



QQI

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Validation Report of Expert Panel

Part 1: General Information

Provider: National College of Ireland

Date of Visit: July 3rd 2013

Programme Submitted for Evaluation: Diploma in National & International Selling
Leading to the award of: Special Purpose Diploma in National & International Selling, Level 7, \ 60 ECTS

Programme Recommended for Approval: Diploma in National & International Selling
Leading to the award of: Special Purpose Diploma in National & International Selling, Level 7, 60 ECTS

Panel of Experts

Name	Area of Expertise	Organisation
Mr. Cathal Kearney (Chairperson)	Quality Assurance, Business	Head of School of Business and Humanities Dundalk Institute of Technology
Mr. Paul McGuckin	Sales & Business	Lecturer in Business and Sales Management, Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Ms. Claire Minogue	International Selling	Divisional Manager, International Sales & Partnering, Enterprise Ireland
Mr. Cyril Gavaghan	Sales & Business	Lecturer in Business and Sales, Institute of Technology Tralee
Mr. Walter Balfe	Validation	Manager, Awards & Certification, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (Secretary)

1.1 Summary

The Expert Panel, having reviewed the documentation and the responses of the management and programme team of the College during the course of the evaluation meeting, are pleased to recommend approval of the proposed Diploma in National & International Selling subject to the conditions and recommendations in the report.

Part 2 Findings of the Panel

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The proposal by the National College of Ireland (NCI) is for a Diploma in National & International Selling offered in a modular format to be offered on a part time basis. The programme has been developed through the partnership of NCI and the Sales Institute of Ireland (SII). The structure of the



diploma delivers a combination of core and elective modules. The learner also completes a work-based project that will enable learners to pursue sales excellence in a practical setting.

2.2 EXAMINATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The panel met with academic staff of NCI involved in the design of the programme, to examine the programme submission against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated in the *Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010*. The criteria are used by the panel to address the requirements of the provider quality assurance arrangements and specific arrangements, and specific features of programme design.

2.2.1 Education and Training Requirements

The panel was satisfied that the programme was consistent with NCI's mission, that it does not constitute redundant provision and that it makes efficient use of resources. The panel was also satisfied with the NCI's presentation on the rationale for the programme and the research undertaken, including the consultation with industry, before the programme was proposed to QQI.

2.2.2 Protection of Enrolled Learners

Validation of a programme of education and training pursuant to Section 25 of the 2012 Act, is subject to QQI being satisfied that NCI has arrangements in place in accordance with QQI interim procedures on Protection of Enrolled Learners.

2.2.3 Quality Assurance

The panel heard how the submission had been developed and approved internally as a result of the application of NCI's quality assurance procedures. The panel was satisfied that those procedures had been applied to the development of the proposed programme and that quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure its provision, monitoring and review.

2.2.4 Programme Titles and Award Titles

Following discussion, the panel was satisfied that the title of the programme is clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. The panel was satisfied that the proposed title of the programme also encompasses QQI's related named award title.

2.2.5 Ethics

It is expected that providers will have procedures in place to ensure that any teaching and learning or research activity at any level shall be conducted in a manner that is morally and professionally ethical.

2.2.6 Particular aspects of proposed programmes

With regard to the following, the panel found:

- **Unity**

The programme design is consistent with the *Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010* and *Assessment and Standards 2009*. The programme has an underlying unifying theme and the modules are bonded by linkages which are either implicit or explicit. It was also clear how the standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the named award to which the programme proposes to lead, evolve throughout the programme as a whole.



- **Teaching and Learning**

The proposed approaches to teaching and learning were indicated and justified.

- **Teacher-Learner Dialogue**

The modes of interaction between the teaching staff and the learners were elaborated upon satisfactorily. These modes will integrate role play, group and presentation work with use of computer labs for learners in updating social media, blogs and other digital formats. Self-directed learning will include review of case studies for discussion in class, use of online channels of communication to engage in discussion with lecturers and peers.

- **Standards**

The learning outcomes of the programme were stated in such a way that the compliance with the Award Standards for Business determined by the Council for the award of:

Diploma in National and International Selling
Special Purpose Award, Level 7, 60 ECTS

This standard was demonstrated to the panel's satisfaction on the occasion of the visit.

A discussion occurred on the standards of the proposed level of the modules and the panel expressed concern at the level. The panel acknowledged the overall approach to the level 7 HETAC Business Standards and that the programme should more closely reflect the knowledge skill and competence strands required at level 7.

- **Learner Assessment**

The programme's learner assessment methods are fully elaborated and consistent with the 'Assessment and Standards 2009'. The assessment methods are capable, amongst other things, of demonstrating attainment of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by QQI, for the related award.

A discussion around the need for the inclusion of formative assessment in the programme assessment strategy took place and the desirability of integrative assessment, utilising case studies as part of assessment and the need to prepare an assessment calendar was raised by the panel. Also, the repeat assessment practice documented in each module is inaccurate and requires amendment.

- **Access, Transfer and Progression**

The programme incorporates the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and adopted by QQI. The programme is in line with the requirements of the Act and the operational principles of the Authority, and accommodates a variety of access and entry requirements from applicants with expertise related discipline areas and from applicants who demonstrate extensive experiential learning in this field of study.

- **Staffing and Physical Resources**

The panel was satisfied that the necessary staffing levels will be in place and were generally satisfied with the level of qualifications and competence of the staff concerned.

The panel visited the physical resources at the College including lecture halls, tutorial rooms, IT facilities and library. The panel complimented the institute on the level of these resources and are confident that the necessary resources are available for the successful delivery of the proposed programme.

**Part 3 Recommendation**

The panel of experts recommend the validation of the programme:

Diploma in National and International Selling

for the purposes of the award of:

Diploma in National and International Selling (Special Purpose Award, Level 7, 60 ECTS)

Subject to:

QQI's general conditions of approval under Section 84 Transition and Savings Provision, 2012 Act

3.1 Conditions

The panel of experts require that NCI should take note of the following conditions and that a satisfactory response to those conditions shall be received before the validation is considered by QQI.

- C1. A mandatory international sales module shall be included and the content of other modules shall explicitly reference international sales to justify the programme title
- C2. The account management module shall be changed from an elective to a mandatory module.
- C3. All module learning outcomes shall be reviewed to ensure they are at the appropriate level and that the mapping of module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes and HETAC Awards standards is revisited to ensure accuracy.
- C4. Module content, module learning outcomes and module assessments shall be constructively aligned.
- C5. An extra semester shall be added to the programme duration where the work-based project shall be offered and assessed.
- C6. The nature and the management of the work-based project shall be described in greater detail and the assessment methodology defined.

3.3 Recommendations

- R1. Reading lists shall be revised and updated to ensure currency of texts.
- R2. Entry requirement shall be amended to reflect accessibility for non-business graduates with the consequent requirement to amend stated academic progression opportunities.
- R3. Opportunities for team work activity and peer-to-peer learning shall be included in the programme.
- R4. The programme schedule shall be edited in order to remove inconsistencies that exist in relation to programme level.
- R5. Formative assessment shall be incorporated into the programme assessment strategy and each module will have an element of formative assessment. Integrated assessment shall be included, case studies shall be used as part of module assessment and an assessment calendar shall be prepared. Also, the repeat assessment practice documented in each module shall be amended. A word count for all module projects shall be specified.



QQI

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland

- R6. The Module Teaching & Learning Strategy section of each module shall be reviewed to ensure that only the strategies appropriate to each module are documented.
- R7. The module content of all modules shall be reviewed to avoid unnecessary overlap.
- R8. Some financial planning and analysis content shall be included in the programme.
- R9. The programme outcome which requires an appreciation of social, cultural, community and ethical issues in international and domestic sales shall be reflected in module outcomes and content.
- R10. The expected workload of learners shall be reconsidered to reflect their part-time status.



QQI

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Appendix 1: College Staff

Dr Phillip Matthews
Prof. Jimmy Hill
Mr. John McGarrigle
Ms. Sinead O'Sullivan
Mr. Colin Whitson
Mr. Conor Morris
Ms. Deirdre Giblin
Mr. Christian Hughes
Mr. Brendan Fianagan

President
Vice President, Academic Affairs and Research
Registrar
Director Quality Assurance and Statistical Services
Vice Dean School of Business
Chair Sales Institute of Ireland
Head of Professional Development
Associate Lecturer
Associate Lecturer