



Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Strategy Statement 2016-2018



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Introduction to QQI Strategy Statement 2016-18

This is the second strategy statement for Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). It provides direction and guidance for our staff and our stakeholders on our mission, vision, values and goals and our approaches to how we intend to achieve our outcomes. The statement covers the three year period from January 2016 to December 2018. It will inform successive annual corporate plans which will set out the objectives, actions and outputs to be achieved each year by the organisation. Over the course of the next three years we will monitor and review the implementation of our strategy and publish reports on our performance.



Dr Padraig Walsh

Chief Executive
June 2015

QQI is a state agency under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills. We were established in November 2012 and are responsible for the external quality assurance of Irish further and higher education and training and we also act as custodian of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Qualifications play an ever more important role in modern day life. They are increasingly necessary for individuals to access employment and further educational opportunities. The recognition of qualifications is an essential element of job and educational mobility in an increasingly globalised world. The acceptance and recognition of qualifications is strengthened by external quality assurance processes which ensure that qualifications continue to enjoy currency and relevance.

QQI has a broad remit across education and training in Ireland. Our work concerns learners in diverse areas – schooling, vocational training, higher education, adult education, community education and English language training. We also work with providers of further and higher education and training; government departments, state agencies and funding bodies; regulatory bodies; professional bodies; qualifications awarding bodies; sectorial and representative bodies and international bodies responsible for quality assurance and qualifications.

During the period of this strategy statement, QQI will develop an International Education Mark for providers of education and training programmes to international students and will establish a database of programmes and qualifications. Through this work we will bring coherence between qualifications and quality assurance in further and higher education and training and promote public confidence and trust.

This strategy statement was developed by our staff and Board with the assistance of our external stakeholders. We took account of our legal mandate; our major areas of work and plans; our external and internal environment and related challenges. Our external stakeholders encourage us to deliver quality outcomes for all stakeholders, especially learners, to collaborate with them to assure and enhance quality, to regulate effectively, to develop further the NFQ and to promote a responsive, dynamic qualifications system.

Over the next three years, QQI will seek to support improvement in the quality of Ireland's further and higher education and training. We will support the delivery of internationally respected qualifications and more pathways and flexibility for learners. We commit to delivering a high quality service to ensure the public is informed about the quality of Ireland's education and training system and to bring greater coherence to quality assurance and qualifications.

Our Mission

QQI promotes the enhancement of quality in Ireland's further and higher education and training, and quality assures providers.

QQI supports and promotes a qualifications system that benefits learners and other stakeholders.

Our Vision

Our Values



Improvement-Oriented

We are a learning, developing and evolving organisation, committed to continuously evaluating and improving the quality of our work. This underpins our approaches to assuring and promoting improved quality in education and training.

Collaborative

We collaborate with our stakeholders to build confidence and we aspire to the improvement of the quality of education and training opportunities and the recognition of qualifications.

Independent

Although we work within the broad framework of Governmental policy, we are operationally independent in the performance of our functions and in our decision-making. We operate with integrity and in a transparent, fair, equitable, impartial and objective manner.

Professional

We treat all persons with respect, dignity and courtesy. We work to the highest standards of public service with regard to accountability, effectiveness, responsiveness and efficiency.

Learner-Centred

We promote a culture of access, responsiveness, flexibility, trust and quality in education, training and qualifications. We place the learner perspective at the centre of our work and also encourage stakeholders to do so.

What We Do and How We Do It

Qualifications

- ▶ We maintain and promote the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) so that it is understood and valued
- ▶ We guide and support the use of the NFQ nationally and internationally
- ▶ We provide the tools for maintaining consistency in NFQ qualifications
- ▶ We set qualification standards using the NFQ
- ▶ We make QQI awards

Quality Assurance

- ▶ We provide external quality assurance for public further and higher education and training
- ▶ We validate programmes of education and training
- ▶ We regulate private providers offering programmes of education and training leading to QQI awards
- ▶ We regulate English Language Training (ELT) provision in accordance with national policy
- ▶ We approve providers' fitness to enrol international students through our authorisation of the International Education Mark (IEM)
- ▶ We work with providers to enhance the quality of education and training

Communication and Information

- ▶ We communicate publicly about the role of QQI and provide information on all of the services we offer
- ▶ We consult with our stakeholders to ensure that their views support and inform our activities
- ▶ We are an authoritative source of information on providers, programmes of education and training and qualifications in Ireland
- ▶ We provide advice on how foreign qualifications compare to the Irish NFQ

Delivering High Quality Service

We focus on continuous improvement in:

- ▶ Staff development and training
- ▶ Employee engagement
- ▶ Performance management
- ▶ Internal quality assurance
- ▶ Information and Communications Technology
- ▶ Provider and stakeholder consultation
- ▶ Planning and project management

Our Goals to 2018

Qualifications

We, in association with stakeholders, will ensure that the NFQ and its qualifications are used to develop:

Education and training programmes with clear occupational and/or educational purposes and learning outcomes for informed career and other choices

Lifelong learning pathways for personal, social and professional development

Quality Assurance

We will oversee an improved quality assurance system that is comprehensive and balances accountability and enhancement and promotes local responsibility

Communication and Information

We will provide clear, authoritative and comprehensive information to our stakeholders and the public regarding our roles, responsibilities and activities

Delivering High Quality Service

We will proactively enable and encourage our staff's ability to develop, thrive, and be fully engaged in their work

We will enhance our self-service systems, processes and technological capabilities to improve the quality and effectiveness of the service we deliver

Our Approaches

Qualifications

- Complete a review of the application and effects of the NFQ
- Develop NFQ standards and guidelines for employers, learners, awarding bodies and policy makers
- Promote the NFQ qualifications to stakeholders by maximising the use of our online communication channels
- Make QQI awards in accordance with our policy and criteria

Quality Assurance

- Introduce a comprehensive system of quality assurance guidelines
- Ensure our quality assurance procedures are sufficiently able to address innovations in education and training
- Validate programmes of education and training in accordance with our policy and criteria
- Devolve responsibility to providers for awarding and related quality assurance as appropriate
- Implement new risk based approaches to monitoring and review that are systematic and proportionate
- Consult and work with public authorities and providers to implement the International Education Mark
- Develop a series of events and publications to help providers improve the teaching and learning environment
- Implement a programme of work with international partners for transnational education
- Take firm action where providers fail to fulfil their responsibilities and place learners or standards at risk

Communication and Information

- Build mutually supportive relationships with all of our stakeholders to better communicate and collaborate with them
- Develop strong working relationships with key sectors, organisations and bodies through a series of Memorandums of Understanding
- Devise and implement a communication and information strategy to increase awareness of the NFQ, NFQ Awards, including QQI awards and the International Education Mark
- Optimise and maintain a user friendly website
- Promote and support the use of all internal information and communications systems
- Publish reports on the effectiveness of providers' quality assurance procedures
- Develop a database of providers, programmes and qualifications in Ireland

Delivering High Quality Service

- Ensure that the individual and collective skills and abilities of our staff support the ongoing delivery of a high quality service to providers and stakeholders
- Continue to develop and enhance the organisation in ways that promote a culture of openness and transparency
- Develop and utilise high quality ICT systems that support progressive services to all stakeholders
- Address obstacles to accessibility to QQI services for people with disabilities

Outcomes

Qualifications

- Providers will publish knowledge, skills and competences intended to be achieved by learners who enrol in their programmes of education and training
- Providers will evaluate and report on the fitness for purpose of their assessments in ensuring consistency of the qualifications of their learners
- More employers refer to the NFQ for recruitment purposes
- Documented and monitored progression pathways between further and higher education and training
- NFQ referenced awards for innovative new apprenticeships
- The NFQ will be widely used to support national and international mobility of qualification holders
- The NFQ will be widely used to clearly express expectations of programme quality

Quality Assurance

- Providers have established statutory quality assurance procedures
- QQI quality assurance guidelines for all providers and new areas of provision
- An International Education Mark granted to providers who offer a high quality international student experience
- Clearer picture and greater confidence in transnational education in Ireland and Irish education delivered overseas
- Reviews of higher education institutions based on a new review model will be underway

Communication and Information

- Greater awareness and understanding about QQI's roles, responsibilities and activities among our stakeholders
- Our stakeholders have confidence in QQI and support us in fulfilling our roles and responsibilities
- Increased awareness of the NFQ, NFQ Awards including QQI awards, the International Education Mark and the benefits for providers, learners and employers
- QQI staff and stakeholders are well informed and can use the communication channels available to them to find and share the information they need on quality and qualifications
- QQI is recognised nationally and internationally as the authority on information of programmes of education and training, and qualifications in Ireland

Delivering High Quality Service

- The talent, experience and abilities of QQI staff are recognised, developed and enabled to drive innovation and ensure we are best placed to respond to the needs of our stakeholders
- A comprehensive approach to ensuring all parts of the organisation work together to deliver high quality efficient service
- Advanced efficiencies in internal processes and systems to better serve the public
- Increased availability of accessible services for all stakeholders



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