



Programme Design and Validation Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles underpinning the University's approach to the design of taught programmes, establish the framework they must follow, and define the validation process that ensures programmes are developed consistently and effectively, leading to high-quality awards.

This policy establishes the principles that guide and underpin the development and validation of programmes, the stages in the process for programme development and validation, and the criteria which must be met for validation of a programme.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff involved in the development, design and approval of all taught programmes, and structured research degrees, collaborative and joint programmes, leading to awards at Level 6 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Where a programme diverges from the parameters set out in this policy the Programme Development Team (PDT) must seek approval from the Academic Council for an exception to policy before further developing or seeking validation for the programme.

All changes made to programmes, arising from on-going review, or planned periodic review must comply with the provisions of this policy in relation to the design of the programme.

3. External Reference Documents

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Core Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI, 2016)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Designated Awarding Bodies (QQI, 2016)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines For Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (QQI, 2023)
- ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) Users' Guide (EHEA, 2015)
- Policies and criteria for the establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications (NQAI, 2003)
- Joint-sectoral protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the inclusion of qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications – July 2022 (QQI, 2022)
- Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of a National Approach to Credit in Irish Higher Education and Training (NQAI, 2006)

- National Access Plan - A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education (Higher Education Authority (HEA), 2022)
- 2nd National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 (Government of Ireland, 2022)
- GreenComp: the European Sustainability Competence Framework (Publications Office of the European Union, 2022)

4. Policy

4.1 Principles

The ethos of Quality Assurance of Programmes at ATU is underpinned by four principles as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Principles underpinning Programme Design and Validation of New Programmes

4.1.1 Academic Excellence

Programmes will be designed by teams with strong academic backgrounds, relevant research experience, and a demonstrated commitment to teaching and learning. These programmes will provide students with a broad and deep understanding of their field of study, as well as opportunities for hands-on learning through practical application of concepts. Programmes will be designed in consultation with relevant stakeholders from industry, professions and the community ensuring that the knowledge, skills, and competencies can respond to the rapidly changing world.

New programme development must:

- enrich the diverse programme provision across the University by fostering an integrated and collaborative approach and align with the ATU Strategic Plan,
- provide access and progression pathways for our diverse student body,
- foster synergies between research and programme provision,
- benchmark and evaluate programme learning outcomes (PLOs) against comparable national and international programmes,
- consider and plan the effective use of resources in supporting the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme, and
- research national and international best practice in teaching, learning and assessment techniques for the discipline area.

Validation processes must:

- establish whether the programme is of value to both students and other stakeholders,
- provide opportunities to demonstrate the richness of the academic experience in the discipline area, and
- ensure reviewed using proportionate and appropriate review mechanisms.

4.1.2 Student-centred Experience and Values

We are committed to providing a value-adding student experience through a high-quality teaching and learning underpinned by active learning strategies in an inclusive learning environment. The student experience will be further enhanced through the provision of a range of academic and non-academic support services. Programme design should foster a culture of lifelong learning that promotes academic achievement, as well as personal and professional growth, and satisfaction.

Processes for developing and validating programmes must:

- apply validation criteria that are founded on student-centred values, for example appropriate entry requirements and opportunities for access, transfer, and progression, and principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL),
- facilitate timely input and feedback from students on, for example, the design of the programme, teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme, supports for students, and
- include student representation in the validation process.

4.1.3 Stakeholder Engagement

We value the contributions that key stakeholders can make to our programmes. Stakeholders include faculty, students, alumni, industry professionals, employers, professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), civic and community organisations,

linked providers, other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and external quality assurance agencies. Stakeholder engagement is an opportunity to gather valuable insights and feedback that can help shape the design of a programme or award. Stakeholder engagement is a key mechanism for improving programme quality and relevance, thus enhancing student outcomes. Additionally, it is a valuable mechanism for fostering community engagement, and for enhancing accountability, transparency, and trust.

This principle recognises that robust processes for developing and validating taught programmes require open, transparent, collaborative, and coordinated engagement with relevant stakeholders. Programme development and validation processes must:

- facilitate input and feedback from external stakeholders such as industry and enterprise, PSRBs, civil and community organisations on programmes being developed,
- facilitate alignment with accreditation processes of PSRBs as required,
- ensure that programme information for approved programmes is published in a publicly accessible manner, and
- report on new programme validations annually to the Quality and Qualifications Authority of Ireland (QQI).

4.1.4 Sustainability, Agility and Responsiveness

We will foster collaboration and ongoing communication with industry partners to help ensure our programmes are aligned with current and future industry needs. Our academic quality assurance and enhancement framework provides appropriate mechanisms to ensure that changes to programmes can be incorporated quickly, when necessary. We will formally review our programmes periodically to assess their relevance, effectiveness, alignment with societal needs, and the changing needs and expectations of students. We recognise the key role the University has in helping students recognise the environmental, social, and economic challenges of the future, and accordingly, we are committed to incorporating principles of sustainability into our programmes.

Programme Development and Validation processes must:

- address themes in the ATU curriculum framework,
- establish processes for gathering and considering information that identifies the need to develop a new programme and/or inform programme design,
- demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of the programme,
- recognise timeliness as being to the fore of programme development in designing programmes to address a specific need; this may be regional/national skills need or in response to national policy or economic circumstances, and
- establish programme development and validation processes which, whilst being robust and comprehensive, are agile and respond to emergent needs in a timely

manner, and that are proportionate and appropriate for the type of award being approved.

4.2 Definitions

4.2.1 Ab-Initio

An ab-initio programme is a Bachelor degree (Level 7) or Honours Bachelor degree (Level 8) or Masters degree (Level 9) that embeds the ladder of progression, “from the beginning” (ab-initio) e.g. an ab initio L9 masters will have L7 and/or 8 degrees embedded within it.

4.2.2 Academic Approval

Approval is the formal acknowledgement by the Academic Council that the conditions of validation processes are met. A programme is validated once approved by Academic Council.

4.2.3 Add-on

An add-on programme is designed to provide students with an opportunity to continue on the ladder to a programme at a higher level on the NFQ, having completed a programme leading to a major award at Level 6 (Higher Certificate) or Level 7 (Bachelor) on the NFQ, which is not embedded in a programme leading to higher award.

4.2.4 Approved Programme Schedule

The Approved Programme Schedule (APS) defines the set of prescribed module(s) (together with associated credits, contact hours, pathways, types of assessment and any special regulations) that make up a full programme of study. When students register for a programme, the APS defines the module(s) that a student must successfully complete to fulfil the programmes learning outcomes’. The award conferred by the University is determined by reference to the APS on which the student is registered.

4.2.5 Award

An award is an academic qualification conferred in recognition of the successful completion of a programme. All awards conferred by ATU are recognised on the NFQ.

4.2.6 Module

A module is a discrete unit of study. At ATU, all modules account for a minimum of 5 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits, or whole multiples thereof.

A module is typically designed to be combined with other modules into a larger programme) and can be shared by different programmes.

4.2.7 Pathway

A pathway is a defined combination and sequence of modules that meet the requirements of the programme learning outcomes. In defining a pathway, the specific requirements of a module for that programme, must be set out in the Approved Programme Schedule.

Modules may be mandatory or elective and sequencing of modules may be prescribed in terms of pre-requisite and / or co-requisite modules.

4.2.8 Programme

ATU provides programmes of study, the successful completion of which leads to a university award. Programmes are comprised of one or more modules which are typically organised into pathways for completion over the duration of the programme.

The programme is defined by the constituent module(s), and the defined pathways, or combination and sequence of modules, to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

Related programmes, including embedded and minor awards are described as a 'family' of programmes.

4.2.9 Programme Development

Programme development is the systemic process of initiating, planning, formulating, evaluating, and refining a programme of learning before seeking validation of the programme by the University. Programme development, being grounded in continuous improvement and enhancement, is an iterative, multi-stage process.

4.2.10 Stage

Programmes are organised into one or more stages delineated by academic year or calendar year. A stage entails a prescribed number of ECTS credits to be completed by a student.

4.2.11 Validation

Validation of a programme is the process by which a proposed programme is formally recognised by the University as comprising a body of learning in a designated discipline or disciplines which leads to an award at a specified level on the NFQ. The validation of the programme also results in the validation of each of its constituent modules.

4.3 Programme Development and Validation

The development of a taught programme from its initial inception to approval is a multi-stage process as illustrated in Figure 2.

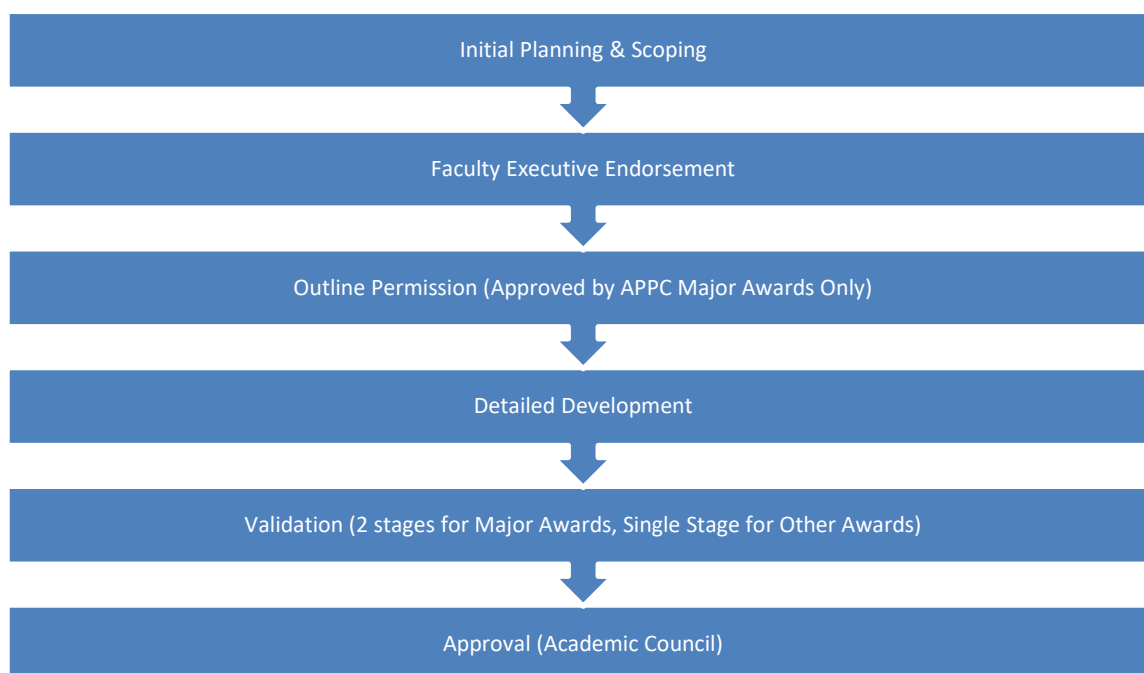


Figure 2. Stages in the Programme Development and Validation

In outlining the stages of programme development, we recognise the differences in programmes and consequently, the validation process stage has proportional requirements depending on the award type, level, and number of credits for which validation is sought.

The proposal for a new programme may emanate from any academic staff member or group. The proposal must be discussed with the relevant Head(s) of Department who will consider the strategic fit and merits of the proposal and may establish an initial Programme Development Team (PDT) to scope out the proposal.

The Head of Department seeks endorsement for all proposed programmes from the Faculty Executive. Programme proposals for major awards that are endorsed by the Faculty Executive proceed to the Outline Permission Stage of the process. Endorsed proposals for SPA/Minor/Supplemental awards proceed directly to detailed development.

At the Outline Permission stage, for programmes leading to Major awards, the Academic Programme Provision Committee (APPC) of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) assess the strategic fit and projected financial viability and sustainability of any proposal. The committee may grant permission to proceed to detailed development. Any prescribed conditions must be satisfied before proceeding to detailed development of the programme.

Academic Council will note all programme proposals approved to proceed to detailed development.

Following detailed development, the programme must be reviewed and evaluated through internal and external validation processes.

The Faculty Academic Planning Committee (FAPC) are responsible for establishing internal validation panels for programmes leading to Major Awards. A nominee of the Director of Academic Affairs and Quality and a member of the Academic Programmes committee of the Academic Council participate in the internal validation process. Following successful completion of internal validation the Quality Office organises an external panel to review major awards.

The FAPC are responsible for establishing validation panels for programmes leading to Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards.

SPAs and Minor awards are validated by external panel only.

Once the validation processes have successfully concluded the Academic Council must formally approve the programme. A programme is validated once approved by Academic Council.

The decision to commence a programme is made by the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer in conjunction with the Dean of Faculty. Changes to the programmes costings as a consequence of validation conditions and/or recommendations or PSRB accreditation must be reviewed to ensure the programme remains financially viable and sustainable.

4.3.1 Engagement with Stakeholders

The PDT must formulate a plan for identifying, engaging, and gathering information from external stakeholders. The rationale, justification for the programme, and demand for graduates must be evident in the proposal.

4.3.2 Resources, Marketing, and Financial Planning

A marketing analysis must be performed for a new taught programme proposal by the PDT. This analysis must:

- examine the demand for the programme,
- identify and indicate feedback from the target applicants or key influencers for recruitment,
- identify other similar programmes offered regionally and nationally,
- outline the unique attributes of the proposed programme, and
- identify the career pathways and progressions routes for graduate.

The PDT must establish whether there are sufficient resources or whether additional resources are required for a new programme proposal. This includes human resources, physical resources, equipment, library requirements and any additional student supports. All resources required to deliver the programme must be included in the programme costing in order to the financial viability and sustainability of the design of a programme. An *ATU Programme Planning Tool* will be available as an aid.

4.3.3 Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies are a diverse group of organisations that include professional bodies, regulators, and those with statutory authority over a profession or a group of professions. We support engagement with PSRBs through the approval, recognition and accreditation of our programmes and recognise the value added to programmes by this engagement.

Where a programme is being developed to produce graduates to work in a regulated profession this must be clearly indicated at the Outline Permission Stage. In developing the programme, the PDT must also ensure that all mandatory requirements for accreditation set out by the regulatory body are adhered to.

For programmes that aim to achieve professional body recognition, approval, or accreditation for non-regulated professions the programme should be designed in accordance with the standards and criteria set out by the relevant professional body.

Where possible, the PDT may liaise with the PSRB to align their accreditation process with the University's validation processes.

4.3.4 Collaborative Programmes

We support the development of collaborative, transnational and joint taught programmes. Such programmes require additional quality assurance measures. Engagement with collaborative partners, including linked providers, must be underpinned by an agreement setting out the terms of reference of the collaboration. Collaboration agreements must be in place before the process of programme development can begin. Please refer to *AQAE038 Collaborative Provision of Programmes Policy* for further detail on the quality assurance measures required for collaborative programmes.

4.4 Programme Validation

The suite of modules that make up a programme and the programme schedule must be considered to validate a taught programme. Piecemeal validation of constituent modules will not accomplish the validation of a programme, because the validation process must assess how the entire suite of modules fulfil the aims, objectives, and PLOs.

However, the validation of the programme will result in the validation of each of its constituent modules. These modules, subject to validation, may then be offered as individual modules through ACCM mode. They may also be included in other programmes if the module learning outcomes align with the PLOs, subject to validation.

4.4.1 Validation Procedures

The procedure for validating an award varies, depending on the type of award. Details of the specific route to validating a programme can be found in the following procedures:

- *AQAE010 Procedure for Validation of a Programme Leading to New Major Award, and*
- *AQAE018 Procedure for the Validation of New Minor, Supplemental or Special Purpose Awards*

4.4.2 Timescales

Early planning for any new programme is advised. This is of particular importance for programmes which are intended for offer through the Central Applications Office (CAO), collaborative programmes and those responding to an urgent need or funding call.

The Quality Office must publish, on an annual basis, a schedule of key dates that are important to facilitate planning for the development of new taught programmes. This should include deadlines for inclusion in the ATU Prospectus, the CAO Handbook deadline and relevant ATU publications.

The *AQAE004_001 New Programme Proposal Form* must indicate an intended commencement date, and a timescale for the validation process must be established and agreed by the PDT and the Quality Office.

A programme must not be marketed or promoted until the validation process stage of the development process has been completed, and the Quality Office has confirmed that requirements have been satisfactorily met. A programme cannot commence until approved by Academic Council.

4.4.3 Student Representation in Validation Processes

We are committed to establishing student representation in our validation processes. Student representatives must be provided with the key skills, knowledge and competencies required to participate in the process by our university. This will be organised by the Quality Office.

To be eligible to participate as a student representative a student must:

- Be a registered student at our university, and
- Have completed the required training to participate as a student representative.

The Quality Office, must maintain a register of eligible students for participation in the validation process.

4.4.4 Criteria for Validation

New programmes must comply with the following criteria for validation:

- The programme aims and learning outcomes are clear and aligned with the proposed award title and programme level.
- The rationale for the programme is well informed and justified.

- The design of the programme is suitably structured and fit for purpose.
- The design of the programme ensures that students can successfully achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes.
- The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is well planned and appropriate for the discipline area and type of award.
- Assessment techniques are fair, valid, reliable, consistent and a credible measure of the academic standard attained by students.
- The planned resources, including staff, physical, online, library and student supports, sufficiently support the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme.
- The programme facilitates lifelong learning for a diverse student population by setting out appropriate entry requirements and opportunities for access, transfer, and progression.
- There is demand for potential graduates from the programme.
- The learning environment and mode of delivery are well planned and consistent with the needs of the intended students of the programme and accessible and appropriate support services for students have been provided for.
- Students will be well informed on the requirements of the programme, guided to relevant resources and supported in their studies in a caring environment.

4.4.5 Commendations, Conditions and Recommendations for Validation

Validation is intended to be a collegial, reflective, and evaluative process which creates the opportunity for academic debate on the merits of a programme and opportunities for enhancement. Commendations for programmes which acknowledge particular strengths in the proposal must be documented and noted in the validation process.

Validation processes require those adjudicating the programme to assess it relative to the criteria set for validation by our university. Where it is deemed that the criteria for validation have not been met, 'conditions for validation' must be prescribed, or the programme may be referred back to the PDT for further development.

Opportunities for further enhancement of a programme should be documented as 'recommendations' in the validation process.

The PDT must address the conditions and recommendations, as specified below:

- 1) Conditions must be dealt with in full by the PDT for a programme to be validated.
- 2) Recommendations must be seriously considered by the PDT. Where the PDT provides compelling justification for not addressing recommendations, the validation will not be impeded by non-compliance with same.

4.4.6 Expiry of Validation and Changes to Validated Programmes

All programmes that are successfully validated are approved until the next Programmatic Review. Reviews are scheduled every 5 – 7 years.

Re-validation must be sought through the Periodic Programme Review Process, the details of which are available in the *AQAE021 Periodic Review Policy*.

Changes to validated programmes are accommodated via the *AQAE020 Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement of Programmes Policy*.

4.5 Programme Adoption

From time to time, Academic Council may approve the adoption of academic programmes that have been formally validated by another recognised Irish higher education institution, where staff of ATU have made a substantive contribution to the design and development of the programme.

In such cases, the relevant programme validation documentation, including the approved programme document(s) and formal confirmation of validation and approval by the Academic Council of the originating institution, shall be submitted to ATU Academic Council for consideration. Academic Council will satisfy itself that the programme aligns with ATU's academic standards and quality assurance policies prior to granting approval.

Approval by ATU Academic Council is required before the programme may be offered by ATU, and all such decisions shall be formally recorded in the minutes of Academic Council.

4.6 Awards

4.6.1 Award-Credit Framework

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) emanated from the Bologna process in 2005 and is a credit system designed to facilitate the movement of students between different countries.

ECTS, or credits, are based on the learning achievements and workload of a learning opportunity. Therefore, a student can transfer their credits from one university to another.

Credits can then be accumulated to contribute to an award. ECTS also makes it possible to merge different types of learning, such as university and work-based learning, within the same programme of study or in a lifelong learning perspective. ECTS credits represent the workload and defined learning outcomes of a given programme. The workload is determined based on an average of 20-25 hours of effort per credit for a typical student. Typically, 60 ECTS represents the workload of a full-time student for one academic year, and these credits are divided among components of learning.

Taught programmes at ATU are designed and structured into components known as modules. These modules are allocated credits, consistent with the ECTS and are accompanied by a module descriptor indicating learning outcomes and associated workload, indicative content, and assessment criteria. The Approved Programme Schedule (APS) indicates the suite of modules and thus the allocation of credits for a given programme of learning.

Modules at ATU must be designed in multiples of 5 ECTS and must indicate the level on the NFQ at which the learning outcomes are associated.

Programmes must meet credit requirements for the particular award class and types at each level of the NFQ. This is given in Table 2 below.

Award Class	Award Type	NFQ Level	ECTS
Major Award	Higher Certificate	6	120
	Bachelor (Ordinary)	7	180
	Bachelor (Honours)	8	180/240
	Higher Diploma	8	60
	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
	Masters (Taught) Degree	9	75, 90, 120
Minor and Special Purpose awards*	Certificate	6	5-60
	Certificate	7-8	<60
	Diploma	7-8	≥ 60
	Certificate	9	5-15
	Postgraduate Certificate	9	20-55

Table 2. Credits requirements in respect of award type, class, and level. * The term micro-credentials is an umbrella marketing term used to refer to minor, special purpose and supplemental awards, up to a maximum 30 ECTS.

Major awards must have at least 60 credits at the level associated with the award type. Award classification is normally based on the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the modules in the final stage of a programme and thus all modules at the final stage (minimum 60 ECTS) must be at the level of, or above the award class.

If the award classification is not based on the final stage only this must be clearly articulated in the APS. The modules contributing to the calculation of a GPA for the purposes of classification must all be at the level of the award, unless otherwise provided for.

The Bachelor (Honours) award class may be designed with a minimum of 180 ECTS but the threshold of 240 ECTS is more typical in ATU. In both cases at least 60 ECTS must be at Level 8 to meet the requirements of the award type. The PDT should only select a 180 ECTS structure where the intended learning outcomes can be achieved within a focused three-year format and it is appropriate for the target students. A 240 ECTS structure is more normal to allow for additional depth, professional practice, placement, or broader

curriculum. The decision should be driven by disciplinary norms, graduate attributes, and the volume and type of learning needed to meet Level 8 standards.

Embedded awards must also meet the requirements of 60 ECTS at, or above the level of the award type on the NFQ.

Special purpose awards must have all credits at the level indicated for the award.

A minor award may be made up of modules at more than level. The level of the award should be determined by the programme learning outcomes.

The *AQAE067 Awards, Certification and Conferring Policy* prescribes a list of award titles that can be used for new programmes. We support the case for greater specificity of titles but not the proliferation of award titles.

A new award title may be proposed for a major award. The proposal of a new award title must be formally approved by the Academic Council. *AQAE045 Procedure for the Proposal of a New Award Title* details the process to be followed.

4.6.2 Award Classification

There are four classes of awards: Major, Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards. These are defined as follows:

- Major Awards are the main type of awards made at each level of the NFQ and constitute a significant volume of learning.
- A Minor award provides recognition for achievement of a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination required for a major award. The module or combination of modules is a subset of a linked major award.
- Special Purpose Awards have a distinct identity which reflects their clearly defined but relatively narrow purpose. They constitute a smaller volume of learning than a major award. The module or combination of modules is not included within a major award.
- Supplemental awards are for learning that is additional to a previous major award. In general, these are at the same level as the awards to which they are additional.

Figure 3 distinguishes between these classes of awards.

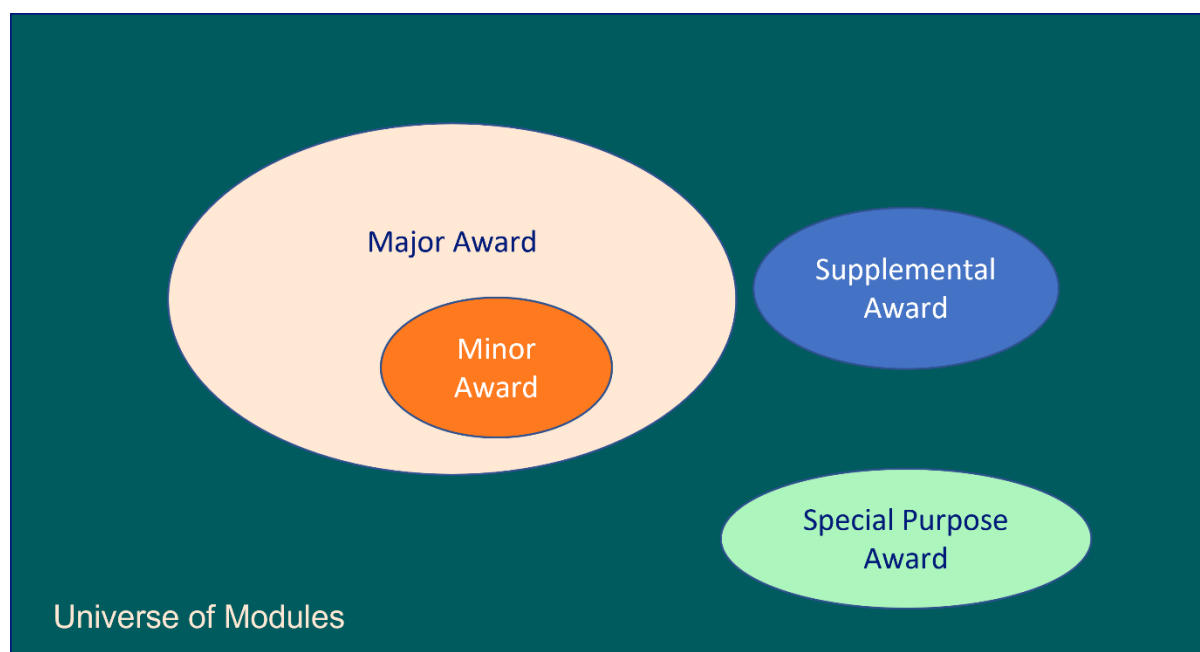


Figure 3. Distinguishing between Major, Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards.

4.6.3 Embedded Award

An embedded award is a programme pathway designed for, and incorporated within, a major award. It is a major award in its own right and may be offered directly to students or as an exit award only.

The design of embedded awards should be considered during the design of the highest major award. Table 1 indicates the awards that should be embedded:

Major Award	Embedded Award(s)
Bachelor (Ordinary)	Higher Certificate
Bachelor (Honours)	Bachelor (Ordinary) and/or Higher Certificate
Masters (Taught) Degree	Postgraduate Diploma

Table 1. Embedded awards

4.6.4 Award Standards

We determine the award standard for each of our awards. The award standard is the knowledge, skill, and competence to be acquired by a student before an award is made. The standard required for a specific programme is articulated in the programme learning outcomes for that programme and an award is only conferred if the programme learning outcomes have been achieved.

We ensure that all awards we make are aligned to the NFQ and conform to the levels set out in the NFQ Grid Level Descriptors (STAN001). These are the default award standards i.e. they apply unless a more specific award standard has been approved by ATU.

Approved discipline-specific award standards are available on the *AQAE SharePoint*.

Where a programme requires regulatory body approval the requirements of the regulatory body are adopted in the design of the programme. For example, the *Teaching Council Céim Standards for Initial Teacher Education* should be adopted for programmes accredited by the *Teaching Council*.

In designing a programme, the programme learning outcomes must align with an appropriate award standard. Where an appropriate discipline specific award standard is not available, the NFQ Grid Level Descriptor must be used. An award standard may also be proposed for a discipline.

Where a new award standard is proposed it must be formally approved by the Academic Standards and Policy Committee of Academic Council. *AQAE044 Procedure for the Proposal of a New Award Standard* details the process to be followed.

The award title must also be consistent with the chosen award standard. The rationale for the choice of award standard and award title must be justifiable by the PDT.

In developing the rationale, the following must be considered:

- the award title must be consistent with the level of the award and the award standard
- the award title and award standard have regard for the primary discipline or disciplines (for multidisciplinary programmes),
- the award standard must be consistent with the programme learning outcomes,
- the programme seeks PSRB accreditation and the programmes learning outcomes align with the requirements of the PSRB,
- the award title must be consistent with the expectations of employers, potential students, PSRBs, where appropriate, and
- the award title is consistent with similar and/or competitor programmes in other HEIs.

4.6.5 Programme title nomenclature

The title of a programme is formed from the award title only or the award title and specialism(s) or subject (s) of study, following the format:

Award Title in Specialism.

For example, a mechanical engineering programme which leads to a degree at Level 8 may have the title BEng (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering.

Where there is a disciplinary stream to the programme this may be indicated by including the named specialism in brackets e.g., MSc in Computing in Cybersecurity (Information Security Management). There should be a minimum of 60 ECTS in a specialism to justify its inclusion in the programme title.

Multidisciplinary programmes are encouraged by the University. However, titles should not combine more than three specialisms and the word “and” and “with” should be used to indicate the relative credit weightings of the specialisms.

Where specialisms have approximately equal weight they are joined by “and” as follows:

Award Title in Discipline X and Discipline Y

or,

Award Title in Discipline X, Discipline Y

and Discipline Z.

For example, a postgraduate programme in the disciplines of equality, diversity and inclusion which leads to an award at Level 9 may have the title Postgraduate Diploma in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. The use of the ampersand symbol (&) in the title is not permitted.

Where the programme has a primary discipline area, that is the majority of credits are in that discipline, and a secondary discipline, the named specialisms are joined by “with” in the programme title as follows:

Award Title in Discipline X with Discipline Y

This applies where the secondary discipline represents approximately one quarter to one third of the credits of the programme.

For example, a marketing programme which leads to a degree at Level 7, 180 ECTS total with modules in French, allocated 45-60 ECTS, may have the title BBus in Marketing with French.

Common entry programmes, designed to allow students to choose their preferred pathway after completing a specified number of stages (typically a common first stage), must include the term “Common Entry” in brackets at the end of the programme title. For example, a Level 8 programme in the discipline of Design which provides a common entry may have the title BA (Hons) in Design (Common Entry).

The name of each embedded award must be considered in its own right and reflect the discipline(s) and learning outcomes of the programme itself. It does not have to be the same as the programme from which it is derived.

Terms such as “Ab-initio”, “Add-On” and “Apprenticeship” should not be included in the programme title.

4.7 Programme Structure

4.7.1 Stage-based programme structure

ATU operates a stage-based programme structure which is underpinned by the following:

- Programmes are organised into one or more stages.
- Normally, students will complete all the credits in one stage before progressing to the next stage.
- The Stage is divided into semesters. A semester has a total of 15 weeks to include module delivery, revision, and assessment.
- Modules may be semesterised or year long.
- Student workload must be balanced across the stage.
- The contact hours should decrease as students' progress through the stages of a programme.
- The proportion of time allocated to independent learning should be higher for programmes at higher levels of the NFQ.
- Pre-requisites must not be defined within a stage.

This programme structure is designed to be flexible and accommodate sharing of modules across departments, faculties, and campuses. Faculties may develop additional models for programme design across their programmes which is fair, open, transparent, and consistent. Such models must comply with the requirements of this policy.

The number of stages and allocation of credits to a stage is defined in the APS. The programme must be delivered and assessed according to the APS and changes to the APS are subject to quality assurance processes before implementation in accordance with *AQAE020 Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement of Programmes Policy*.

4.8 Programme Design

ATU's 7 Steps for Programme Design is a tool to aid the PDT in designing a new programme as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4. ATU Seven Steps for Programme Design.

Resources and support on implementing the 7 Step approach can be found on the ATU *Teaching and Learning Centre SharePoint*. Some of the key components relating to programme design are outlined in the sections below.

4.8.1 Outcomes-based approach to programme design

Programme design must be based on an outcomes-based approach.

Programme learning outcomes (PLOs) define what a student is expected to know, to understand or to be able to do upon successful completion of a programme.

A programme leading to major award should have 8 to 12 PLOs defined.

A programme leading to a minor, special purpose or supplemental award should have fewer PLOs defined and does not require a PLO in each of the award standard strands.

Each module must be defined in terms of module learning outcomes (MLOs). MLOs articulate what the learner can demonstrate upon successful completion of a module.

MLOs must align with the PLOs to achieve the overall aim of the programme.

4.8.2 Pathways

In defining a pathway, the specific requirements of a module for that programme, must be set out in the APS.

Modules may be defined in the APS as mandatory or elective.

A mandatory module has learning outcomes that must be demonstrated to achieve the PLOs. Such modules must be passed by the student to complete the requirements of the programme.

An elective module has learning outcomes that contribute to the programme learning outcomes. Where elective modules are offered, the student has the choice of which elective module(s) to select. This may be subject to resource considerations.

The APS may indicate necessary dependencies between modules by specifying pre-requisites and co-requisites however PDTs should be cognisant of not creating unnecessary barriers to entry or progression.

Students must have passed or obtained exemption through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the modules listed as pre-requisite before the module can be attempted. As indicated in 4.6.1 pre-requisites cannot be defined within a stage.

Co-requisite modules must be taken in parallel.

4.8.3 Programme Specification

A *Programme Specification* must be created for each programme, including each programme leading to an embedded award.

The *Programme Specification* document specifies the particulars of a programme under the following headings:

1. Programme Details
2. Introduction
3. Overview of University
4. Introduction to Faculty, School, and Department
5. Rationale for Programme
6. Demand for Programme
7. Programme Design and Management
8. Resources
9. Access, Transfer and Progression
10. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
11. Learning Outcomes
12. Schedules
13. Module Descriptors
14. Appendices

Academic Module Manager (AMM), the document management system for programmes and modules must be used to record the Programme Specification. The following

procedures detail and give guidance on how programme proposals, programme specifications and module descriptors are developed in AMM:

- *AQAE028 Procedure for Writing New Programme Proposals*
- *AQAE029 Procedure for Writing Programme Specifications*
- *AQAE030 Procedure for Writing Module Descriptors.*

4.8.4 Entry to a Programme

All criteria that must be met by prospective students to be admitted to the programme must be clearly detailed in the programme specification document and must be consistent with the *AQAE037 Access, Transfer and Progression Policy*.

4.8.5 Study and Delivery Mode

There are two aspects to defining the delivery of a programme. The programme specification must indicate whether:

1. The programme is designed for full-time or part-time participation i.e. Study Mode.
2. The delivery of module content is on-site, online or blended i.e. Delivery Mode.

Study Mode:

- Full-time: A stage (60 ECTS) extending over a full year targeted at students who will largely devote their whole working time to their academic studies as far as is known. In the case of a Masters programme, a stage is 90 ECTS delivered over 1 to 1.5 years targeted at students who will largely devote their whole working time to their academic studies as far as is known.
- Part-time: Less than a stage (60 ECTS) per year OR 60 ECTS delivered in a year but with delivery deliberately structured so as to be targeted at those in work. In the case of a masters less than 90 ECTS delivered over 1.5 years OR 90 ECTS delivered over 1 – 1.5 years but with delivery deliberately structured so as to be targeted at those in work.

Delivery Mode:

- Onsite: Content is exclusively or primarily (80%+) taught onsite.
- Online: Content is exclusively or primarily (80%+) taught online.
- Blended: Content is taught using a mix of onsite and online delivery i.e. >20 and <80% online.

4.8.6 Collaborative and joint awards

The design of programmes with collaborative partners, including the design of joint awards must be informed by both this policy and *AQAE038 Collaborative Provision of Programmes Policy*.

A collaborative programme must, as far as is practicable, align with this policy (AQAE004). The University acknowledges the potential for unique aspects of collaborative programmes, such as varying module credit sizes, by applying a flexible approach to validation.

Dual Degrees have specific programme design requirements.

- A dual degree involves two complimentary but distinct programmes of study at two separate institutions, typically undertaken sequentially and leading to separate awards at the same level of the NFQ.
- Partner institutions must have the authority to make both their own awards at the level of the award and to make joint awards at the level of the award.
- The student must successfully complete their studies in both institutions in order to be conferred with both awards (refer to *AQAE038 Collaborative Provision of Programmes Policy*).
- The duration of the programme must be longer than a corresponding single award at that level but is usually shorter than completing two programmes separately.
- There must be two distinct sets of programme learning outcomes. Some PLOs may be common. The dual degree should be designed such that PLOs for each award are appropriate to the standard of the award level.
- Each institution must deliver a substantial proportion of the programme, typically an equal part, and must deliver a significant proportion at the level of the award.

4.9 Curriculum Requirements

The first consideration in the design of the programme is the ethos and design of the curriculum to produce graduates that are equipped with the knowledge, skills and competences of the discipline (see Section 4.6.4 Award Standards).

4.9.1 Transition to Higher Education

Full time undergraduate programmes leading to major awards should be designed to support students in the transition to higher education through comprehensive induction into both their programme of study and the university environment.

The first stage of such programmes should provide students with the knowledge and skills required to engage in higher education.

Programmes aimed at those returning to education, part-time students and mature learners should also consider how students can be appropriately supported as they embark upon higher education.

4.9.2 Curriculum requirements for programmes leading to Major Awards

The following sections outline requirements for the design of programmes leading to Major Awards.

Capstone/Research Project

A capstone or research project should be included in all taught programmes leading to the degree of Bachelor (Honours) and Masters. A capstone/research project is defined as a project that requires a significant level of independent research by the student and provides them with an opportunity to compound and integrate the knowledge, skills and competencies developed across a suite of modules undertaken in the programme. It should result in the production of a significant piece of individual work by the student. This is typically produced as a dissertation, thesis or portfolio but may take other forms depending on the discipline.

The capstone/research project is typically allocated one or more modules at the final stage but may form part of a module. The credits allocated to a capstone/research project module must reflect the workload associated with the research and the work produced.

Work placement or work-based project

All programmes leading to undergraduate major awards at Level 8 should incorporate a work placement or work-based project, which may be the capstone project. Where a placement is included in a programme, alternatives to placement may be required in exceptional circumstances, and these should be included on the APS. The alternative should aim to replicate as far as feasible the type of learning that students on placements will gain.

4.9.3 ATU Curriculum Framework

The ATU Curriculum Framework promotes consideration of six themes in curriculum design and teaching activities. The themes of Sustainability, Universal Design for Learning, Digital Transformation, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Academic Integrity and Employability must be addressed in the design of all taught programmes leading to major awards.

The ATU Teaching and Learning Centre provides resources and supports to assist PDTs in addressing these themes. The six themes are expanded on below:

Sustainability

The PDT should aim to create learning opportunities for students to build knowledge of sustainability and capacity for active citizenship. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) should be embedded in programmes to ensure students acquire knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions to promote, advance and take action for sustainable development. This should be aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and GreenComp: the European Sustainability Competence Framework. Consideration should be given in the curriculum to key competencies for sustainability including design thinking, critical thinking and problem-solving skills to better understand the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental factors.

Inclusivity

The PDT should aim to provide an inclusive curriculum aligned to the EDIT Charter and ensure that the curriculum is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all students, giving consideration to content and teaching materials, teaching and assessment methods.

ATU has subscribed to ALTITUDE, the National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education. The PDT should consider how programmes can be designed to enable as many students as possible to undertake their programme of study by building programmes that apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and that nurture learner variability, choice, and flexibility, where reasonably possible.

Academic Integrity

The University is committed to enhancing and promoting a culture of academic integrity among all staff and students through curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Assessment integrity is essential to the promotion and maintenance of academic integrity. The University recognises the need to provide ongoing instruction on academic integrity practice across all programmes, and to embed academic integrity in curriculum and assessment design and practice.

Digital Transformation

The PDT should aim to design programmes that facilitate students' digital competence, enabling students to creatively, responsibly and ethically utilise digital technologies for communication, collaboration, and problem solving.

Employability

The PDT should define the attributes required by graduates and embed employability, transferrable skills and/or applied learning opportunities into the curriculum. The curriculum and assessment should be informed by enterprise and stakeholders, where possible.

Internationalisation

The programme design should provide students with an international dimension to their studies. Specific module learning outcomes which require students to develop global perspectives in the context of their discipline, and where relevant, support language and cultural education, should be considered.

PDTs should also consider engaging in other opportunities to enhance internationalisation of the programme such as educational partnerships, students exchanges and faculty exchanges, both physical and virtual.

A semester or stage can be replaced with study abroad e.g., Erasmus, if agreed by the Programme Board, providing a learning agreement is in place. In this instance student results will be recorded against mapped modules or a 30 or 60 ECTS 'Study Abroad' module as appropriate.

Programmes intending to admit non-EU students should ensure that the structure and delivery of the programme adheres to nationally published requirements so that it can be listed on TrustEd.

4.10 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Strategy

The programme specification document should describe the TLA Strategy for the proposed programme. The PDT should endeavour to employ a TLA strategy that provides a supportive and engaging learning environment that enables students to achieve their full potential, while promoting academic excellence and, where possible, innovation in teaching. The TLA strategy should demonstrate the appropriateness of the pedagogical approaches and mode of delivery used to deliver the programme for the achievement of the programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes. The TLA strategy should align with the programme's mode of delivery, and where multiple modes are proposed the strategy should reflect each.

Additionally, the programme TLA strategy should outline the methods and criteria for assessing student learning, including the use of formative and summative assessments, and feedback mechanisms. Academic integrity should be embedded as a core principle in assessment to promote ethical scholarship, authentic assessment, and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) to prevent misconduct and uphold trust in academic standards. The PDT should review the scheduling and workload associated with assessment at each stage of a programme to ensure a fair and balanced approach to assessment. *AQAE056 Assessment and Feedback Policy* provides a framework for ensuring that assessment and feedback is of the highest quality and meets the requirements articulated by the wider academic community, relevant professional bodies and our statutory function in awarding degree.

TLA strategy should be informed by the principles of UDL to facilitate the needs of diverse student cohorts.

4.11 Modules

Module descriptors are used to specify the particulars of a module and must comply with the Module Descriptor template (see *AQAE030 Procedure for Writing Module Descriptors*).

4.11.1 Module name

The name of a module should be carefully considered. The name should be succinct while indicating to stakeholders the subject or content of a module.

Numbering should only be used where there are successive modules in each stage of a programme.

Care should be taken to avoid duplication of module titles or module titles with marginal difference to another within a faculty. For example, Math 1 versus Mathematics 1.

4.11.2 Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs)

To ensure consistency between modules, the following should be adhered to when writing modules:

- A 5-credit module should have between 3 and 5 learning outcomes, and
- A 10-credit module should have between 5 and 8 learning outcomes.

Modules allocated 15 or more ECTS should have a proportional number of learning outcomes to those above, to a maximum of 10 learning outcomes.

4.11.3 Workload

The workload for a module is indicated by the credits (ECTS) allocated to the module. The workload is an estimation of the time invested by a typical student to successfully achieve the MLOs. The workload for a module is reflective of the credits allocated to the module. It must account for all teaching, learning, and assessment activities, including preparation for assessments.

The workload associated with 5 credits (ECTS) is typically 100 -125 hours.

Module descriptors must indicate the contact time and the time to be allocated to independent learning. Contact time refers to the time allocated to teaching and assessment activities facilitated by academic staff. Independent learning is completed by the student independent of academic staff and includes preparation and study for assessments.

The proportion of time allocated to independent learning should increase as students' progress through each stage of a programme.

4.11.4 Assessment

Students must demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes through assessment. Assessment must be designed in accordance with the principles set out in the *AQAE056 Assessment and Feedback Policy*. The examination regulations and standards for student assessment are articulated in *AQAE005 Marks and Standards Policy* and must be adhered to in the design of a programme.

The Assessment Strategy for a module must align with the overall Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy for the programme. Careful consideration should be given to a programme-level approach to assessment, including the type and timing of coursework

assessments which must be indicated in order to prepare an assessment plan for a programme.

The following must be adhered to when designing assessment:

- A single module code and title should be used when the same learning outcomes and the same final examination component is shared across programmes. Coursework Assessment (CA) may be written in a way that allows for assessments to be tailored or adapted to multiple programmes.
- The maximum duration of a final examination component for a 5 ECTS module is 2 hours.
- The maximum duration of a final examination component for a module of more than 5 ECTS is three hours.
- Modules should be designed using learning outcomes and assessment methodologies that minimise or negate the need for special regulations such as 'Must Pass' and 'Minimum Threshold' components. If special regulations are required they must be justified (for example, health and safety or requirements of PSRBs).
- Special Regulations must be stipulated on the APS where they apply,
- Each assessment component should be designed to assess at least two learning outcomes to minimise the overall number of assessments, and
- Programmes should design shared assessment to minimise the overall number of assessments.

4.12 Responsibilities

4.12.1 Programme Development Teams

The PDT are responsible for developing and designing academic programmes in adherence with this policy. Specifically the PDT must

- produce the required programme documentation,
- develop programmes that meet the specified criteria for validation, and
- participate in all stages of the validation process, including meeting with validation panel(s).

For joint programmes, the PDT must work with partners to design a programme that meets the requirements of all partners.

The PDT must be constituted by the proposing Head(s) of Department and will comprise:

- Head(s) of Department (lead proposer(s)),
- academic staff with experience and expertise in the relevant discipline area(s),

- other nominees as appropriate with relevant expertise in, for example, student support services; access; teaching and learning; flexible, online and life-learning; equality, diversity, and inclusion; research; sustainability goals; internationalisation; work placement; apprenticeships; industry and external engagement; marketing and financial planning of programmes.

Cross-departmental, interdisciplinary, and multi-disciplinary programmes are encouraged across the University, but a programme is 'owned' by an individual department. Such programmes may establish joint proposers, as appropriate. Deans of Faculty and Heads of School may also lead proposals.

Following validation, the PDT is disbanded, and a Programme Board is established for the management, delivery, and assessment of the programme.

4.12.2 ATU Teaching and Learning Centre

The Teaching and Learning Centre

- promote best practices in teaching, learning and assessment,
- offer support and guidance to all staff on teaching, learning and assessment,
- provide resources and support for students, for example academic integrity training, and
- support PDTs in relation to programme development and the curriculum framework.

4.12.3 Faculty Academic Planning Committee (FAPC)

The Dean of Faculty will establish a FAPC. The function of the committee will be to advise, support and evaluate academic planning, in particular the development, validation, management, and monitoring of programmes within the faculty.

The FAPC will typically comprise:

- the Dean of Faculty
- all Heads of School and Department within the Faculty,
- Assistant Registrar, and
- Quality Assurance Officer.

FAPCs may also include members of academic staff and student representatives, as determined by each FAPC. Given the varying size of FAPCs, each Faculty will determine its own quorum for meetings.

The FAPC are responsible for:

- establishing internal validation panels for programmes leading to Major Awards as outlined in the relevant procedure, and

- establishing validation panels for programmes leading to Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards and Single Modules, as outlined in the relevant procedure.

4.12.4 Faculty Executive

The Faculty Executive, comprising the Dean of Faculty, Heads of School and Department and other senior members of the Faculty, are responsible for reviewing all programme proposals for strategic fit and consistency with the Faculty Academic Plan.

The Faculty Executive will have the following specified duties:

- to review and evaluate all New Programme Proposal forms, and
- to endorse programmes leading to major awards to proceed to the Outline Permission Stage.
- To endorse programmes leading to minor, special purpose or supplemental awards to proceed to the Detailed Development stage.

4.12.5 Office of the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer

The Office of the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer (R&CAO) is responsible for overseeing the quality assurance of all academic programmes.

The Director of Academic Affairs and Quality, reporting to the R&CAO, will facilitate quality assurance of the programme development and validation processes by providing appropriate oversight of the processes.

In support of this policy, the Director for Academic Affairs & Quality, through the Quality Office, must

- Publish a schedule of key deadlines to facilitate planning and development timelines for new programmes. The schedule will include including deadlines for inclusion in the ATU Prospectus, the CAO deadline and relevant ATU publications.
- Agree a timescale for the validation process with the lead proposer.
- Organise training for student representatives and maintain a register of eligible students for participation in the validation process.
- Organise and oversee external validation mechanisms as required in the validation procedures.
- Maintain a *Register of University Programmes* (RUP) which records the details of all programmes validated across the University.
- Ensure that approved programmes are included on the *Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ)*.
- Ensure that approved programmes are included on the TrustEd list, where relevant,
- Present an annual list of all major awards approved by Academic Council to Governing Body.

- Maintain *Academic Module Manager (AMM)*, the document management system for programmes and modules, and the *Student Record System (SRS)*.
- Oversee and support faculties in the implementation of the policy requirements.
- Undertake a review of this policy as required.

4.12.6 Senior Leadership Team

The SLT has executive responsibility for the provision of taught programmes. The SLT's Academic Programme Provision Committee (APPC) is chaired by the Registrar & Chief Academic Officer. Its remit is to review academic programme provision in the University in terms of strategic fit and resources.

Accordingly, the APPC committee will have the following specific roles:

- to review proposals for programmes leading to new major awards at the Outline Permission stage of the Programme Development and Validation Process and assess strategic fit, projected programme viability and sustainability, and
- to approve the programme to proceed to the Detailed Development stage of the process following the granting of Outline Permission. The decision to develop a programme may be subject to conditions.

The APPC will liaise with the proposing Department as required and make final recommendations to the SLT.

4.12.7 Academic Council

Academic Council has a statutory responsibility to control the academic affairs of our university, including the curriculum and instruction and education provided by ATU.

Accordingly, the Academic Council has the following specific roles:

- approval of this policy and all other relevant policies,
- approval of proposals for new award titles, new award standards, and exceptions from policy,
- approval of all new programmes,
- a member of the Academic Programmes Committee will participate in the internal validation of new programmes leading to Major Awards, and
- approval of changes to programmes and modules.

5. Documents Related to this Policy

5.1 Policies

- AQAE005 Marks and Standards Policy
- AQAE020 Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement of Programmes Policy

- AQAE022 Academic Integrity Policy
- AQAE037 Access, Transfer and Progression Policy
- AQAE038 Collaborative Provision of Programmes Policy
- AQAE056 Assessment and Feedback Policy
- AQAE067 Awards, Certification and Conferring Policy

5.2 Procedures

- AQAE010 Procedure for the Validation of a New Programme Leading to Major Awards
- AQAE018 Procedure for the Validation of New Minor, Supplemental or Special Purpose Awards
- AQAE028 Procedure for Writing New Programme Proposals
- AQAE029 Procedure for Writing Programme Specifications
- AQAE030 Procedure for Writing Module Descriptors
- AQAE044 Procedure for Proposal of a New Award Standard
- AQAE045 Procedure for the Proposal of a New Award Title

5.3 Forms

- AQAE004_001 New Programme Proposal
- AQAE004_002 Module Template
- AQAE004_003 Programme Specification (Major Award) template
- AQAE004_004 New Programme (Major Award) Internal Validation Report template
- AQAE004_005 New Programme (Major Award) External Validation Report template
- AQAE004_006 Validation Panel Nomination Form
- AQAE004_007 New Programme Validation Panel Agenda
- AQAE004_008 Response to Validation Report

5.4 Other Documents

- Register of University Programmes
- Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ)
- TrustEd List

6. Revision History

Revision No	Description of Change	Approval Date
000	New Policy Approved by Academic Council	14/06/2023

001	Revision to add Master of Pharmacy as Award title, update list of award standards, table 3& A1 and update cross references to AQAE documents and section 5.	25/10/2024
002	Revision to clarify the use of the term of micro-credentials as an umbrella term and to allow for programmes constituted from a single module, minimum 5 ECTS. Inclusion of Figure 4 – Seven Steps to Programme design in Section 4.7. Inclusion of programme design requirements for Dual Degrees in Section 4.7.6 Revision of Section 4.8 to aid readability and provide clarification, incorporate Curriculum Framework, address study abroad such as Erasmus. Revision of Section 4.9.4 to reference the Assessment and Feedback Policy. Inclusion of role of Teaching and Learning Centre (4.11.4) Update to cross-references to AQAE documents throughout and list in Section 5. Bachelor of Veterinary and Surgery – addition of Award title and award standard, and update list of award standards, table 3& A1. Minor changes to language to improve clarity and readability throughout	11/04/2025
003	Title Change Revision to include the AQAE003 Developing and Validating New Programmes Policy to allow for obsolescence of that policy (new sections 4.3 and 4.4; updated sections 1; 2; 3; 4.1; 4.2; 4.12) Removed sections on legal context and background, list of approved award titles (now in AQAE067 Awards, Certification and Conferring Policy)	12/06/2026

	Removed List of Approved Award Standards and reference to Sharepoint location) Removed Appendix 1 Award Standards and Titles 4.10 – Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence and reference to AQAE056 Assessment and Feedback Policy Trust Ed Mark reference to replace ILEP Updated titles throughout New Section 4.5 Programme Adoption New Section 4.8.5 Study and Delivery Mode Changes to Section 4.3 Commencement of Programmes following validation and resources planning 4.12.3 – amended membership and quorum of FAPC Minor changes to language to improve clarity and readability throughout	
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Appendix 1 Appendix List of Acronyms

AMM	Academic Module Manager
APPC	Academic Programme Provision Committee
ATU	Atlantic Technology University
CAO	Central Applications Office
FAPC	Faculty Academic Planning Committee
IRQ	Irish Register of Qualifications
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PDT	Programme Development Team
PLO	Programme Learning Outcomes
PSRB	Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Authority of Ireland
RUP	Register of University Programmes
SLT	Senior Leadership Team