



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte  
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh  
Regulating Health +  
Social Care Professionals

# Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes

## **Information for Education Providers**

## About this Document

**CORU is a multi-profession regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.**

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out CORU's processes for the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended).

**Section 1** provides an overview of programme approval and monitoring processes

**Section 2** provides a detailed view of the programme approval process

**Section 3** provides a detailed view of the programme monitoring process

**This document should be read in conjunction with:**

- › Core Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- › Profession-Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- › Standards of Proficiency for the Profession

### Freedom of Information and Data Protection

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council is subject to the Freedom of Information and its records are subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

Any personal data received by CORU will be used for the purposes of programme approval and monitoring and shared with those involved in these processes.

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# 1. Overview of Programme Approval and Monitoring

## Legislative Context

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) [The Act] provides for:

- > The approval of education and training programmes (Section 48).
- > Monitoring of continuing suitability of education and training programmes (Section 49).

## Programme Approval

The programme approval process allows a Registration Board to determine if it is satisfied that a programme is suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration in its register.

## Programme Monitoring

The programme monitoring process allows a Registration Board to satisfy itself as to the continuing suitability of:

- (a) the education, training, assessment and examination, and
- (b) the clinical training and experience provided by any education and training programme approved by the Board.

## Approved Qualifications Bye-Law

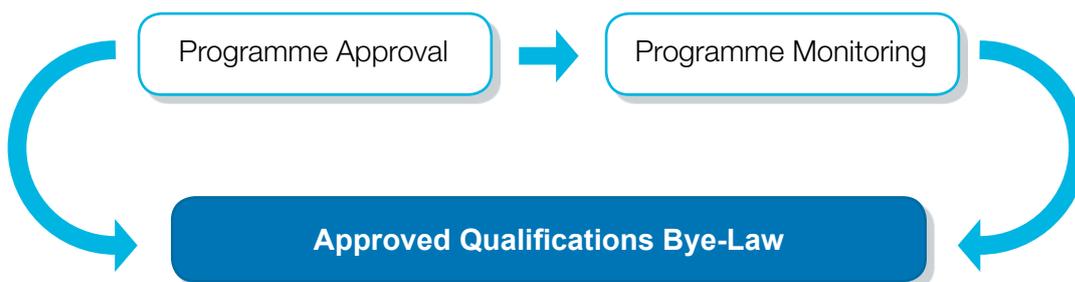
When a programme is approved, the qualification awarded on completion of the programme can be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law. This bye-law lists the qualifications approved as attesting to the standard of proficiency required for registration under Section 38(2)(a) of the Act.

Graduates with qualifications listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law are eligible to apply for registration under Section 38 of the Act.

Programmes which maintain approval under monitoring continue to have the associated qualification listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Institutions should ensure that the information they provide regarding the approval status of a programme is accurate and not misleading, false or exaggerated. Please check the CORU website for Programme Information Guidelines.

**Figure 1:** Approval and Monitoring of Education and Training Programmes



## Registration Board Requirements

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The approval and monitoring of education and training programmes are based on the Registration Board's requirements. These are:

- › Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards set by a Registration Board for entry to the register for that profession. The standards of proficiency provide detail on the knowledge and skills that all graduates must possess at entry to the register.

- › Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are the requirements set by the Registration Board related to how a professional education and training programme is designed and managed. The criteria are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession.

Approved programmes should meet all of the Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

## Multiple Programmes Leading to a Single Qualification Title

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Institutions may offer multiple programmes leading to one single qualification title. Registration Boards will not usually list a qualification on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law unless all programmes leading to the award of that qualification have been approved. Approval for one programme pathway does not infer approval for another.

For this reason, institutions offering more than one programme leading to a single qualification title should plan an application for programme approval carefully. They may wish for example, to distinguish between the qualification titles awarded at the end of the different programmes.

## 2. Programme Approval Process

### 2.1 Introduction to Approval

#### Programme Approval

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The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) (Section 48) provides for the approval of education and training programmes upon application by an institution. Registration Boards engage in the approval of individual programmes, they do not approve institutions.

Registration Boards carry out programme approval in a range of situations which may include, but is not limited to:

- approval of a programme for a profession which is being regulated by CORU for the first time
- approval of a new programme and new qualification title for a profession already being regulated by CORU
- approval of a new programme pathway to an existing qualification title

Institutions need to demonstrate, through evidence, that the programme meets the Board's requirements. These requirements are expressed in the Core Criteria for Education and Training Programmes, Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes and Standards of Proficiency. Institutions are advised to read these documents thoroughly.

Institutions should consider an application for programme approval carefully and enter the regulatory approval process when they believe that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the programme meets the Registration Board's requirements.

#### Application for Programme Approval

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Institutions should complete the Programme Approval Application Form. This form is available on the CORU website.

#### Withdrawal of Application

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An institution may withdraw an application at any point in the approval process before the Registration Board makes a decision. The request to withdraw the application should be communicated in writing to CORU.

#### Cost of Programme Approval and Monitoring

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Institutions are required to meet their own costs associated with approval and monitoring of their qualifications and programmes. This includes the costs of preparing documentation and providing facilities.

Currently, there is no fee for programme approval or monitoring.

## 2.2 Before the Approval Visit

The submission for programme approval consists of:

- (a) documentation, and
- (b) a visit.

The documentation and approval visit are used to determine whether the programme meets the Registration Board's requirements.

Contact is made with the School/Discipline which provides the specific education and training programme to agree dates for an approval visit. The notice given to arrange the visit depends on the individual circumstances but would normally be at least six months. Providers are informed by CORU of the deadline for the submission of documentation. All documentation is required in line with the deadlines communicated.

### Meeting with CORU Staff

CORU staff meet with the provider to discuss the programme approval process and to address any questions that arise. Key documents such as the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes, Standards of Proficiency, Mapping Document and Visit Schedule Template will be provided and explained.

It is outside the remit of CORU staff to advise providers on the potential outcome of the approval process for their programme.

### Preparation of Documentary Evidence

Providers must submit documentary evidence to demonstrate that the programme meets the criteria and standards.

CORU provides a Mapping Document Template to facilitate the presentation of this evidence.

The completed Mapping Document should:

- > address each criterion and standard of proficiency individually
- > refer to specific documentary evidence which demonstrates that the programme meets the individual criterion or standard

- > provide a page number or reference to the relevant location(s) in each piece of evidence
- > provide a short supporting narrative to explain the evidence, if necessary
- > include all evidence in an appendix to the Mapping Document

Evidence is likely to consist both of existing documentation such as a programme handbook, and evidence specifically produced for the approval process. For further guidance on the preparation of documentary evidence please see the *Documentary Evidence - Guidance for Education and Training Providers*.

Providers delivering programmes in partnership with others should make the involvement and responsibilities of each party clear in the mapping document.

For guidance on how to complete a mapping document and submit supporting evidence please see *Documentary Evidence - Guidance for Education and Training Providers*.

Documentation which is not in order will be returned to a provider. This may impact on the timing of the approval visit.

### Review Team

The Registration Board approves a review team to review the submission and conduct a visit.

Potential reviewers undergo a conflict of interest procedure specific to education and training reviewers. The team comprises up to six members drawn from some or all of the following groups: academics, practitioners, the public. One member of the review team serves as Chair.

## 2.3 Approval Visit

### Visit

Based on the *Visit - Guidance for Education and Training Providers* CORU agree a detailed schedule for the visit with the provider along with details of attendees. A visit normally takes between two and four days.

The criteria for education and training programmes and standards of proficiency form the basis of the engagement between the review team and a range of people and groups.

Please see the *Visit - Guidance for Education and Training Providers* for guidance on attendees and requirements for the approval visit.

After reviewing the programme documentation, the review team may request the inclusion of additional sessions in the schedule.

### Facilities during the Visit

The provider is asked to make the following facilities available during the review team visit:

- > One large room for group sessions and one separate small room, one of which should be lockable
- > Phone access
- > Wireless internet access
- > Food and refreshments

## 2.4 After the Approval Visit

### Report by Review Team

The review team will prepare a report for the Registration Board based on the evidence made available by the provider.

### Factual Accuracy Review

The Registration Board will communicate with the Head of School/Discipline and provide an opportunity for a factual accuracy review of the report. The Board may also seek additional evidence from the provider. The Head of School/Discipline should respond within the timeframe communicated.

### Decision by Registration Board

When the deadline for response by the provider has passed, the Registration Board will consider the approval of the programme taking into account a range of factors including the requirements it has set for the approval of education and training programmes, the protection of the public and the evidence provided about the programme.

The Registration Board will make one of the following decisions. The Board will inform the provider of the decision, the date on which it was made and the reason(s) for the decision.

#### 1. Programme Approved

The Registration Board is satisfied that the programme meets the criteria for education and training programmes and standards of proficiency.

The Approved Qualifications Bye-Law process commences once the programme is approved. This process can take up to six months.

Graduates with a qualification listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law are eligible to apply for entry to the relevant register.

The programme is subject to monitoring and must satisfy the Board, as required, regarding its continued suitability.

## 2. Programme Approval Refused

The Registration Board is not satisfied that the programme meets the criteria for education and training programmes and standards of proficiency.

The qualification associated with the programme is not listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law. Students graduating from the programme are not eligible to apply for registration to the relevant Registration Board.

The provider may apply again for approval of the programme. There is no time limit for subsequent applications.

### Request to Minister

Following a Registration Board's decision to refuse approval the institution may request the Minister for Health to direct the Board to grant approval. This request to the Minister must be made within 30 days after the institution is informed of the Registration Board's decision to refuse approval of the education and training programme.

If, after consulting the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Health is satisfied as to the suitability of the education and training programme, he or she may direct the Board to grant approval.

If, after consulting the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Health is not satisfied as to the suitability of the education and training programme, he or she may confirm the Registration Board's decision.

## Key Responsibilities in Approval

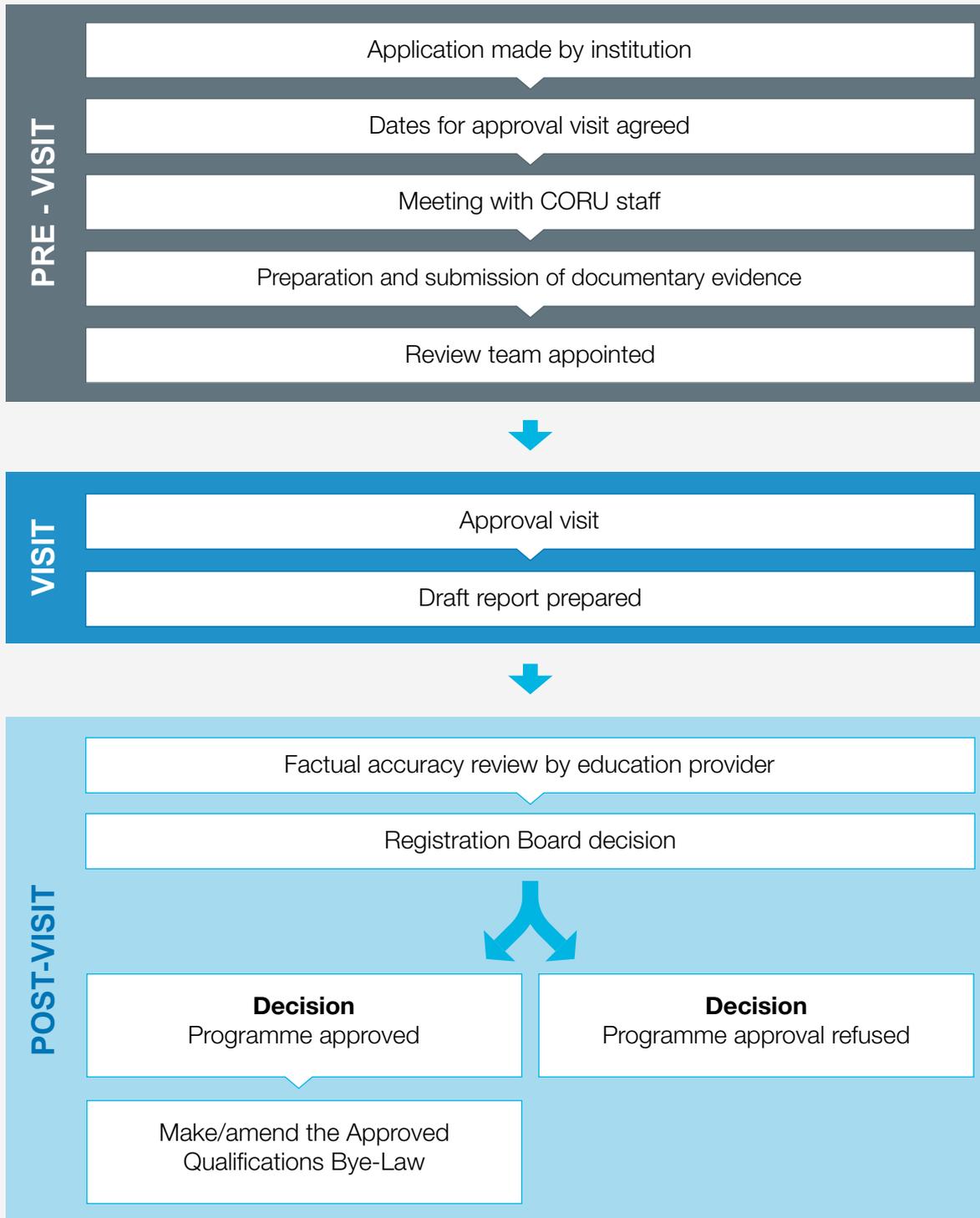
### Education Providers are responsible for:

- › Applying for approval
- › Providing appropriate documentation by dates communicated
- › Agreeing dates for an approval visit
- › Meeting with CORU staff for a briefing
- › Identifying relevant participants for the visit and communicating with them
- › Ensuring availability of relevant people for the visit
- › Providing adequate facilities for the reviewers and all participants invited to meet with the review team
- › Bearing costs associated with their application for programme approval
- › Conducting a factual accuracy review of the report
- › Giving feedback on the process

### The Registration Board with the support of the CORU executive, is responsible for:

- › Keeping providers informed about its role, the approval timeframe and deadlines
- › Approving appropriate reviewers
- › Making decisions regarding the status of a programme
- › Making the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law

Figure 2: Flowchart of Programme Approval Process



## 3. Programme Monitoring Process

### 3.1 Introduction to Monitoring

#### Monitoring Requirements

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) (Section 49) provides for the monitoring of education and training programmes.

The Board shall, as occasion may require but in any event not less than once in every five years, satisfy itself as to the continuing suitability of:

- (a) the education, training, assessment and examination, and
- (b) the clinical training and experience provided by any education and training programme approved by the Board.

Monitoring is a requirement of all approved programmes. Providers should be mindful of the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes and the Standards of Proficiency in the on-going management of the programme.

#### Standard Monitoring Timeline

Providers of approved programmes are informed by CORU of the standard timeline for monitoring. The standard monitoring timeline is based on the statutory requirement of Registration Boards to carry out monitoring not less than once every 5 years. Preparation for monitoring will normally commence three years after the previous approval/monitoring and be completed within five years of the previous approval or monitoring.

#### Changes to Standard Monitoring Timeline

The standard monitoring timeline for a specific programme may be altered by the Registration Board as occasion may require. A range of factors may alter the standard monitoring timeline, these include, but are not limited to:

- > a change in the requirements set by a Registration Board for education and training programmes
- > information received about a programme that indicates a change in the way it meets the criteria for programmes and standards of proficiency

Providers may also request a change to the standard monitoring timeline. Please see the website for the *Monitoring Request Form*.

CORU will be in communication with providers about the timelines for monitoring. The notice given to arrange the monitoring visit depends on the individual circumstances, including risk to the public.

**Figure 3:** Standard Monitoring Timeline



## 3.2 Before the Monitoring Visit

The submission for programme monitoring consists of:

- (a) documentation, and
- (b) a visit.

The documentation and visit are used to determine whether the programme continues to be suitable.

Contact is made with the School/Discipline to provide information on the monitoring requirements which include a monitoring visit. The notice given to arrange the visit depends on the individual circumstances but would normally be at least six months. Providers are informed by CORU of the deadline for the submission of documentation. All documentation is required in line with the deadlines communicated.

### Meeting with CORU Staff

CORU staff meet with the provider to discuss the programme monitoring process and to address any questions that arise. Key documents such as the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes, Standards of Proficiency, Mapping Document and Visit Schedule Template will be provided and explained.

It is outside the remit of CORU staff to advise providers on the potential outcome of the monitoring process for their programme.

### Preparation of Documentary Evidence

Providers must submit documentary evidence to demonstrate that the programme meets each criterion and standard.

CORU provides a Mapping Document Template to facilitate the presentation of this evidence.

The completed Mapping Document should:

- address each criterion and standard of proficiency individually

- refer to specific documentary evidence which demonstrates that the programme meets the individual criterion or standard
- provide a page number or reference to the relevant location(s) in each piece of evidence
- provide a short supporting narrative to explain the evidence, if necessary
- include all evidence in an appendix to the Mapping Document

Evidence is likely to consist both of existing documentation already produced for the programme, for example module descriptors and evidence specifically produced for the monitoring process. For further guidance on the preparation of documentation please see the *Documentary Evidence - Guidance for Education and Training Providers*.

Providers delivering programmes in partnership with others should make the involvement and responsibilities of each party clear in the mapping document.

For guidance on how to complete a mapping document and submit supporting evidence please see *Documentary Evidence - Guidance for Education and Training Providers*.

Documentation which is not in order will be returned to a provider. This may impact on the timing of the monitoring visit.

### Review Team

The Registration Board approves a review team to review the submission and conduct a visit.

Potential reviewers undergo a conflict of interest procedure specific to education and training reviewers. The team comprises up to six members drawn from some or all of the following groups: academics, practitioners and the public. One member of the review team serves as Chair.

### 3.3 Monitoring Visit

#### Visit

Based on the *Visit - Guidance for Education and Training Providers* CORU agree a detailed schedule for the visit with the provider along with details of attendees. A visit normally takes between two and four days.

The criteria for education and training programmes and standards of proficiency form the basis of the engagement between the review team and a range of people and groups.

Please see the *Visit - Guidance for Education and Training Providers* for guidance on attendees and requirements for the monitoring visit.

After reviewing the programme documentation, the review team may request the inclusion of additional sessions in the schedule.

#### Facilities during the Visit

The provider is asked to make the following facilities available during the review team visit:

- > One large room for group sessions and one separate small room, one of which should be lockable
- > Phone access
- > Wireless internet access
- > Food and refreshments

### 3.4 After the Monitoring Visit

#### Report by Review Team

The review team will prepare a report for the Registration Board based on the evidence made available by the provider.

#### Factual Accuracy Review

The Registration Board will communicate with the Head of School/Discipline and provide an opportunity for a factual accuracy review of the report. The Board may also seek additional evidence from the provider. The Head of School/Discipline should respond within the timeframe communicated.

#### Consideration by Registration Board

When the deadline for response by the provider has passed, the Registration Board will consider the continued suitability of the programme taking into account a range of factors including the requirements it has set for the approval of education and training programmes, the protection of the public and the evidence provided about the programme.

#### Opinion to Continue Approval

If the Board is of the opinion that the education and training programme continues to be suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration, it will make the following decision:

#### 1. Continued Approval

The Board is satisfied as to the continued suitability of the programme.

The programme continues to be subject to monitoring and must satisfy the Board, as required, as to its continued suitability.

### Opinion to Withdraw Approval

If the Board is of the opinion that an education and training programme it has approved may no longer be suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration, it shall give the institution an opportunity to make within 30 days, representations to the Board as to why the approval should not be withdrawn.

When the deadline for representations by the provider has passed the Registration Board will make one of the following decisions after consulting with Council:

#### 1. Continued Approval

The Board is satisfied as to the continued suitability of the programme.

The programme continues to be subject to monitoring and must satisfy the Board, as required, as to its continued suitability.

Or

#### 2. Approval Withdrawn

The Board is not satisfied as to the continued suitability of the programme.

The Board will provide the following information to the institution:

- (a) the decision and the date on which it was made,
- (b) the date, not less than 3 months after the date of the notice, on which the decision will become effective, and
- (c) the reason for the decision.

### Recommendation to Minister

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After monitoring the continuing suitability of education and training programmes the Registration Board shall make appropriate recommendations to the Minister for Health and Minister for Education and Skills.

### Request to Minister

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Following a Board's decision to withdraw approval, the provider may request the Minister for Health to direct the Registration Board to continue the approval. This request to the Minister must be made within 30 days after the institution is informed of the Registration Board's decision to withdraw approval.

If, after consulting the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister is satisfied as to the suitability of the education and training programme, he or she may direct the Board to continue the approval.

If, after consulting the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister is not satisfied as to the suitability of the education and training programme, he or she may confirm the Registration Board's decision.

### Approved Qualifications Bye-Law

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The decision of the Registration Board may have an impact on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

## Key Responsibilities in Monitoring

### **Education Providers are responsible for:**

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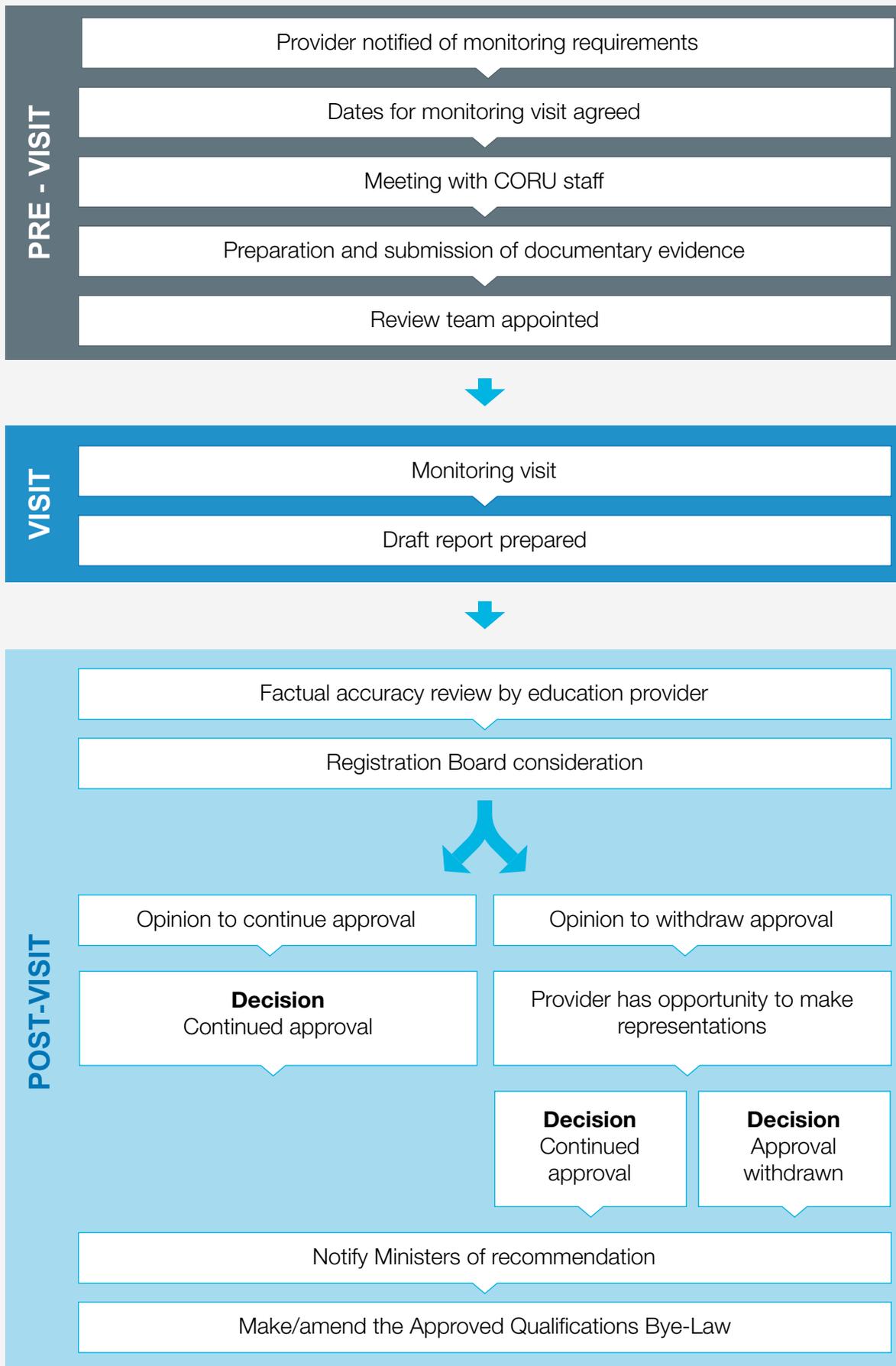
- › Providing appropriate documentation by dates communicated
- › Agreeing dates for a monitoring visit
- › Meeting with CORU staff for a briefing
- › Identifying relevant participants for the visit and communicating with them
- › Ensuring availability of relevant people for the visit
- › Providing adequate facilities for the reviewers and all participants invited to meet with the review team
- › Bearing the costs associated with their application for programme monitoring
- › Conducting a factual accuracy review of the report
- › Giving feedback on the process

### **The Registration Board, with the support of the CORU executive, is responsible for:**

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- › Keeping providers informed about its role, the approval timeframe and deadlines
- › Approving appropriate reviewers
- › Making decisions regarding the status of a programme
- › Amending the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law if necessary

**Figure 4:** Flowchart of Programme Monitoring Process







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