

Programme Approval in Dublin City University

Page 2: Background/Introduction

- Principles underpinning the approach to approval
 - ESG context as starting-point
 - Coherence in terms of NFQ
 - Proactivity
 - Interdisciplinarity
 - Subsidiarity
- Operational principles
- Steps in the approval process

Page 3: Objectives

- Ensure strategic relevance and business case (validation – internal university decisions)
- Ensure academic standards and fitness for purpose (accreditation - external expertise)
- Make recommendations for improvement, enhancement (accreditation - external expertise)

Page 4: Methods/Actions

- Collaboration with other institutions as appropriate
- Building on strengths and avoiding duplication
- Use of data from institutional analysis/research
- Focus on quality in terms of process and content
- Relationships with external professional bodies
- Intensive advance and ongoing communication with programme proposers
- Closing the loop: documentation and follow-up

Page 5: Results/Achievements

- Synergy obtained by bringing external experts together
- Reputational enhancement for the university in terms of both processes and standards
- Even the best proposals are improved by the process
- Openness to all outcomes: learning achieved even if programme not approved
- Learning can be applied to future programme development

Page 6: Challenges

- Increased competitiveness with decreased resources
- Articulation with other processes (internal and external), especially other quality assurance processes
- Breaking down of boundaries between new programmes and other types of initiative
- Changing requirements of external professional bodies
- Balancing thoroughness of procedure with flexibility of response to emerging needs
- Balancing thoroughness of procedure with need to avoid overload and respect academic independence
- Balancing Faculty aspirations with central unit resources
- Need for particularly thorough preparation of cross-institutional initiatives

Page 7: Conclusions

- Programme approval as first stage of ongoing quality assurance process in relation to programmes
- Programme review (in terms of both viability and standards) complements approval (review procedures are in the process of being enhanced)
- Programme approval also to be considered in a holistic perspective which includes a range of other processes, e.g. teaching quality evaluation, enhancing the student experience, administrative excellence.

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Objectives

Validation – internal university decisions



Ensure (a) strategic relevance and
(b) business case

Accreditation – external expertise



Ensure academic
standards and
fitness for purpose



Make
recommendations
for improvement,
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Methods/Actions

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Approval, monitoring and periodic review of
programmes and awards

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