

Education Programme Request and Approval Procedure (ED-SOP-028)

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Department	Education Development Department
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Approving Body	Academic Board
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Related Documents	ED-Pol-026 - Programme Development Policy ED-SOP-029 - Curriculum Development Procedure ED-T-031 - New Programme Business Case Template ED-T-032 - Programme Viability Financial Model

1. Receipt of Proposal and Initial Programme Feasibility Assessment

- 1.1 Programme proposals may arise from a range of sources including Directors, Deans, clinical leads, members and fellows, staff and through market research.
- 1.2 Once a programme is proposed, it is first shared with the Academic Board and assessed for its compatibility with RCPIs vision and mission, and whether it is deemed to be a suitable programme for RCPI to offer learners. If deemed suitable, the Academic Board refer the proposal for Senior Management Team (SMT) consideration to determine if it is commercially viable and the resource requirements are available to develop and deliver the education programme.
- 1.3 A programme feasibility assessment is prepared so that SMT can consider if the proposed programme is commercially viable and outline the resource requirements.
- 1.4 A benchmarking process is undertaken to assess if there are similar programmes already offered by other institutions. The value proposition of the proposed programme, as well as the potential target audience is considered with detailed analysis conducted as to the costs of developing and delivering such a programme, and the revenue which could be expected. This is considered together with the resources required to develop and deliver the programme, and an assessment made as to whether a collaborative partner provider will be considered or not. This information gathered as part of the programme feasibility assessment is captured in New Programme Business Case Template (ED-T-031) and Programme Viability Financial Model (ED-T-032)
- 1.5 The completed New Programme Business Case Template (ED-T-031) and Programme Viability Financial Model (ED-T-032) is submitted to the SMT who consider the proposal and either:
 - refer the programme proposal to proceed to the Academic Board for initial approval if commercially viable
 - refer it back to the proposer seeking further information/amendments; or
 - decide not to proceed further as the programme is not commercially viable.

2. Academic Board Approval

- 2.1 Consideration of the new programme request is put on the agenda of the next Academic Board meeting.
- 2.2 The Academic Board assesses the appropriateness of the proposal focusing on academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities to ensure the draft outline of an education programme is well thought out and provides a high-quality academic experience for all learners.
- 2.3 The following documentation must be sent to the Academic Board for decision:
 - Educational and pedagogical rationale
 - High level programme specification (adhering to all relevant Policies and Procedures)
 - Outline of programme content

- Proposed Learning Outcomes
- Market research report (if available).

2.4 The Academic Board will consider whether the design and content of proposed programme specification:

- Allows learners appropriate opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- Takes account of best practice and external reference points where relevant
- Is compliant with relevant QQI guidelines and consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications
- Reflects learner consultation as appropriate

2.5 The Academic Board decides whether to proceed or not, as well as any conditions that their decision may be subject to.

2.6 If the programme is approved, the Academic Board will establish a Programme Board, as described in the Curriculum Development Procedure (ED-SOP-029), to oversee the development of the programme, refer to Programme Board Terms of Reference (GOV-TOR-008)

2.7 Once developed the programme will be submitted to the Academic Board for final approval going live. The final judgement of the programme by the Academic Board will be against the criteria set out at the beginning of the programme development. The Academic Board will ensure the programme has met the specifications it set out to meet such as:

- Programme and module teaching and learning strategies
- Programme and module assessment strategies
- Award structure including access, transfer, and progression
- Satisfaction of award standards
- Credit allocation, learning hours
- Any programme-specific quality assurance