

**QQI**Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

# Circular

<b>Reference:</b>	2015-03 QQI CL
<b>Title:</b>	Key Timelines for FET Validation Processes
<b>Issued by:</b>	Validation and Delegation Unit, QA Directorate
<b>Subject:</b>	Implications for providers seeking validation of their programmes from QQI
<b>Recipients:</b>	Further education and training providers registered with QQI
<b>Of interest to:</b>	Providers of programmes validated by QQI; Providers who are seeking initial access to programme validation following successful agreement of quality assurance procedures in Stage 1 of Provider Access to Initial Programme Validation, 2013
<b>Effective from:</b>	02 November 2015
<b>Date:</b>	02 November 2015
<b>Further information:</b>	<a href="http://www.QQI.ie">www.QQI.ie</a> Provider section of <a href="#">QHelp</a> .

To help enhance efficiency within the validation unit for the benefit of all providers, please note the following arrangements which will apply with immediate effect:

1. **ALL queries** relating to validation will be dealt with in rotation through [QHelp](#). We will endeavour to respond within 5 working days.
2. In planning your validation activity for the year, bear in mind that QQI advises a period of **up to 25 weeks** following receipt of payment for the completion of the validation process on a programme application. Please note that validation fees are non-refundable.
3. When an application is made, it must include a **cover page** available on the QQI [website](#) indicating the fee that is considered due to QQI. Please see QQI's [Schedule of Fees July 2014](#). The cover page can be uploaded to the 'Documents' tab of [QBS](#). An initial screening occurs - please allow up to **10 days** for screening. This screening is a cursory view of the documents with a view towards verifying the appropriate fee and does not constitute an evaluation.

If the application is accepted, an invoice will be issued by QQI. Applications will not proceed until the fee has been paid. Providers have **30 days** to pay following the date of invoice or the application will lapse and be withdrawn. A single invoice will be raised where more than one application is received on a particular day from the same provider. Thus, providers who may avail of a single validation fee where an application comprises one or more programmes in the same field of learning must make each of the relevant applications within one working day. Please see Note 1 in QQI's [Schedule of Fees July 2014](#).

Please note that an application will not be accepted for validation where the awards structure is incorrect (that is, all mandatory components in addition to the appropriate amount of credit from elective components must be present for major CAS (Common Awards System) awards), or where the provider has exceeded the credit limit in respect of minor CAS awards (thus necessitating an application for a major CAS award). It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that an acceptable application is made to avoid time delays. For guidelines and information about making an application, please refer to the material available on the QQI [website](#).

**Different arrangements apply in respect of non-CAS FET awards and in this case QQI should be contacted well before an application is prepared.**

4. The number of Requests for Further Information (RFIs) allowed for an application is typically one. More than one RFI will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Thus, there is a responsibility on providers to track the progress of applications on QBS to ensure that any RFI request is answered accurately and comprehensively. Providers will **not** be alerted by email to a possible RFI. Where an RFI is made, the status on QBS will be 'evaluation on hold'. RFIs must be responded to within **21 days** (when response is uploaded to QBS, a provider must alert QQI through QHelp), or the application will lapse and be withdrawn. Again, providers will not be alerted to applications that are inactive and have been withdrawn – the status can be tracked on QBS. Please see QBS for an explanation of how to respond to an RFI. **Please note that validation fees are non-refundable.**
5. No application will be brought to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) in the absence of an appropriate Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL) arrangement being in place. Where PEL is required, the details must be clearly communicated to QQI using the *pro forma* template documents available on the QQI website, along with all necessary additional documentation. The proposed PEL arrangements must be submitted to QQI upon initial application and accepted by QQI at least **30 days** in advance of a PAEC meeting. For further information on PEL, please see the relevant page on the QQI [website](#).
6. All evaluation reports (positive and negative), beginning with reports submitted for the PAEC meeting on 02 December 2015, will be published after the appeal window closes. It is important to note that details provided in the outline tab on QBS are also published on the QQI website.
7. The next PAEC meeting is 02 December 2015. Committee meetings are planned for February, April, June, July, September and December 2016. Exact dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.
8. QQI will only accept applications for FET programmes leading to CAS awards made using current templates. These can be found on QBS. Different formats are used for programmes leading to non-CAS awards and these should be agreed with QQI in advance of making an application.
9. A White Paper in respect of QQI's new draft validation policy is expected to be published for consultation in December 2015. Please note that current policies and criteria will apply for this academic year. Adequate notice will be given of any changes to be implemented.
10. A future circular will address the revalidation of FET programmes.
11. It should be noted that programmes in process and still subject to validation should only be advertised to prospective students accompanied by an explicit note to that effect.