Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Programme Approval Process

Full-time programmes

October 2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg |
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1. Introduction and background

1.1. The purpose of the Programme Approval - Full-time programmes policy is to provide a transparent, consistent and evidence-based approach to approving programmes eligible for Medr funding.

1.2. The policy ensures that approved programmes demonstrate need, are appropriately resourced, align with Medr's strategic objectives and deliver measurable benefits for learners, employers and Wales. It supports fair and consistent decision-making, effective stewardship of public funds, accountability, and value for public investment.

1.3. This Policy supports Medr's funding, planning and monitoring functions under Part 3 of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022. It should be read alongside Medr's Conditions of Funding, Regulatory Framework, Terms and Conditions of Grant, and associated funding guidance.

1.4. Approved programmes will normally form part of Medr's funding and monitoring arrangements and will be subject to ongoing review to ensure their continued relevance, effectiveness and compliance with Medr's regulatory requirements.

2. Eligibility

2.1. The Investment and Monitoring Team manages the approval process for all full-time programmes contained within the Programmes Directory and delivered by further education institutions and local authorities that are funded by Medr.

2.2. A new programme is provision that is not currently approved by Medr and included within the Programme Directory. New programmes require approval by Medr before they can be delivered as funded provision. A programme will be considered new where it represents a distinct programme of study with its own purpose, delivery requirements, learner outcomes, or funding arrangements. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that there are no current programmes similar to the newly proposed programme.

2.3. Each programme that receives approval from Medr will be eligible for public funding via the full-time mainstream allocation and individual funding values will be calculated by Medr. All programmes will have specific learner eligibility requirements as noted in specifications and provider policies.

2.4. Medr works to ensure that all programmes that receive funding from Medr meet and evidence the below required criteria:

a) Qualifications within learning programmes must be selected from those listed on the Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database, within the Approved or Designated categories of qualifications and must relate to the learning area of the programme. For further guidance on this please see Post-16 Funding Framework 2026/27.

b) there is evidenced demand for the programme from learners that meets regional, local or national skills needs

c) it does not duplicate existing provision and there is a genuine gap in provision; and

d) the outcomes and impacts of delivering the programme to learners can be measured and demonstrated.

This policy and process apply to new programmes that are not currently delivered in Wales and that are funded by Medr. This policy and process do not apply to amendments to existing programmes or to request discontinuation of existing programmes.

3. Proposal Process

3.1. Any further education college or local authority receiving Medr investment for full-time programmes of study may submit a request, this can be found at **Annex A**. The submission form is maintained by the Investment and Monitoring Team.

3.2. The proposal should consider the eligibility criteria listed in 1.2 and be focused on future need. It should not consider the current cohort of learners.

3.3. The proposal must be signed and approved by the Director of Education (local authority) or Principal (further education college).

3.4. The proposal must also have the support of an appropriate representative body i.e. Regional Skills Partnership, Colegau Cymru, or the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW). This can be confirmed by an email of support and a signature on the proposal form.

3.5. A provider will submit the form to the Investment and Monitoring Team.

3.6. Once a completed request form has been confirmed as received and validated, Medr will aim to communicate an outcome in up to 28 calendar days to consider the programme for investment and confirm the outcome with the provider.

3.7. Medr will hold a panel made of Medr staff. The panel will assess the proposal against the below criteria and minute the discussions regarding the decisions made. If a provider wishes to withdraw its application they will need to email InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru to confirm.

Criteria for internal Medr panel
a) Evidenced demand from learners
b) Evidence that the programme meets skills demand (regional, local, and sector)
c) Evidenced gap in provision
d) Evidence that the provider has the appropriate resource available to deliver the programme

Criteria for internal Medr panel
e) Evidence of employer engagement for course development
f) Evidence of progression pathway either before or post programme
g) Clear aims of outcomes, benefits and impacts that can be measured

Each criteria will be scored out of 5 as below focusing on the confidence that Medr has in the programme based on the evidence submitted by the provider. Any programme requests not receiving an outcome of 15 or above will not be accepted.

0 = Not Acceptable

1 = Major Concerns

2 = Moderate Concerns

3 = Minor Concerns

4 = Confidence

5 = Absolute Confidence

3.8. Prior to the panel, Medr will informally engage with external colleagues from tertiary sector (eg if a further education institution were to submit a request Medr would engage with local authorities, apprenticeship providers, and higher education institution's) to ensure that the new programme does not cause any unintended consequences across the tertiary sector. These views will inform the panel's decision.

3.9. Once the panel has confirmed its decision, Medr will confirm the outcome of either of the below three options to the provider along with feedback on the submission.

1. accepted;
2. rejected; or
3. On hold with further information required.

3.10. If further information is required, Medr will communicate this with details about the information, and adjusted timelines.

3.11. New programme requests may be submitted at any point during the academic year. Where approval is required before the start of a new academic year, submissions should be received by 30 June.

4. Appealing the decision

4.1. If a provider is dissatisfied with the decision, it can appeal within 10 working days of receiving the outcome via email to InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru.

4.2. An appeal can only be made on one or both of the following grounds:

a) Irregularities in the programme approval process that could reasonably call into question whether the same decision would have been reached if those irregularities had not occurred;

b) New information has become available that the provider could not, for compelling reasons, include in its original programme proposal.

4.3. The appeal submission should contain detailed evidence supporting one or both of the grounds outlined in section 3.2. If the appeal meets the criteria, Medr will consider this and communicate the outcome to the provider within 14 calendar days.

4.4. The appeal will be considered by the Director of Development, Investment, and Performance in Medr. It will be confirmed to the Investment and Monitoring Team via email. The Investment and Monitoring Team will then confirm the outcome of the appeal with the provider by email within the 10-day period.

5. Further information

5.1. For any further information or queries about programme approvals for full-time programmes, please contact InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru.

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