] Note that there is a message beside the QHub (Validation) link. This provides information on how to set up a phone for Single Sign On, if you haven't already done so. This is only relevant for new usernames.

Home Page on QHub

When you login to QHub, you will be brought to the home page as shown below. Note this is a test page and the live site will look slightly different.

Side Panel: links to different QQI services. On the live site this list will only show whatever services are currently implemented.
Announcements: information posted by QQI for communication to users of QHub.
Event Calendar: taken from the QQI calendar. These events will include conferences, seminars, PAEC and other governance meetings of relevance to providers.
News Items: - taken directly from the News section of the QQI public website
Key Facts: headline statistics relevant to the provider who has logged into QHub.

To do anything with programmes, click on Programme Management in the side panel.

Programme Management: This part of QHub is designed with two main aims.

> (i)   to give providers improved access to information about their programmes, individually or in groups, validated or in the validation process
>
> (ii)   to allow providers to submit requests for new validation, revalidation, extension of validation or closure of programme(s).

Finding a programme or set of programmes

On the Programme Management page, There are three lists – _All Programmes_ (every programme belonging to the provider), _Due for Review (revalidation)_ – programmes which are approaching the date by which they should be reviewed in preparation for revalidation after 5 years, and _Condition of Validation_ – programmes with one or more conditions of validation outstanding. Each list displays the three programmes most recently updated but can be expanded to a full list by clicking on a _Go to link_ as indicated below.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

All programmes

Programme Code	Programme Title	Award Type	Award Level	Status	Programme State	PAEC Date	Last Intake Date	Last Status Change	Modified By
PG24627	Bachelor of Business in Accounting	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	Pre-submission	New	-	30/11/2025	03/07/2020	pa00331
PG24337	Master of Science in Cloud Computing	Masters Degree	9	Revised Submission	New	07/04/2020	31/08/2025	02/07/2020	wbalfe_uat
PG24112	Higher Certificate in Arts in kkk	Postgraduate Diploma	9	In Screening	New	10/07/2019	31/08/2024	19/06/2020	wbalfe_uat

Go to all 264 items

Due for review (revalidation)

PG21105	Certificate in Personal Debt Management Services	Special Purpose Award	8	Validated	New	11/07/2014	01/09/2018	25/09/2019	User Story 60444
PG22179	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics	Postgraduate Diploma	9	Validated	New	11/04/2018	01/01/2019	12/12/2018	User Story 60444
PG21859	Higher Certificate in Science in Computing Applications and Support	Higher Certificate	6	Validated	New	10/06/2015	01/09/2019	11/12/2018	User Story 60444

Go to all 101 items

Condition of validation

0 programmes

- Note the field headings on the programme lists. Note particularly the Status and Programme State fields.
    - **Status** indicates where the programme is at in the current validation process e.g. New, Awaiting PAEC Decision, Validated, Expired, Withdrawn etc
    - **Programme State** indicates the type of process the programme was submitted for i.e. one of New, Revalidation or Extension

- Click on <u>Full View</u> or <u>All Programmes</u> to get a full listing of programmes
- In Full View you have a table with 10 programmes listed in order of most recent status change. If the programme you want is displayed, you can click on the code or title to open it. If it's not shown you have a number of ways to find it through Searching or Filtering.

Search or Filter (Refer to screenshot below)

- Click on the magnifying glass to search / filter by any one or a combination of the fields.
- A *search* is by 'partial match' i.e. you don't have to enter the full text of what you're looking for. So, if you're looking for an individual programme by code (the best way), the number alone will work without the 'PG' prefix e.g. 24175 will find programme PG24175.
- *Filtering*: you can narrow down a search by specifying what value(s) you want in a field or fields. For example, entering 'Dairy' in Programme Title field will find all programmes with that text in the title. Combine that with other fields as necessary e.g. status, level etc. The search shown below is for all validated programmes at levels 5 or 6 with 'Dairy' in the programme title.
- Some fields allow multiple values for a search e.g. **Award Type** would allow you to search for programmes leading to advanced certificate or an ordinary degree. You just tick which type(s) you want in the drop-down list.
- A very handy 'quick search' is to click on the **In Process** button (arrowed below). This will filter out those programmes which have been submitted to QQI for validation but not finished the process yet i.e. they have not yet gone to PAEC.

Export to Excel / pdf: If you search for a group of programmes and you want to get the list for use elsewhere, you can export the list to an Excel file or pdf by clicking on the relevant icon

Searching and Filtering

Navigating through a programme / Adding a new programme

When you have found a programme you want to read, clicking on the programme code or title will open it for viewing only. It is not editable for a provider unless it is a programme in validation process and at a stage / status where the provider has control e.g. draft, post screening.

If you wish to create a new programme, click on the relevant button in the top right-hand corner, arrowed in the screenshot above.

The information held / to be added about a programme will vary according to the programme variables e.g. HET or FET, New validation or Revalidation, CAS or non-CAS, Apprenticeship or not, PEL or not, Online or not etc. (ref screenshot of typical FET programme below). Nonetheless, there is a common core data structure to all programmes.

QHub will ensure that the essential, mandatory elements of this core structure are captured and will not allow a programme to be submitted without these mandatory elements being met, at least in part.

Header Section

When reviewing a programme or finding specific pieces of information about it, you need to be able to go to the relevant section of the programme quickly. To do this you need to get familiar with the Navigation Bar, as shown below

Navigation Bar

The Navigation Bar has a number of very useful functions.

- It allows you to move back and forward between different sections of the application without having to go page by page
- It tells you which section you are currently on i.e. a dot within an outer circle. In the example shown, it is the Outline section
- It tells you whether the section is complete i.e. all mandatory data complete, or partially complete. A fully complete section will be a blue circle with a tick (e.g. Details below) while and incomplete section will just have a half circle. (e.g. Documents and Awards below)
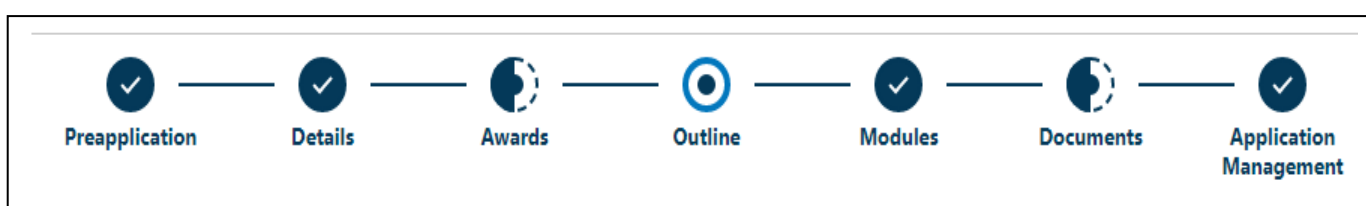
Creating a programme – how long will it take?

To submit a programme for validation, it is essential that the programme is already documented and checked against the validation criteria before approaching QHub. The screens are designed to complement the programme descriptor templates for HET and FET, CAS and non-CAS. That means that completing a submission should be possible in a single session. However, if it's necessary to stop before inputting all the information, it's possible to **Save** the information and the programme will be available to resume when you are next ready. The programme status will show as **Draft**.

It is important to have all the necessary documents available for upload i.e.

Mandatory in all cases for new /revalidation

- Programme Descriptor
- Self-Evaluation against Validation Criteria
- Fee Cover Note

Optional

- PEL Evidence (if PEL applies to the programme)
- Programme Review Report (if the application is for revalidation)
- Extension request (if the application is for extension of validation)

QHub will specify which document types are required for the application being submitted**.** The user specifies the document type before uploading it. Note that multiple documents of a type can be uploaded. Document type 'Other' can be chosen for a document which is not obviously of any one type. (See Documents section below p. 18)

SECTIONS OF THE APPLICATION

Every programme is recorded in a series of named sections, identified in the navigation bar, and each is described below. When entering a new programme, or reading through one previously validated, you need to understand these sections.

Each is described below.

Preapplication:

This section is where the provider identifies the type of programme it is submitting i.e.

Sector: HET or FET
Apprenticeship: Yes or No
Single or Multiple: A *single* programme is stand alone. A *multiple* application implies that there will be a principal programme with one or more embedded programmes.

If the programme is FET, there will be additional information i.e. does it lead to CAS awards?

If the application is Multiple[2] or it is an application for Revalidation[3], then there will be an additional section titled Linked Programmes. See screenshot on next page.

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[2] See page 23 below
[3] See page 25 below

Linked Programmes:

This section gives information about principal programmes, embedded programme(s) or, for revalidation, the previous version of the programme which has been reviewed and is now to be replaced by the programme in process.

In the example below, the programme being viewed (PG24370) is a principal programme with one embedded [4]programme (PG24371). It is submitted for revalidation to replace PG21908, a previous version of the programme.

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[4] See pages 23 and 24 for explanation of embedded programmes

Note below the complementary information shown if the user is viewing the programmes *linked* to the one shown above i.e. (i) PG24371, the programme embedded in PG24370, and (ii) PG21908, the older programme now being replaced by PG24370.

These links are made automatically by the system when the provider is making the application.

Details:

This section is mainly about the provider making the application i.e.

- who the **contact person** for this programme is to be
- **Provider context**: - this should be a short summary of the provider. Note that this info will be published as part of the programme info on the IRQ and should be written with that in mind.
- Which **centre**(s) is the programme to be offered in and how many learners (minimum and maximum) can that centre have on the programme. In most cases, a provider will only have one centre i.e. the provider premises. In some large FET providers i.e. ETBs, Teagasc, Solas, REHAB Group, there are many centres and the provider has to specify which centres from the list of those registered are to offer this programme when validated.
- **Additional Location(s):** this will only be completed if the provider intends to offer the programme in a place(s) other than its own registered centre(s). This does not mean a private provider has to list every hotel it is going to deliver its course in. It's only where a significant part of the programme has to be and will be delivered in a special location e.g. a specified industry partner which has to be used for a work placement.

Awards:

This section is where the main award(s) available on this programme are identified. The appearance and content of the screen in this section will vary depending on whether the programme leads to a CAS award (FET only) or a non-CAS award (HET or FET). The screen will reflect whichever type of programme has been selected by the provider.

Programmes leading to CAS Awards.

In the case of a FET CAS awarded programme, the *linked certificate* is identified by the provider. This is the major, special purpose or supplemental award to which the programme will lead, in whole or in

part.

Target Certificate for Completing Learner: based on the number of CAS components included in the programme and the combination available to the learners, the system will calculate whether the programme can deliver the Linked Certificate or a Component Certificate. *Note that this will show as component certificate until the provider has entered all the CAS components to be offered on the programme. When they are all identified and the system has verified that they meet the certification pool requirements of the linked certificate, the Target Certificate will recalculate.*

In the example shown below the provider is offering a programme leading to a single component in Project Management (15 credits) which is part of the Advanced Certificate in Administration (120 credits) i.e.

the linked certificate. Since the programme will only deliver 15 of the required 120 credits, a successful learner will achieve a Component Certificate.

If the programme offered the full 120 credits required for the Advanced Certificate, then the Target Certificate would calculate as Linked Certificate when the components were entered (Modules section) and the system verified that the certification requirements will be met by the programme.

Note the Select Award and Select ISCED code buttons. These allow the provider to pick the relevant award or ISCED code. A search facility is included where the user can find the awards even if s/he does not know the code.

Programmes leading to Non-CAS Awards

In the case of a *non-CAS* awarded programme i.e. HET programmes and FET apprenticeships and other programmes where a CAS award is not used, the award will only be created if and when the programme is validated. Hence the provider has to set out the attributes of the award that is to be created. See example below. Note that the award code field is blank and will only be completed if and when the programme is validated. The award details and code will be automatically generated by QHub.

Outline:

This section captures a lot of the detail of the programme. The contents are taken directly from the programme descriptor.

It is important that this information be accurate, as when the programme is validated this information will be published through the IRQ (Irish Register of Qualifications).

The information to be entered will vary slightly depending on the programme i.e. information on PEL and online provision will be requested only if relevant.

In this section and others, fields which are mandatory i.e. must be completed by the provider, are indicated by a red asterisk. The provider will not be able to submit the programme until all mandatory fields are completed and all required documents are uploaded.

Modules:

This section contains the most detail. It requires the provider to enter the structure of the programme i.e. stages and modules, and the details for each.

Stages: A programme has to have at least one stage. Short programmes generally only have one stage. Longer programmes, especially those which last longer than a year, will have multiple stages. A four-year degree programme will have a stage per year i.e. Stages 1, 2 and 3 with the final stage of the programme always being the Award Stage. A programme with just one stage will automatically have an Award Stage only.

The information to be supplied about a stage is as follows: the NFQ Level and Credit Value. The credit value is what must be achieved to complete the stage e.g. the stages of a degree will usually be 60 ECTS credits each.

Modules: A stage will be divided into modules, each with its own credit value. Modules may be mandatory or elective and the provider will specify for each the type(s) of teaching and learning used and the various forms of assessment.

Note that a provider will not be able to complete an application unless the credit value for a stage is accounted for by the modules within that stage e.g. a 60 credit value stage must be made up of modules whose credit values total to at least 60. If there are elective modules, then the total will be greater than 60.

Programmes leading to CAS Awards

In programmes leading to CAS awards, the user will specify which CAS component(s) is / are associated with each module.

It is important to remember that a module does not necessarily equate to a component. i.e. in a Health Care Support programme (120 credits), one module titled 'Caring Skills' might lead to three components totalling to 45 credits (Care Skills, Care Support and Care of the Older Person). Having these delivered as one module allows the provider to integrate the learning and assessment for the three components and remove unnecessary duplication often arising from separate delivery. (See screenshot on next page).

This is an issue to be decided when designing and documenting the programme and should be agreed prior to recording the programme on QHub. Suffice to know that QHub allows multiple components to be attached to a module.

Note that a provider will not be able to complete an application unless the credit value for a stage is accounted for by the modules within that stage e.g. a 60 credit value stage must be made up of modules whose credit values total to at least 60. If there are elective modules, then the total will be greater than 60.

Note the three-dot icon against the stage and each module. That allows the user to edit the data for the stage or module as required.

Stage and Module information

Stage 1	Award Stage		Total CAS Credit 45

Stage Information

Stage	Stage NFQ Level	EQF Level	Stage Credit Value	
Stage 1	5	4	120	⋮

✓ Add Module *

№	Programme Module Title	Credit Value	Semester	Elective / Mandatory	Capstone	Mode(s) of Delivery	Class Contact Hours	Directed e-learning hours	
		45	Not Applicable	Mandatory	No	Classroom/Face to face Workplace On-Line	100	50	⋮

Independent Learning Hours	Work based learning hours	Total Hours	Continuous Assessment %	Exam %	Project Assessment %	Workbased Assessment %	Skills Demonstration %
300	0	450	20	30	20	0	30

1. Caring Skills

CAS Components

Award Code	Award Title	Award Level	Award Class	Award Type	CAS Credits	Professional
5N2770	Care Skills	5	Minor	Minor Award	15	☐
5N0758	Care Support	5	Minor	Minor Award	15	☐
5N2706	Care of the Older Person	5	Minor	Minor Award	15	☐

Programmes leading to Non-CAS Awards

In QHub, each stage of a programme has a tab containing all the modules for that stage. The screenshot below shows Stage 1 of a two-stage programme and details for two modules of that stage. The two modules account for 15 of the 60 credits that are required to fully specify the stage.

Note the three-dot icon against the stage and each module. That allows the user to edit the data for the stage or module as required.

Stage and Module information

Documents:

In this section the provider will have uploaded the documents necessary to accompany the programme data. The *document type* is what identifies the document and should be set before uploading the actual file. It's always worth double checking that the actual document matches the document type.

Certain document types are mandatory for all applications i.e. *programme descriptor, self-evaluation report* and fee cover note. If PEL applies, then *PEL evidence* must be attached. If the application is for *revalidation* then a *programme review report* must be attached.

The provider may upload additional documents under any of these document types or as type Other.

When module data is entered, the provider can generate a programme schedule report. If it has been generated, then it will appear in the list as document type *Programme Schedule*. Likewise, the system can generate the *Certificate of Validation* for QQI after a PAEC decision to validate.

Application Management:

This section is used by QQI to track the progress of the programme through the validation process and to record the significant dates.

This section is less important for providers and shows less information. A typical screenshot is shown below.

The most important field in this section, by far, is *Status*. It is this field which controls the progress of the application through the validation process and communicates to QQI and to the provider where in the process a programme is currently at.

Some status changes are made by the system i.e. when the provider submits the programme, the status will change from Draft to New. At that point the provider can no longer edit it but QQI can.

When a QQI person starts screening the programme, s/he sets the status to In Screening and hits the Submit button to save this change.

After screening, if the QQI user deems it necessary s/he can set the status to Draft Post Screening. This will revert the programme control back to the provider who is then able to edit and supply whatever extra information or correction is required.

When the provider has finished these edits, hitting Submit will revert the programme back to QQI and the provider will no longer have edit rights.

Submitting a Multiple Application i.e. a Principal programme with Embedded(s)

Many HET programmes have other programmes embedded within them i.e. all of the modules of an embedded programme are a subset of the modules of a larger principal programme. For example, a Level 8 Honours degree (four year-long stages, 240 ECTS) may have embedded within it an Ordinary Degree (three years, 180 ECTS) and a Higher Certificate (two years, 120 ECTS). It could also have SPAs and / or minor awards associated with specific groups of modules.

Each embedded programme may lead to an exit award i.e. learners are not enrolled onto the programme but may achieve the award if they don't complete the principal programme they enrolled on. e.g. a learner enrolled on the Level 8 programme above may *exit* after two years with a Higher Certificate.

If the provider chooses to have an embedded programme which is marketed separately and onto which learners are enrolled, then it is not an exit award.

This arrangement of principal and embedded programmes can work in FET also. A level 6 Advanced Certificate achieved in two years could have embedded within it a programme leading to a Level 5 Certificate after one year.

If a provider has designed such a suite of programmes, QHub will accept them as a Multiple Application.

Programme sector:

◉ **Higher Education** ◯ Further Education

Is this an Apprenticeship programme?

◯ Yes   ◉ **No**

Is this an application for validation of a Single or Multiple programmes?

◯ Single   ◉ **Multiple (Principal with embedded programmes)**

The user should create the Principal programme first and specify how many embedded programmes there will be.

Linked Programmes

Is this the Principal or an Embedded Programme?   ◉ **Principal** ◯ Embedded   *

How many programmes are embedded in this principal programme?   [2]   *

It is very important that the principal programme has all mandatory data and documents entered /uploaded and that its status show as '**Pre-Submission'.**

It will not be possible to link any embedded programme to a principal which is not at Pre-Submission status.

When the principal programme has been created and saved, the user can then create an embedded programme. The user should identify the programme as part of a multiple programme submission and that it is an embedded programme.

This will prompt the system to ask which principal programme this embedded programme will be part of and will show a list of possibilities for that provider – unlikely to be more than one at any time. When this link is made, QHub will seek to always maintain the connection.

When entering the modules for the embedded programme, the system will present the list of modules already entered for the principal and the user just has to assign them to the relevant stage for the embedded programme e.g. the Award Stage for an Level 5 Certificate will usually contain all the modules from Stage 1 of the Advanced Certificate principal programme of which it is part. Hence, the modules section for embedded programmes can be entered quite quickly.

It is important to note though that other parts of the application may be different e.g. the MIPLOs for a level 5 programme will be different to that of the Level 6. This will need to have already been sorted in the programme descriptors in any case.

It is only possible to submit a multiple application from the principal programme. If it and all the embedded programmes are complete, the submission of the principal programme will include the embedded programmes.

Submitting a Programme for Revalidation

If a programme has been reviewed and a revised programme documented and prepared for revalidation, then the new version should be linked to the previous in QHub.

To do this, all that is required is that instead of creating a New Application, the user should initiate the process from the old version where it appears in the listing of programmes due for review / revalidation.

In the example shown above, the user has clicked on the icon to the right of the relevant programme (Pg21105) and can choose to submit a revised programme or a request for an extension or a notification that the programme will close.

If submitting a programme for revalidation, the system will create a draft copy of the previous programme which can then be edited to reflect changes made following programme review.   Because programmes previously held in QBS have limited data to copy, this is of limited usefulness for now.

Once the copy is created, it can be edited and submitted in the same manner as if it was a new validation.

Once the old version of the programme is ready to be closed i.e. no further learners to complete, then notification of closure can be submitted using this screen.

Submitting a Programme for Extension of Validation

If a programme is approaching the end of its period of validation, it will appear in the list of programmes due for revalidation. If, for whatever reason, the provider is not in a position to revalidate the programme in time it can request an extension of the period of validation. Such an extension needs to be approved by PAEC and QHub can be used to submit the request.

As with revalidation, the request for an extension is initiated by clicking on the three dots beside the relevant programme and choosing the Submit for Extension option.

The user will be prompted to enter the proposed new last intake date for the programme i.e. the new final date by which a cohort of learners can begin the programme. The programme will require to be revalidated before another intake can occur after that date.

As most programmes on QHub will originally have been entered on an older system, many data items and documents mandatory for QHub will not be present and will need to be completed before the request for an extension can be submitted. This is an opportunity to supply the data necessary for an updated certificate of validation.

The user will also have to upload to QHub:

- a document making the case to PAEC as to why the programme should have an extension. This can be upload under the document type '**Other'**
- A fee cover note indicating the fee payable for the period of extension requested. See fee schedule for details.

Bundling, Invoicing and Screening

A *bundle* is a group of programmes which are to be treated as a group for invoicing and for assignment to a panel. Normally they will comprise a principal programme and its embedded programme(s). Sometimes, especially in FET, a bundle may be made up of a group of programmes which are standalone, but which are small enough and closely enough related to be handled by a single panel.

Putting QHub programmes into a bundle is a task for QQI staff but will usually follow what is set out in the Fee Cover Note submitted with the application.

When a bundle is created, QQI will use the Schedule of Fees to assign a fee. This will create a pdf invoice which is available to the provider to download – see *Invoicing* link on side panel of home page.

This will mean that <u>no invoice will issue by post</u>. It is hoped that this will speed up the validation process considerably as delays have often been caused by delays in invoicing and payment.

QQI will screen a programme using the information on the screens as well as the detail in the programme documents. The screening checks carried out are summarised below on the screenshot as shown.

Where information is missing, incomplete or unclear QQI will send screening feedback to the provider and revert the application back for amendment. (See Application Management above)

The Discuss button on the bottom of the screen will be used to carry out interactive messaging between QQI and the provider. These messages will be visible on the QHub Discussion Board and / or at the designated email address for the provider user username@qbsonline.ie

The bell icon on the top of the screen indicates if there are messages to be read.