PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PAEC)

Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 9:30am

via Microsoft Teams

Note of the 69th meeting of the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held via Microsoft Teams, at 9:30am on **28 November 2023.**

Present:	**In attendance:**
Dr Padraig Walsh (Chairperson)	Ms Therese Masterson
Ms Andrea Durnin	Ms Janet Cawley (Secretary)
Ms Barbara Kelly	Ms Alex Keys
Dr Jim Murray	Ms Laura McNamee
Dr John O'Connor	Ms Michelle Gallagher
Ms Mary Grennan	Mr Walter Balfe
	Ms Yvonne Agnew
Apologies:	Mr Brendan O'Dea (*Programmes and*
Órla Barry	*Awards Oversight Committee*)

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Brendan O'Dea, a member of the Programmes and Award Oversight Committee as an observer at the meeting.

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

   The Chairperson enquired and confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to any of the items of business before the Committee.

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 21 SEPTEMBER 2023**

   2.1 The Minutes of the PAEC Meeting held on 21 September 2023 were approved by the Committee.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

   Any matters arising were covered within agenda items and were discussed during the meeting.

4. **NOTE OF THE MEETING, REPORT FOR THE BOARD**

   4.1 Note of Meeting of 21 September 2023

   The Committee APPROVED the Note of the PAEC Meeting of 21 September for publication on the QQI website.

4.2 Report for the Board on the PAEC meeting of 21 September 2023

The Committee NOTED the Report for the Board on the PAEC Meeting of 21 September 2023.

5. PROGRAMME VALIDATION APPLICATIONS

5.1 Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes

5.1.1 **Forus Training**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.1.1.1 PG25488, Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits
PG25559, Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care, Level 5, Major Award, 120 Credits, *non-CAS*

5.1.2 **City of Dublin Education and Training Board**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed reports presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.1.2.1 PG25462, Level 3 Specific Purpose Certificate in Introduction to Climate Justice, Level 3, Special Purpose Award, 10 FET Credits, non-CAS

5.1.2.2 PG25537, Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Digital Citizenship, Level 4, Special Purpose Award, 10 FET Credits, non-CAS

5.1.3 **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificates of Validation:

5.1.3.1 PG25544, Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Immersive Technology, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 5 FET Credits, non-CAS

5.2 Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes – Differential Validation

5.2.1 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB* in May 2022. Each was screened to ensure that there was only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care, Level 6 *(120 FET Credits) non-CAS*
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care, Level 5 *(120 FET Credits) non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **An Cosán:** PG25483, PG25487

5.2.2   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care*.* The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB* in May 2022. Each was screened to ensure that there is only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care, Level 6 *(120 FET Credits) non-CAS*
Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care, Level 5 *(120 FET Credits) non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Longford Women's Link:** PG25484, PG25486

5.2.3   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to Door Security Skills, Level 4, Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *Louth and Meath ETB* in July 2023*.* It was screened to ensure that there is only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Door Security Skills, Level 4 Special Purpose Award, *(10 FET credits), CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **City of Dublin Education and Training Board** - PG25639
- **Cork Education and Training Board** - PG25626
- **Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board** - PG25616
- **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board** - PG25590
- **Tipperary Education and Training Board** - PG25623
- **Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board** - PG25673

5.2.4   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to Security Guarding Skills, Level 4, Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated *for Louth and Meath ETB* in July 2023. It was screened to ensure that there is only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Security Guarding Skills, Level 4, Special Purpose Award, *(10 FET credits), CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **City of Dublin Education and Training Board** - PG25640
- **Cork Education and Training Board** - PG25627
- **Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board** - PG25617
- **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board** - PG25588
- **Tipperary Education and Training Board** - PG25624
- **Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board** - PG25674

5.2.5   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Building Digital Business Skills, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated *for Tipperary ETB* in June 2022. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Building Digital Business Skills, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 10 FET Credits
Certificate in Social Media for Digital Marketing, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET Credits
Certificate in Digital Business Solutions, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET Credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board**
  PG25635, PG25636, PG25634

5.2.6   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Business Innovation and Market Development, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Cavan and Monaghan ETB in* December 2022. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Business Innovation and Market Development, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 30 FET credits
Certificate in Business Idea Generation, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Business Idea Validation, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Market Exploration, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Customer Acquisition, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Market Development, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Customer Retention and Scaling, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board**
  PG25604, PG25608, PG25609, PG25610, PG25611, PG25612, PG25613

5.2.7   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Construction Skills for Energy Conservation, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Laois and Offaly ETB* in April 2023. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Construction Skills for Energy Conservation, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 30 FET Credits
Certificate in External Wall Insulation, Level 5, Minor Award, 10 FET credits
Certificate in Retrofitting Skills, Level 5, Minor Award, 10 FET credits
Certificate in Airtightness and Vapour Control, Level 5, Minor Award, 10 FET credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board**
  PG25592, PG25593, PG25594, PG25596

5.2.8   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Fish Farm Techniques, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Galway and Roscommon ETB* in February 2022. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Fish Farm Techniques, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 15 FET Credits
Certificate in Nutrition and Feed Distribution at Fish Farms, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET Credits
Certificate in Fish Handling and Sea Lice Screening, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET Credits
Certificate in Introduction to Biosecurity, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET Credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Mayo Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board**
  PG25583, PG25585, PG25586, PG25587

5.2.9   The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Limerick and Clare ETB* in July 2023. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 15 FET Credits
Certificate in Lean Principles for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Lean Tools for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Minor Award, 10 FET credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Tipperary Education and Training Board**
  PG25582, PG25589, PG25591
- **Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board**
  PG25632, PG25637, PG25638
- **Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board**
  PG25628, PG25666, PG25667
- **Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board**
  PG25663, PG25664, PG25665

5.2.10 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Cavan and Monaghan ETB* in July 2023. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 5 FET Credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Tipperary Education and Training Board**
  PG25577
- **Cork Education and Training Board**
  PG25625
- **Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board**
  PG25641
- **Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board**
  PG25580

5.2.11 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Using Robotics in Advanced Manufacturing, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Louth and Meath ETB* in July 2022. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Using Robotics in Advanced Manufacturing, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 30 FET credits
Certificate in Fundamentals of Robotics, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits
Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals and Application, Level 6, Minor Award, 10 FET credits
Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals and Integration, Level 6, Minor Award, 10 FET credits
Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals and Robot Programming, Level 6, Minor Award, 15 FET credits
Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals, Developments and Trends, Level 6, Minor Award, 10 FET credits, *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board**
  PG25595, PG25597, PG25599, PG25601, PG25602, PG25603
- **Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board**
  PG25657, PG25658, PG25659, PG25660, PG25661, PG25662

5.2.12 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 3 Specific Purpose Certificate in Learning to Support Primary School Children, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Kilkenny and Carlow ETB* in February 2023. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 3 Specific Purpose Certificate in Learning to Support Primary School Children, Level 3, Special Purpose Award, 25 FET credits
Certificate in Supporting Primary School Children: Learning, Level 3 Minor Award (10 FET Credits)
Certificate in Supporting Primary School Children: Literacy, Level 3 Minor Award (5 FET Credits**)**
Certificate in Supporting Primary School Children: Digital Lit, Level 3 Minor Award (5 FET Credits)
Certificate in Supporting Primary School Children: Maths, Level 3 Minor Award (5 FET Credits), *Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board**
  PG25652, PG25653, PG25654, PG25655, PG25656

5.2.13 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in The Circular Economy in the Workplace, Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB* in April 2023. It was screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in The Circular Economy in the Workplace, Special Purpose Award *(5 FET Credits), Non-CAS*

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programme:

- **Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board**
  PG25642

5.3 Higher Education and Training Programmes – Programme Validation

5.3.1 City Education Group

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificates of Validation:

5.3.1.1 PG24661, Certificate in Special Education, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 15 Credits

5.3.2 National College of Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed reports presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.3.2.1 PG25329, Master of Science in Open Data Practice, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG25330, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Open Data Practice, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits
PG25331, Certificate in Science in Open Data Practice, Level 9, Minor Award, 30 Credits

5.4 Devolution of Responsibility for Validation Sub-Processes
No Business

5.5 Validation of Research Degree Programmes
No Business

5.6 Apprenticeship Programmes
No Business

6. REVALIDATION

6.1 Application for Extension of Validation Period

6.1.1 CCT College Dublin

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. CCT College Dublin requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programme:

6.1.1.1 PG23756, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits

The rationale for this request was as follows:

CCT College Dublin indicated that they wished to extend the duration of the programme for a further 12 months due to ongoing strategic discussions within the college's Executive Leadership Team regarding the scale of new business degree programmes being offered in the Dublin city area. It was their view that this additional extension would allow time for the market to stabilise and enable CCT College Dublin to make a considered decision as to the viability of the programme.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programme above to August 2025.

6.1.2 National College of Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. National College of Ireland requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programmes:

6.1.2.1 PG24508, Certificate in Strategies of Learning and Teaching for P-Tech (Pathways in Technology), Level 9, 10 Credits. Proposed new date of last intake - **30 June 2025**
PG24509, Certificate in Educational Practice for P-Tech, Level 9, 20 Credits. Proposed new date of last intake - **30 June 2025**
PG24592, Certificate in P-Tech Level 6, 10 Credits. Proposed new date of last intake - **1 September 2024**

The rationale for this request was as follows:

NCI indicated that they wished to extend the duration of the above programmes by one year to allow time to strategically review all three programmes, which need to be carried out in partnership with the full P-Tech consortia. Additional time is also required to have improved alignment between the three programmes and the current development and validation of the proposed BA (Honours) Digital and Business Skills degree as a progression option for the P-Tech graduates on these programmes.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programmes as indicated above.

6.2 Applications for Revalidation

6.2.1 **Griffith College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programme for five years, subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.2.1.1 PG25645, Higher Certificate in Healthcare Support Practice, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits (Apprenticeship).

6.2.2 **IICP College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programmes for five years (effective from September 2022) subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.2.2.1 PG24953, Master of Science in Pluralistic Counselling & Psychotherapy, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG24955, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pluralistic Counselling & Psychotherapy, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits *(Exit Only Award)*
PG24954, Certificate in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Level 9, Minor Award, 10 Credits

6.3 Request for Modification of Validated Programmes

6.3.1 **Griffith College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

Griffith College requested modifications to the Certificate of Validation for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Level 8 Major Award and its embedded awards. The modification request is related to inclusion of full-time delivery (and subsequent increase in learner intake numbers).

6.3.1.1 PG24695, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Procurement & Supply Chain Management, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG24696, Diploma in Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Minor Award, 60 Credits
PG24697, Certificate in Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Minor Award, 30 Credits

The Committee APPROVED the modifications to the programmes as requested by Griffith College.

7. FOLLOW-UP ON PAEC RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS IN PANEL REPORTS

7.1 Update on the follow-up of conditions of validation
No Business

7.2 Update on the follow-up of conditions of QA Approval

As part of its internal quality assurance procedures, the executive is required to follow up on any Conditions of QA Approval imposed by the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee.

7.2.1 Dublinia DAC

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. At its meeting on 21 September 2023, the PAEC approved the QA procedures of Dublinia DAC with four conditions of QA Approval. The PAEC then noted that the executive considered the conditions of QA approval numbers 1, 2a and 3 to be met.

The Committee NOTED that the executive now considers condition 2 to be met and that no further follow-up is required.

7.2.2 Irish Wheelchair Association

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. At its meeting on 21 September 2023, the PAEC approved the QA procedures of The Irish Wheelchair Association with one condition of QA Approval.

The Committee NOTED that the executive considers the condition to be met and that no further follow-up is required.

7.2.3 Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. At its meeting on 22 September 2022, the PAEC approved the QA procedures of Markwatch Security Training Services Ltd with three conditions of QA Approval. At its meeting on 1 December 2022, the PAEC noted that the executive considered the conditions of QA approval numbers 2 and 3 to be met.

The Committee NOTED that the executive now considers condition 1 to be met and that no further follow-up is required.

8. QA FOR COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL PROVISION
No Business

9. APPROVAL OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR LEGACY PROVIDERS (RE-ENGAGEMENT)

9.1 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee REFUSED TO APPROVE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (pending mandatory changes being made) the named provider's application for Blended Learning QA Approval. The Provider may submit revised procedures for approval within a six-month period of notification of this decision.

9.2 St. Michael's House

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of St. Michael's House.

The Committee APPROVED St. Michael's House's application to extend its current scope of provision to include NFQ Level 1.

9.3   Central College Limerick

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Central College Limerick.

The Committee NOTED that the executive now considers all conditions of QA approval to be met.

9.4   Scoil Mhuire Community School

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Scoil Mhuire Community School.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS Scoil Mhuire Community School's application to extend its current scope of provision to include collaborative provision as first provider.

The Committee NOTED that the executive considers the condition of QA approval to be met.

9.5   Muintearas Teoranta

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Muintearas Teoranta.

The Committee NOTED that the executive now considers all conditions of QA approval to be met.

9.6   LeanTeams

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of Lean Teams.

10. ROUTINE STANDARDS ACTIVITIES UPDATE
No Business

11. CHANGE OF STATUS OF LEGACY HET AND FET PROVIDERS
No Business

12. REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PAOC)
No Business

13. INTENTION TO WITHDRAW VALIDATION OF PROGRAMMES

13.1   Intention to withdraw validation of programmes

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee NOTED that the following CAS awards and their associated minor awards would be deactivated at the end of December 2023:

- Early Childhood Care and Education - 6M2007
- Early Childhood Care and Education - 5M2009

The executive informed all providers offering programmes leading to these awards that the associated programmes' validation would cease once the awards are deactivated.

In addition, two providers have confirmed that they are no longer offering Healthcare programmes. They have been informed that validation will be withdrawn.

The Committee NOTED the intention to withdraw validation of programmes.

14. SOLAS - UPDATE REPORT ON APPRENTICESHIP

14.1 SOLAS - Update Report on Apprenticeship

The Committee NOTED that SOLAS sent an update report to QQI on apprenticeship. The report indicated that:

- The current focus is on updating and developing the new curriculum and assessment for the five programmes recently revalidated. They are to be in place by Q1 2024.

- SOLAS has some significant staffing challenges. When resolved and new staff are in place, SOLAS will prioritise the implementation of the plan agreed with QQI.

- SOLAS is committed to the wider central reform agenda of a single integrated system.

- DFHERIS has asked SOLAS to prioritise the elimination of the backlog of training places at phase 2. A plan is now in place, led jointly by SOLAS and the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO). As this is a priority project for the Department and the Minister, it has been necessary to focus internal resources on this work.

- In addition to the above, SOLAS is continuing to co-ordinate, on a day-to-day basis, the operations of all 25 craft apprenticeship programmes including scheduling and administration; assessment development and delivery; results; certifications and engaging with apprentices (c22.5k) and employers of craft apprentices.

The QQI executive agreed to:

- Follow up with SOLAS to implement the plan as agreed, as it is imperative that apprentices entering programmes need to be assured that the programmes they are commencing are current and fit for purpose.

- Advise the DFHERIS re QQI's concerns relating to the validation status/fitness of the craft apprenticeship programmes (to meet industry's and learners needs) including that previous validated programmes were never implemented.

15. REENGAGEMENT PROCESS: PROVIDER AND PANEL MEMBER SURVEY

15.1   Reengagement Process: Provider Survey

The Committee NOTED the Reengagement Process: Provider Survey which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

In September 2023, QQI issued a survey to 134 providers that had been evaluated through a QA approval process (reengagement, initial access to validation or extension of scope of provision to include blended learning or FET to HET).

The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback on how to improve the QA approval processes for panels and providers going forward. The survey form asked the provider to rate a number of substantive statements using a 5-point scale going from 5 Strongly Agree to 1 Strongly Disagree. The provider was also invited to suggest how their experience in the area could be improved.

The information will be used within QQI as part of its quality improvement process.

The response rate was 46% - 62/134 providers responded.

While most providers welcomed the level of documentation and information available, a number of smaller FET providers expressed concern in relation to the significant amount of documentation and information and would prefer if there were more summarised documents or templates available.

Overall, providers agreed that access to advice and feedback from QQI staff was invaluable in assisting with the application process.

Overall, providers agreed that the composition of the panel was appropriate and, while acknowledging the challenges posed by the reengagement process, it reflects the underpinning principles of value, context and proportionality, fairness and consistency, and confidentiality.

15.2   Reengagement Process: Panel Member Survey

The Committee NOTED the Reengagement Process: Panel Member Survey which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

In September 2023, QQI issued a survey to 96 panel members who had participated on a QA approval panel (reengagement, initial access to validation or extension of scope of provision to include blended learning or FET to HET) since the last such survey was issued in late 2020.

The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback on how to improve the QA approval processes for panels and providers going forward. The survey form asked the panel member to rate a number of substantive statements using a 5-point scale going from 5 Strongly Agree to 1 Strongly Disagree. The panel member was also invited to suggest how their experience in the area could be improved.

The information will be used within the QA Approval unit as part of its quality improvement process.

The response rate was 57% - 55/96 responded.

While acknowledging that the reengagement process is challenging for smaller FET providers, panel members agreed overall that the process facilitates evaluation relevant and proportionate to provider context and scale.

All panel members agreed that access to advice and feedback from QQI staff was invaluable in assisting with the evaluation process.

Of those panel members who provided qualitative feedback in relation to the virtual context of the evaluation, while recognising the benefits of the online platform, there is an appetite to return to in-person site visits.