![QQI - Quality and Qualifications Ireland / Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann]

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training

Part 1

Provider name	Carlow College
Date of site visit	14/3/2018
Date of report	13/4/18

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) (Level 8)
	Award	Bachelor of Arts
	Credit	60
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions[1] OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory

Embedded programme	Title	N/A
	Award	
	Credit	
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	
Module2	**Title**	N/A

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[1] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

Further, in exceptional cases the 'special conditions' may be used to identify parts of the application that are considered satisfactory on a stand-alone basis. For example, an application might propose a programme to be provided at two locations but the independent evaluation report may find the application satisfactory on condition that it be provided only at one specified location and not at the other. These conditions will not however be used to recommend that QQI can be satisfied with a programme conditional on a different QQI award (e.g. at a lower NFQ level or having a different CAS award title) being sought than the one identified in the application.

[2] Discrete modules are only validated on a stand-alone basis if they are to lead to a QQI award.

	Award	
	Credit	
	Recommendation Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory	2

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	**Role**	**Affiliation**
Prof Margaret Kelleher	Panel Chair	Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama, UCD
Dr Michael Tobin	Panel Secretary	Head of Lifelong Learning, Athlone IT
Prof Fred Powell	Academic Expert	School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
Dr Anne Cleary	Academic Expert	Lecturer, Geary Institute, UCD
Dr Kevin Lalor	Academic Expert	Assistant Head of School of Languages, Law & Social Sciences, DIT
Mr William O'Rourke	Industry Expert	Regional Manager Children's Residential Services Dublin North East Tusla - Child and Family Agency
Ailbhe Rogers	Learner Representative	PhD Student (History), Maynooth University

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
Carlow College, College St, Carlow	120	40

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	September 2018
	Date of last intake	September 2022
Maximum number of annual intakes	1	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	120	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	12	
Target learner groups	Learners who have successfully completed a level 7 BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) or equivalent	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time/Part-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	Combination of face to face workshops/lectures and online supports: • Lectures • Experiential Groups • Workshops with Guest Lecturers • Workshops with learners from different stages	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	This is a one-year add-on programme for learners who have successfully completed the BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) or equivalent. On the BA (Hons) programme learners will acquire knowledge and skills applicable for leadership roles in professional social care work. The programme also prepares learners for post-graduate study by engaging them in critical investigation, analysis and evaluation of contemporary social issues.	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	Level 9 and/or upwards in cognate area • Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications • Professional based practitioners in Social Care and related fields with academic qualifications	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	20:1 Workshops 120:1: Lecture 8:1 Dissertation	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
PG20130	BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	2017

Embedded programme – N/A

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners

Enrolment interval *(normally 5 years)*	**Date of first intake**	
	Date of last intake	
Maximum number of annual intakes		
Maximum total number of learners per intake		
Programme duration (months from start to completion)		
Target learner groups		
Approved countries for provision		
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time		
The teaching and learning modalities		
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)		
Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff		

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**

Module[3] - N/A

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners

Enrolment interval *(normally 5 years)*	**Date of first intake**	
	Date of last intake	
Maximum number of annual intakes		
Maximum total number of learners per intake		
Programme duration (months from start to completion)		

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[3] This only needs to be completed where modules may be offered independently. Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards.

Target learner groups	
Approved countries for provision	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	5
The teaching and learning modalities	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
	N/A	

Programmes being replaced

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
PG20130	BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	2017

Other noteworthy features of the application

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluators completing this report are expected to understand **Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training 2016**.

Note that in making its determination QQI
- Will consider the findings of the validation process including the **independent evaluation report** along with the applicant's response to this report;
- May consider any other information received in respect of the process;
- May consider an account of the conduct of the process and its context noting any concerns or complaints expressed by the applicant.

The independent evaluation report must address whether the programme meets the validation criteria in general and in detail.

The independent evaluation report must, for each programme, embedded programme and module that leads to a QQI award:
(1) Outline the salient characteristics of the proposed programmes (Part 1);
(2) Outline whether and how the QQI validation criteria and sub-criteria are addressed by the application for validation citing evidence from the application documentation and other findings (e.g. from the site visit);
(3) Address whether the principal programme, and any embedded programme, and any module proposed to lead to a minor award, meets the validation criteria in general and in detail. (Part 2 and Part 3)
(4) Include one of the following overall conclusions in light of the applicable validation policies and criteria:
    - Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3 of Core **policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training**);
    - Satisfactory subject to proposed special6 conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (minor) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
    - Not satisfactory.
(5) Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. **If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence.** A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

All independent evaluation reports are required to provide a rationale for any proposed special conditions and recommendations to the provider as well as the overall conclusion.

The report may also propose recommendations for consideration by the provider.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).

Part 1A, does not normally require completion, and only needs to be addressed when the proposed new programme extends of the scope of provision.

After a provider has had a programme validated it may seek to extend the approved scope of provision by applying for validation of a programme that extends the scope. A more elaborate evaluation process may be required when scope is to be extended. This may require the provider to first modify its quality assurance procedures to extend their scope and have these approved by QQI.

Validation alone may extend the scope to a limited extent (e.g. within the provider's existing approved QA procedures).

Comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme.

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

QQI's validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey panels.

Criterion 1

The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme
a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.
b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.
c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[4]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme**

Principal programme

Carlow College meets the prerequisites of Section 44(7) of the 2012 Act. The panel met with the President who confirmed orally and in writing the veracity of all the information provided and confirmed that all the applicable criteria have been met.

Embedded programme[5]

N/A

Module leading to a QQI award[6]

N/A

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[4] This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

[5] Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes.

[6] Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards.

Criterion 2

The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought

    a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.

    b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.

        (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.

    c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).

    d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.*

    e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

    f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are

        (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.

        (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.

    g) For each programme and embedded programme

        (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.[7]

        (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.

    h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.

    i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[8]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

Detailed discussion took place between the panel and the programme team with respect to this criterion and the panel is satisfied that criterion 2 is fully addressed for this programme.

The programme aims and objectives are clear and consistent and are expressed plainly.

The programme title BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) is consistent with the QQI award sought and is otherwise legitimate. The panel is satisfied that the rationale for the inclusion of the word 'Professional' in the title is appropriate and supported by the structure and content of the programme. In discussing the programme title, the programme team explained that the title reflects the changes occurring within the profession and the need to align with the requirements of CORU. **The panel recommends that the new title be put forward for validation.**

The panel, having examined the alignment of Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes against the QQI award standards, is satisfied that Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes have been clearly and explicitly expressed and are consistent with the QQI Award Standards Social Care Work (2014) level 8. The MIPLOs were further researched and developed by adherence to the Standards of Proficiency for Social Care

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[7] Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

[8] Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

Workers, (CORU, 2016); Criteria for Education and Training Programmes (CORU, 2016); Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes: information for Education Providers (CORU, 2017); How to *How to Conduct Research for Service Improvement: A Guidebook for Health & Social Care Professionals, ((HSCPs) Education and Development Unit, 2015)*; *Third Level Liaison Framework (Subgroup 1 & 4) membership.* Furthermore, Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes are explicitly specified in all module descriptors throughout Section 6 of the modified programme documentation.

Criterion 3

The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)

  a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.[9]

  b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.

   (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.

   (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.

   (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).

   (iv) There is evidence[10] of learner demand for the programme.

   (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[11].

   (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[12]

  c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

  d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

  e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based.

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

- In designing the proposed programme for revalidation, Carlow College engaged extensively with many stakeholders, such as learners, graduates, lecturers, employers and staff as evidenced in the documentation. The feedback has been taken into account in the design of this programme. Following employer feedback, a new module 'Professional Development and Employability Skills' has been incorporated into the programme to place greater emphasis on learners acquiring skills and competencies.

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[9] Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

[10] This might be predictive or indirect.

[11] It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

[12] There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

Carlow College compared its programmes with three similar programmes in the IT sector – IT Tralee, Athlone IT and IT Blanchardstown. The Carlow College programme compares favourably with these programmes and some key differentiating features of Carlow College were noted as follows:

i. Research – there is an apparent shift from traditional dissertation-based research to research projects and proposals based on practice areas. The programme contains a full dissertation-based research project. This approach has proven to be an effective teaching and reflective learning strategy in the past. The question remains about the resource implications of supporting learners in undertaking primary research, often relating to the social care field and practice. However, it is worth noting that several other colleges continue to contain a thesis-based research project at honours degree level.

ii. Employability – feedback from current and past learners mentions the preparedness for employment. The professional field of social care presents a complex picture in terms of employment and career structure. Agency work, contract work, compliance, registration, regulation and CPD add to a fluid employment context for 'new-to-practice' Social Care graduates. This has been addressed with the introduction of a bespoke 'Employability' module. This is an opportunity to facilitate learners to take stock as they emerge into a field of work that is itself emerging as a profession in its own right.

iii. Alignment with Level 8 Awards Standards – locating specifically 'beyond' qualification standard: the timing of this review and revalidation process coincides with the publication of a suite of guidance documents from CORU. This has afforded Carlow College the opportunity to align its programme content with Social Care proficiencies identified by CORU. This, in turn has enabled the development of the add-on degree as a distinct offering beyond professional qualification level, with particular reference to building emergent and assigned leadership capacity.

- **The panel recommends that Carlow College review and exploit the rich interdisciplinarity potential across its programmes to ensure the most efficient use of modules and to reduce workload where relevant.**

- The panel noted that the demand for this programme has continued to increase over the last decade.

- The panel note that there are sufficient employment opportunities for graduates. 73% of respondents to a recent Carlow College Graduate Survey are working either full-time or part-time with many working for employment agencies in the community and voluntary sector. Furthermore, Carlow College referred to employers' satisfaction with graduates in a number of key competencies. These included a good knowledge of social care theory and practice; a fluency and proficiency in written communication; confidence and clarity in verbal communication; ability to work effectively as part of a team; self-awareness and reflexivity and a critical understanding of the dynamics of relationships.

- The panel finds that the programme meets genuine education and training needs. The variety and range of modules on this one-year add-on programme offers an opportunity for learners to explore, evaluate and critically assess specialist areas of professional social care in greater detail than in previous Stages. The specialised modules offered in this add-on programme and the range of electives develop further the skills-base for the expanding field of social care, and the adherence to professional standards. The programme further prepares learners for post-graduate study, leadership roles in social care practice, and the ability to use advanced skills to conduct research in a variety of contexts, contributing to the on-going development and enhancement of social care services.

Criterion 4

The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory
a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied[13].
b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.
c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL[14]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):- (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory.

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

Procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with QQI's policy and criteria in this area. Information that will be made available to learners is clear, and generally, explicit. Programme information is available in a range of accessible formats such as the Student Handbook, the college prospectus and website, lecturers on the staff team. Learners are aware of what is expected from them and what they can expect from the programme. The panel are satisfied with Carlow College entry procedures and procedures for recognition of prior learning as outlined on pages 23-27 of Section 8 (Modified Programme).

The programme title is learner focused, meaningful to learners and has long-lasting significance and complies with all applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

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[13] Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings
- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

[14] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

Criterion 5

The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose
a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.
e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[15].
f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
j) The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.[16]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose.

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The written curriculum is laid out clearly and it is suitably structured, well integrated at all stages and modules and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. Its content is similar to those of Social Care programmes in other Irish third level providers. Carlow College outlined the framework that guided the overall process in terms of credits and equivalent workload allocations and how the programme learning outcomes would be met. This model was then used to identify how module learning outcomes would be achieved.

The module descriptors are comprehensive and systematically oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended programme learning outcomes. The objectives and purposes of the programme's modules are clear to learners and to the lecturing staff. The extensive module documentation provided in Section 6 is very thorough. **The panel recommends that research modules be revised and updated to include a greater variety of methodologies and to focus on both qualitative and quantitative methods, drawing from the findings of the Growing Up in Ireland Study.**

In this add-on degree, the credit allocation is 60 ETCS and the required learner effort is based on a calculation utilising 125 hours of learner effort per ECTS, consistent with QQI award standards.

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[15] This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.
In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.
[16] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

Criterion 6

> **There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**
>
> a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to-practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).
>
> b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[17] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.
>
> c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners' achievements as required.
>
> d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development[18] opportunities[19].
>
> e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.
>
> f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel met with the programme team who would be involved in teaching learners as part of this programme. The qualifications and experience required, as specified within the programme documentation, was evidenced in the CVs of existing staff – almost all at doctoral level or completing doctorates. The panel sought clarification on the average contact hours for full-time staff and career progression pathways for staff. **The panel recommends that the College introduce research leave for staff, including those post doctorate, to enable academic publication and larger-scale research activity.**

Carlow College referred to the recent introduction of the workload allocation policy and its attempt to balance workloads in terms of teaching, research and service. **The panel recommends that the provider should also consider as a matter of priority, a career progression pathway for staff**.

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[17] Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

[18] Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

[19] Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).

b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:
   (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)
   (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
   (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
   (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
   (v) technical support
   (vi) administrative support
   (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable

c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).

d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
   (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
   (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.

e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**There are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

Criterion 7 is fully addressed for this programme and there are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned. The panel saw at first hand the physical resources of the college. The panel toured lecture halls, libraries, archives, Students' Union and student recreation facilities, Academic Administration, Academic Resources, dining hall, learner accommodation and was impressed with the facilities of the College and the manner in which they are maintained.

The panel meeting featured discussion on library facilities and the availability and expansion of online resources for learners. **The panel recommends that staff act as more active mediators in making up-to-date resources available and known to students***.* There was further discussion on the evolution of IT facilities with Carlow College noting the introduction of Moodle and Office 365 to allow learners more access and cloud storage, a college email for all learners and an updated infrastructure in the IT hardware network and firewalls has recently been implemented and allows for further scaling in the future. The panel queried the provision of staff training on information literacies and there was also discussion on digital strategies and the need to keep up-to-date with current trends in the area of mobile devices. **The panel recommends the identification of a clear minimum requirement for staff in their use of Moodle and Turnitin.**

An outline five-year plan has been provided for the programme. The panel met with the President and Director of Operations to address the five year plan and the panel are satisfied that Carlow College has the resources to cover any deficit that may arise.   Plans to address a likely deficit are in place and the College has the financial resources to cover any deficit that may accrue.

Criterion 8

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners

a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.

b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.

c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The learner experience – physical, social, cultural, intellectual - is fully supported throughout the College. Learners can interact with fellow learners, lecturers, tutors, Academic Advisors, Academic Resource Office, Chaplaincy, Counsellors, administrative staff, Library staff, Dining Hall etc. Learners are further supported in their first year through a specialised induction programme and academic skills workshops. **The panel recommends that this be further enhanced by the development of a formalised Peer Assisted Learning model.**

Learners are supported in their first year through a specialised induction programme and academic skills workshops.   The panel meeting featured discussion on the role of the Essay Doctor and writing workshops that are offered to learners. **The panel recommends that this be built upon further to educate students in diverse modes and registers of writing, reflecting changing requirements of current workplaces.**

Overall, the panel were impressed with the learning environment and how supportive the programme team were of the College's learners and this was evident in the comments of the learners at the site visit.

Criterion 9

There are sound teaching and learning strategies
a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).
d) Learning is monitored/supervised.
e) Individualised guidance, support[20] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**There are sound teaching and learning strategies.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The teaching strategies are specified at module and programme level. Carlow College has a Teaching and Learning strategy that is learner centred and allows learners to take ownership of their own learning. The panel meeting featured discussion on the Institute-wide *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy* (2018-2023). This strategy identifies objectives in the areas of curriculum design and providing supports for good practice in teaching, learning, assessment and feedback. The panel queried whether there was an implementation plan in place for the strategy. The panel were informed that a draft Implementation plan has been drawn up by the Teaching and Learning Committee which identifies both immediate and longer-term actions and assigns responsibility for the implementation of these actions. The implementation plan is awaiting discussion and agreement at the next Academic Council meeting. Improving the use of technology/technology assisted teaching is part of that process. The Teaching and Learning Committee is aware of current best practice in this area and offers CPD opportunities for staff. **The panel recommends that the Implementation Plan be finalised and have clear milestones and measures for regular review of the implementation of individual components.**

The panel meeting featured discussion on the mechanisms available for student feedback e.g. student effectiveness questionnaires, end of year programme evaluations and turnaround time for student feedback on assignments. Formative feedback is given to learners via written feedback, online via Moodle and on a one-to-one with the lecturer. **The panel recommends that each programme should take greater control of student feedback measures.**

The panel queried if there was a dissertation handbook available to learners. The College clarified that while the information is available on Moodle and handed out in class, there was no specific handbook in place as of yet. **The panel recommends that a College Dissertation Handbook be produced.**

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[20] Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies

a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[21]

b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.

c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.[22]

d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.

e) There is a satisfactory written **programme assessment strategy** for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.[23]

f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable.

g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.

h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.[24]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**There are sound assessment strategies.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel queried the approach to the allocation of assessments on the programme. Carlow College outlined that the programme seeks to ensure that assessment fairly measures learner achievement by ensuring that a range of assessment methods are used throughout the programme, not only to support the development of a variety of skills and knowledge areas, but also to support learners' different learning styles and abilities. The panel finds that assessment is consistent with Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI awards. The programme is aligned with QQI quality assurance procedures and its specific procedures are fair and consistent for the assessment of learners. Carlow College further outlined that the programme design process was based on an integrated process of constructive alignment which required that all MIMLOs relate to the overall MIPLOs and that the assessment approach at modular level clearly links to demonstrating achievement of MIMLOs.

There is a substantial amount of formative assessment provided on the programme as noted at 5.6 of Section 8. An example of formative assessment to support learning is the Dissertation module. This begins with a Research topic, which is developed into a Research Proposal, which is further refined through a Literature Review, and on-going feedback is given for each section. The Dissertation is a capstone project which helps learners practice advanced research skills and self-directed study, thus preparing them for post-graduate study. The curriculum is designed to provide learners with opportunities for deeper and more specialist learning, analysis and skills-application. This in turn fosters active learning and allows learners to take ownership of their learning. **The**

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[21] See the section on transitional arrangements.

[22] This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

[23] The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

[24] If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

panel supports the approach to formative assessment but recommends that it should employ standards that reflect both learner and staff workloads.

The review of the programme indicates that over-assessment has been a problem in the past. The summary table at 5.10 of Section 8 indicates the variety of assessments proposed, taking into account the feedback re over-assessment and attempts to vary the type and length of assessment used in order not to disadvantage any particular style of learner.

The Carlow College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, along with its associated Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards clearly outlines guidelines and procedures for all aspects of assessments.

As so many learners are also working, as evidenced particularly by this programme, **the panel also recommends that Carlow College should develop strategies on how to increase and monitor attendance across all programmes.**

Criterion 11

Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for
a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.
b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.
e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.
f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.
g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.
h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[25].
i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[26] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.
j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel agree that learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for. This is evidenced through programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners. The function and remit of the Programme Board was discussed at the site visit, along with its monitoring and responsiveness to learner enrolment, progression and feedback.

All learners are registered on Moodle to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments. The Programme Handbook and other supporting documentation set out arrangements regarding the personal, professional and educational development of the programme. Student Services personnel are available to support learners through any personal difficulties that may occur during the course of their studies. In particular, the Academic Resource Office is a notable addition to Carlow College's academic portfolio. The office provides supports for learners who have special education and training needs and makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities on the programme. Supports for students with disabilities is based on an individual needs assessment

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[25] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).
[26] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

and there is assistive technology supports available also. Supports are tailored to meet individual student needs e.g. mature students, first generation learners.

Learners are also guided in their academic progress by the provision of substantial feedback on assignments by lecturers.

Criterion 12

The programme is well managed
a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures. b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not. c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff. d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources. e) Quality assurance[27] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved. g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**The programme is well managed.**

Principal programme

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

Carlow College has, throughout its documentation, articulated the role of programme staff, the Programme Board Chair, the Office of the Registrar, the Academic Council and External Examiners. The programme is fully staffed. It has the physical resources to meet its needs and its Management procedures are coherently minuted. The programmes QA procedures are fully in line with QQI's updated statutory QA guidelines. All the College's Quality Assurance procedures are published on the college website.

Furthermore part 10 (evaluation against the validation criteria) in Section 8 offers a helpful overview of all 12 criteria. The panel is content that Criterion 12 is fully addressed for this programme and that the programme is well managed.

The panel wish to acknowledge that the documentation received from the College greatly assisted the panel in its task.

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[27] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Overall recommendation to QQI

1.1 Principal programme

Select one	
Satisfactory	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[28]
	Not satisfactory.

1.1.1 Reasons[29] for the overall recommendation

The programme documentation (including supporting documentation) has been thoroughly reviewed by the panel. Programme material was made available to all panel members three weeks before the site visit and preliminary comments were submitted by panel members to the Chair and Secretary in the week before the site visit.

The site visit commenced with a panel pre-meeting on the evening of 13th March 2018. A full day's meeting with the programme team and stakeholders was held on the 14th March 2018. The panel concluded that the proposed programme is satisfactory. Recommendations were issued to the College to which the programme team responded. The College forwarded a formal response to the recommendations and amended programme documentation to the Independent Panel for consideration.

The Independent Panel have evaluated the programme against the validation criteria (and sub-criteria) and considers the proposed programme, BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care), to be satisfactory and recommends the programme to QQI for revalidation.

1.2 Embedded programme – N/A

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[30]

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[28] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

[29] Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

[30] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent

	Not satisfactory.

1.2.1 Reasons[31] for the overall recommendation

1.3 Module – N/A

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[32]
	Not satisfactory.

1.3.1 Reasons[33] for the overall recommendation

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

Not applicable

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Below are the recommendations issued by the panel to the provider, with the provider's response noted underneath each one. The response in depth to these recommendations can be found in Carlow College's document entitled to 'Response to Recommendations of QQI Independent Panel, 27 April 2018'.

1. The proposed revised title is recommended for validation.

The College welcomes this recommendation.

2. The provider should update and restructure module reading lists to reflect recent advances in scholarship (both book publications and journal articles); it is recommended that staff act as more active mediators in making up-to-date resources available (in the library and online) and known to students.

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evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

[31] Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

[32] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

[33] Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. This is an ongoing process and mechanisms in place will be improved to ensure that the Reading Lists reflect advances in scholarship and that there is clear communication with the Library regarding Reading Lists in advance of the commencement of a module. Staff will be required to review their Reading Lists prior to the start of the academic year, to place the updated List on Moodle and to liaise with the Library to ensure updated resources are available for students.*

3. The provider should improve subscriptions to Library Databases and other electronic resources. It is recommended that the Institute explore means of strategic collaboration (e.g. IReL) to maximise availability of digital learning resources.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. We will re-evaluate and upgrade subscriptions to Library resources and other electronic resources. We recognise the opportunity offered through strategic collaborations to maximise access to digital learning resources and will actively explore these in the coming academic year. This work will be undertaken in the first instance by the Learner Resource Committee.*

4. The provider should require all lecturers to be consistent in their use of Moodle and Turnitin; to achieve this, it is recommended that the College identify a clear minimum requirement and disseminate this to all staff (PT and FT).

> *The College accepts this recommendation. Actions 3.1, 3.3 and 6.3 of the Implementation Plan of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy address this.*

5. In line with the prominence given to research within each programme, it is recommended that research modules are revised and updated to include a greater variety of methodologies and focus on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Existing datasets e.g. Growing Up in Ireland can be utilised to enable students gain experience of quantitative analysis.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. Continuous Assessment will use the Growing Up in Ireland datasets to encourage learners in manipulating, interpreting and analysing large data formats. The study will be included in the Essential Reading for relevant modules. In the Dissertation and Seminar module, learners will further assess and evaluate the methods and evidence used in current research including the 'Growing Up in Ireland' study. This acts as a basis to guide the learners' own empirical research.*

6. It is recommended that social science, community and child related programs draw from the findings of the Growing Up in Ireland Study.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. The Growing Up in Ireland Study will be included in the Essential Reading for the following modules: Approaches to Working with Children; Approaches to Working with Families; Equality and Diversity.*

7. It is recommended that the Institute-wide Teaching and Learning Strategy be finalised, with clear milestones and measures for regular review of the implementation of individual components. This should be supported by a clear IT strategy to allow the institution to capitalise on new advances in Teaching and Learning.

The College accepts this recommendation. The Implementation Plan drawn up by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee was passed by the Academic Council meeting of 25th April 2018.

8. Building on the Institute's heritage and distinctiveness, the provider should develop a transdisciplinary vision and strategy for the place of theology in relevant programmes.

The College accepts this recommendation. An academic working group will be established in the first semester of the coming academic year (2018 – 2019), with a brief to examine this issue and report to the Academic Council and to the Management Board.

9. It is recommended that programmes highlight more visibly the Institute's vision for social justice and civic engagement, through discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary modules.

The College accepts this recommendation.

10. The provider is encouraged to develop a Peer Assisted Learning model across all programs.

The College accepts this recommendation. As an extension of our orientation and induction programme and current student engagement initiatives, Student Support Services will work in collaboration with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, Learner Resources Committee, academic staff and the Students' Union to develop, pilot and implement a Peer Assisted Learning model in an undergraduate programme by 2020 with a view to rolling this out across all programmes.

11. The provider should consider the feasibility of formative assessment and should co-ordinate modes of assessment and requirements (at and across stage level), employing standards that reflect both student and staff workload.

The College accepts this recommendation. The Design Team has undertaken to map all assessment, including formative, on the programme by student workload and staff workload, and to consider the implications of formative assessment on these workloads. We will consider the following:

Reduction of formative assessments where unnecessary multiplication of the same outcome may occur at a Stage level.

Carrying out an evaluation of potential implications of the current formative assessment schedule on students.

Revision of formative assessment procedures to ensure consistency with Teaching and Learning Strategy.

> *Monitoring formative and summative assessment schedules in line with Academic Workload Allocations Policy.*
>
> *The consistency and standardisation of assessment modes in terms of allocated percentage weighting and word count required in relation to continuous assessment will also be examined. The percentage weighting and time allocated for final examinations is also being reviewed in order to ensure a balanced student and staff workload.*

12. It is recommended that the provider review and exploit the rich interdisciplinarity potential across all programmes e.g. Community Psychology and Group Dynamics and Facilitation, to ensure most efficient use of modules and to reduce workload where relevant

> *Where possible the College has sought to ensure and promote interdisciplinarity and sharing of modules and accepts the recommendation that we continue to review and enhance this on our programmes.*

13. It is recommended that a College Dissertation Handbook be produced, with the Handbook for the MA in Leadership in Therapeutic Child and Social Care serving as a valuable model.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. The Carlow College Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards (2018) document makes specific reference to the guidelines and regulations on Dissertation. However, it is understood that while this is a useful starting point, a more comprehensive overview of the dissertation process should be given to students. A Dissertation Handbook will be produced prior to the commencement of the Academic year 2018-2019 and will be made available on Moodle from August 2018. The MA in Leadership and Therapeutic Child and Social Care will serve as the model to be utilised.*

14. It is recommended that the existing wide variation in contact hours for 5 ECTS credits be reviewed to provide more consistency for students.

> *The College accepts this recommendation and accepts that it should be responded to immediately. As a response, the Programme Board Chairs met to standardise these variations across programmes in order to ensure consistency for students.*

15. The provider should develop strategies on how to increase and monitor attendance across all programs.

> *The College accepts this recommendation and, through the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, is employing a number of strategies to increase and monitor student attendance.*

16. The provider should develop a stronger profile and status for community-related group creative projects, interlinking their practice and research dimensions.

> *The College accepts this recommendation as the consolidation and development of collaborative relationships with local national and international partners in planned projects and events is specifically mentioned in the Carlow College Strategic Plan (Objective 6)*

17. Building on the success of the Essay Doctor programme, the provider should develop writing workshops that educate students in diverse modes and registers of writing, reflecting changing requirements of current workplaces.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. The Essay Doctor service currently delivers a programme of writing development workshops which are available to students across all programmes and stages. Working closely with the cross-programme Academic and Digital Skills module and other professional and employability related modules, these workshops will be extended to educate learners in diverse modes and registers of writing relevant to the requirements of current workplaces.*

18. The provider should encourage each programme to take greater control of student feedback measures.

> *The College accepts this recommendation.*

19. The provider should consider, as matter of priority, a career progression pathway for staff to ensure staff retention.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. We note that this issue has implications for College strategy as well as job descriptions, titles and salary scales. It will be addressed as a matter of priority by Senior Management and HR.*

20. The provider should introduce research leave for staff, including those post doctorates, to enable academic publication and larger-scale research activity.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. As part of a general review of the Academic Workload Allocation Policy, the Office of the Registrar will design a Research Leave Policy for academic staff, in consultation with academic staff, with a view to implementation for the 2019-20 academic year.*

21. It is recommended that a balance on various committees be ensured between mature and school -leaver students.

> *The College accepts this recommendation. We note some of the imbalance arises from ex-officio representation as outlined in Terms of References of various committees. In order to address this imbalance the Office of the Registrar will work with the Students' Union to develop mechanisms whereby a more appropriate representation of mature and school-leaver students can occur with a view to having an impact on committee representation for the academic year 2018-19. We will enter into discussions with the Students' Union around their selection procedures for class representatives.*

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

There are no interests to declare

This report has been agreed by the evaluation panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Panel chairperson: Prof. Margaret Kelleher   Date: 26th June 2018

Signed: *Margaret Kelleher*

1.4   Disclaimer

The Report of the External Review Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

Name of Provider:		Carlow College					
Programme Title		BA (Honours) in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)					
Award Title		BA (Honours)					
Stage Exit Award Title[3]							
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Full-time and part-time					
Teaching and learning modalities		Direct learning, problem based learning					

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8		Award	8		60	08-2018	0923

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module Status	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Number[5] Credit Units ECTS	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent learning	Work-based learning effort[34]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration	Proctored written exam %
Approaches to Working with Children	1	M	8	5	125	24		101		40			60
Contemporary Sociological Theory	1	M	8	5	125	24		101		40			60
Dissertation and Seminar	1 & 2	M	8	20	500	40		460		20	80		
Equality and Diversity	1	M	8	5	125	24	21	80		100			
Leadership and Management: Theory and Practice	1	M	8	5	125	24		101		30			70
Approaches to Working with Families	2	M	8	5	125	24		101		30			70
Professional Development and Employability Skills	2	M	8	5	125	24	29	72		100			
Quality Management in Social Care	2	M	8	5	125	24		101		100			
Creative Interventions (Music)	2	E	8	5	125	24		101		40			60
Community Mental Health and Well-being	2	E	8	5	125	24		101		100			
Working with Older People: Theory and Practice	2	E	8	5	125	24		101		30			70
Youth and Community Studies	2	E	8	5	125	24	16	85		100			
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													

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[34] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Part 4: Detailed evaluation of the programme's modules and stages that do not directly lead to QQI awards

The commentary in Part 2 will have regard to the modules and address issues concerning them.

However, should any of the modules require extensive this may be included here. Commentary on the modules in Part 4 is only required on an exceptional basis.