



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Introduction to the QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines Website

Ross Woods, QQI

Introduction to Online QA Guidelines



QQI

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Navigating QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines

HOME POLICY & PRINCIPLES CORE GUIDELINES SECTOR SPECIFIC TOPIC SPECIFIC RESOURCES

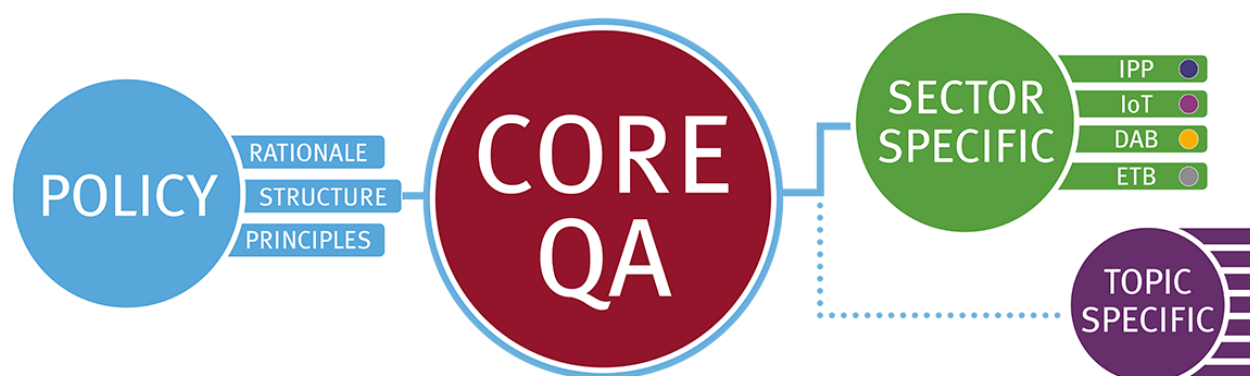
WHAT ARE QQI's QA GUIDELINES?

The QA Guidelines are a set of statutory guidelines for providers in higher, further and English language education for the quality assurance (QA) of their programmes and services. The QA Guidelines are intended to guide providers through their responsibilities for the quality of education and training, research and related services. They were developed in collaboration with the education and training sectors.



Purpose of website

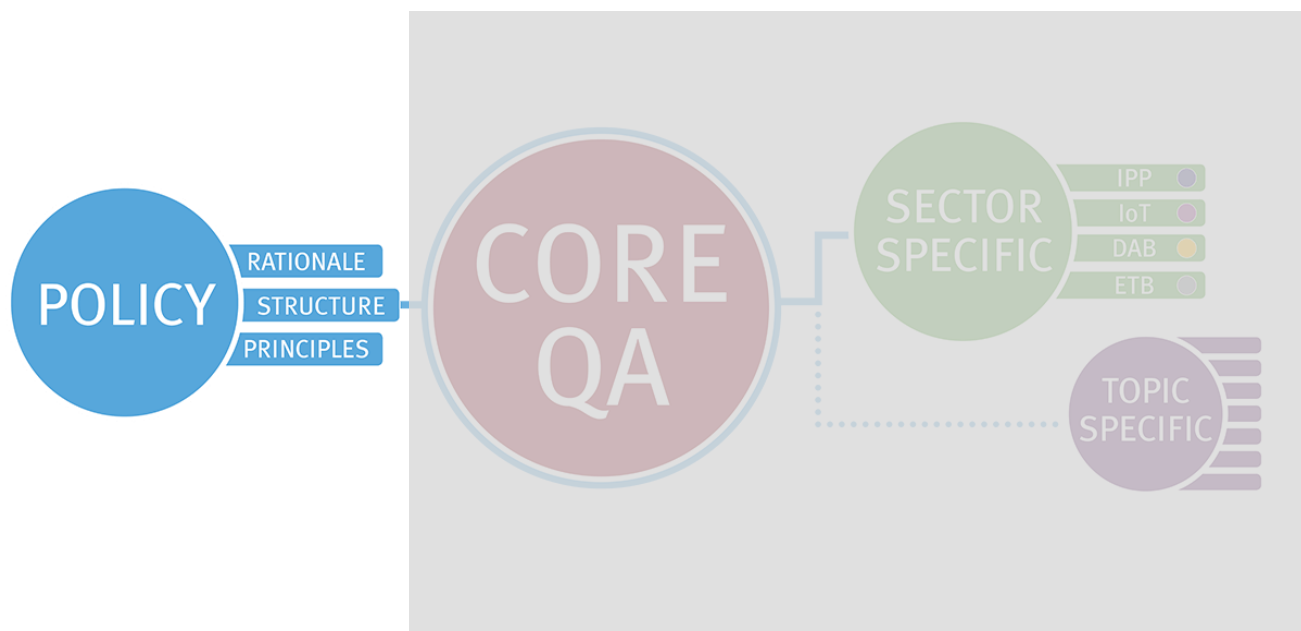
1. To help give providers a clearer picture of how to use QQI QA Guidelines and Policy;
2. To map out how the different guidelines (Core, Sector-specific, Topic-specific) are connected.





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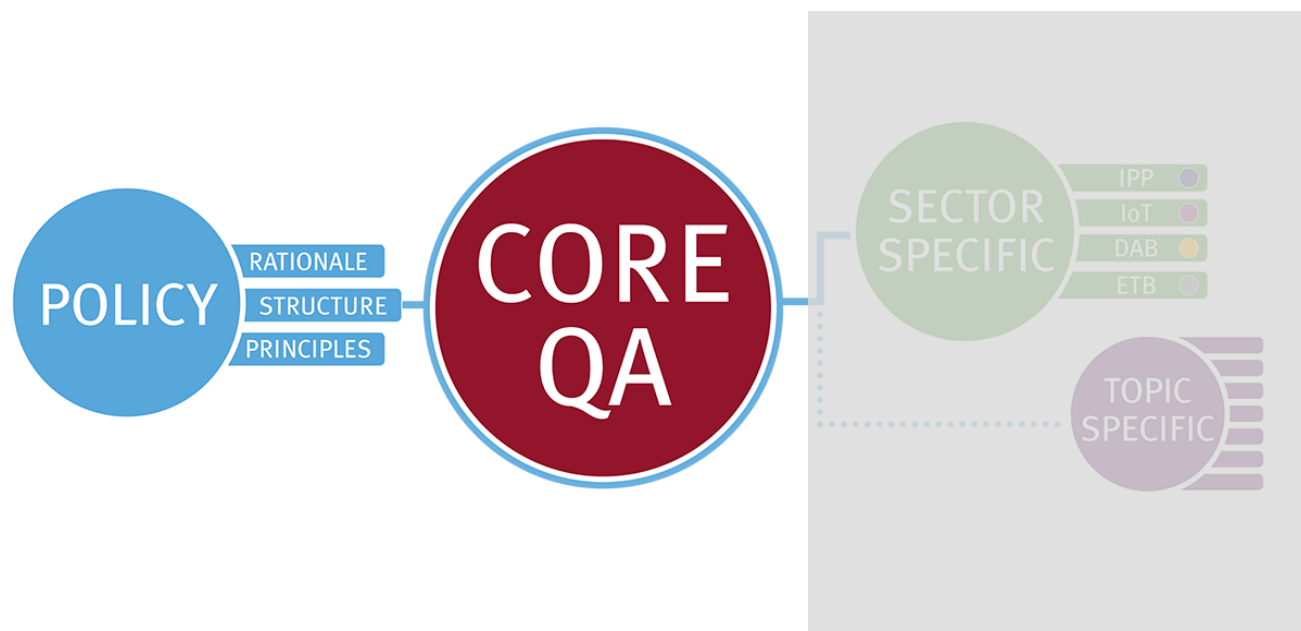
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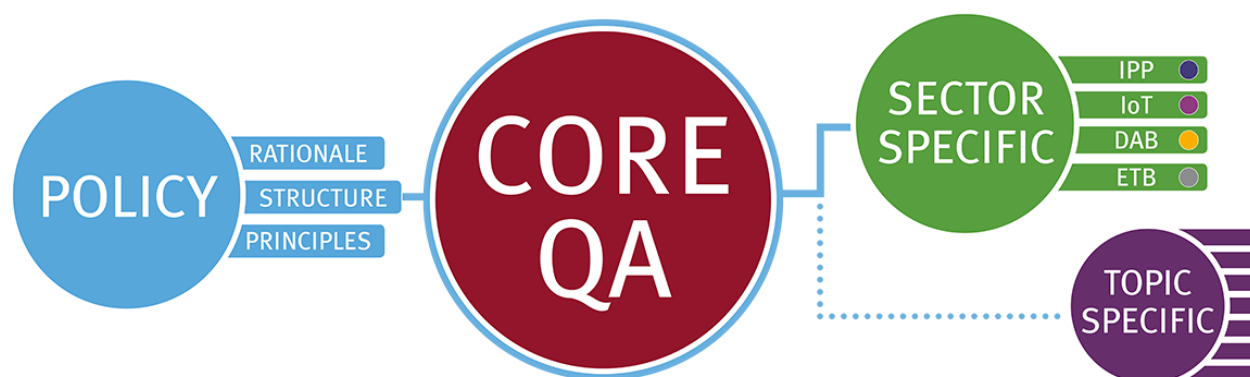
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How to use the website

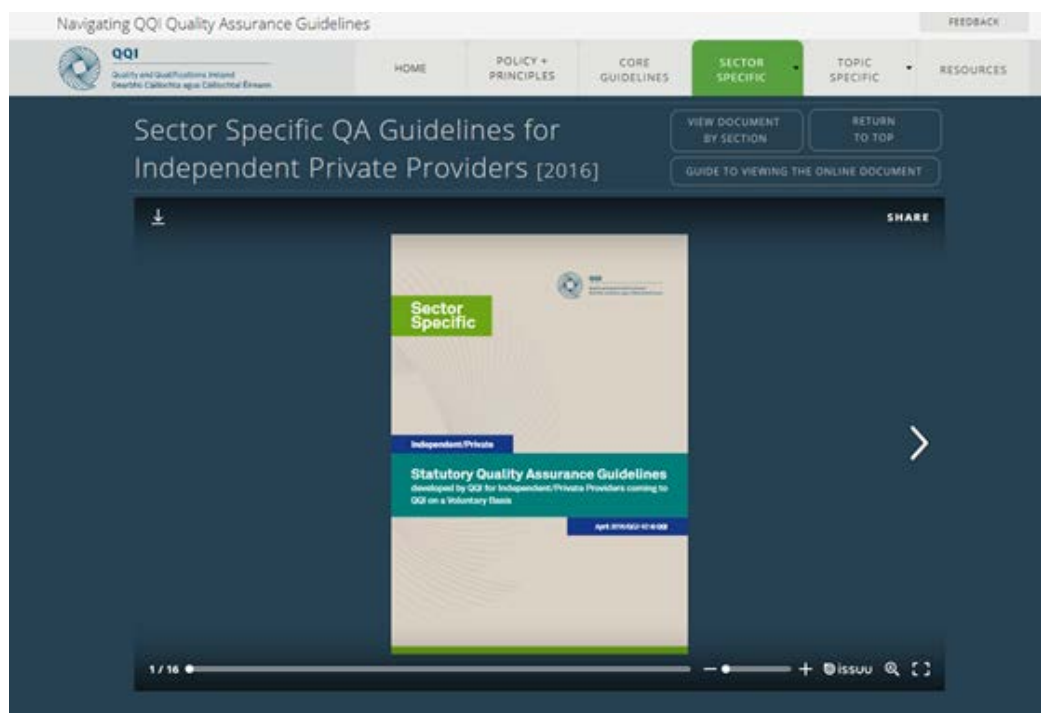
To find out *what* the guidelines are and *how* they should be used – click on the grey tabs on the site's main page





On the website you can...

Browse an **entire document**, such as the *QA Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers*





On the website you can...

Or go directly to a **particular section** and read or print off the ones needed

4 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Voluntary providers will have quality assurance procedures in place to:

- Establish and manage the arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to comply with statutory obligations which are set out in *Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act*
- Have access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval
- Support the programme design, development, approval and delivery process as set out in the *QQI Core Validation Policy and Criteria for education and training programmes*
- Monitor and review programmes and arrange for the revalidation of continuing programmes, normally every 5 years or in accordance with the expiry of the duration of the validation

Additional QA procedures will be required if a voluntary provider wishes to change the scope of its approved quality assurance. Examples of where substantial changes may require additional QA procedures include:

- Where proposed programme provision is moving to a different level in the NFQ or from one field (ISCED) of learning to another
- A further education and training provider is proposing to develop a programme leading to validation outside the Common Awards System (CAS)



Using the QA Guidelines...

Start with the *Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines*

QQI Policy on QA Guidelines
[Revised 2016]

[VIEW DOCUMENT
BY SECTION](#)[RETURN
TO TOP](#)[GUIDE TO VIEWING THE ONLINE DOCUMENT](#)

Policy On Quality Assurance Guidelines

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Using the QA Guidelines...

Start with the *Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines*

1. The Provider-Owned QA Principle

The primary responsibility for quality and its assurance lies with education and training providers.

2. The QA Context Principle

Quality systems are context dependent i.e. the scale and scope of a provider's provision will impact on how it operates quality assurance. Providers should be able to demonstrate their quality publicly.



Using the QA Guidelines...

Next move on to the *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*

1.2 What is the purpose of these guidelines?

These guidelines are to be used:

- by providers when designing, establishing, evaluating, maintaining, renewing and reviewing their quality assurance policies and procedures
- as a basis for the approval by QQI of providers' quality assurance procedures (other than for previously established universities)

These guidelines are not intended:

- to prescribe how providers are to carry out their work or run their organisations
- as a "how to" manual for providers on the establishment of QA procedures. Rather, it is up to providers to establish an internal quality system appropriate to their individual context which incorporates both operational procedures and a system of review to monitor the effectiveness of those procedures

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with QQI's policy on statutory QA guidelines.



Some examples of areas to be included in a provider's QA system include:

- The organisation's **Mission** to clarify its role as a provider of education and training programmes.
- **Policies** showing full understanding of the legislative obligations of the provider. The policies will inform:
 - management and staff as to the general approaches to follow in their work
 - learners and other stakeholders as to what they can expect of the provider
- The **procedures** designed to implement the policies.
- An **internal self-monitoring system** which will regularly check the effectiveness of the procedures and act as an early warning system in areas of provision requiring improvement. This includes the use of data collected and compared against indicators, for example, completion and progression rates for learners.
- A **self-evaluation system** through which the provider will review and report on the quality of its own programmes and related services. Each such evaluation will include the views of learners and independent evaluators who can make comparisons with other similar programmes offered elsewhere.
- A system for responding to the findings of self-monitoring and review which will address areas for **improvement** and build on areas of strength. The provider uses indicators/benchmarks against which programme data can be compared.



Using the QA Guidelines...

Finally, refer to the *Sector-Specific Statutory QA Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers*

1.1 What is the purpose of these guidelines?

These statutory, sector-specific QA guidelines address the responsibilities of independent, private providers of higher, further and English language education and training (hereafter referred to as voluntary providers)¹ in the context of accessing the statutory and regulatory functions of QQI. These guidelines set out additional, statutory, quality assurance (QA) guidelines specific to voluntary providers that come to QQI on a voluntary basis for the purpose of:

- Gaining access to programme validation; and
- Authorisation to use the International Education Mark (IEM)

The approval of quality assurance procedures only has relevance in the context of a validated programme(s) leading to QQI awards and/or authorisation to use the IEM. The approval of quality assurance procedures has no standing in its own right; it does not confer any status upon a provider.

¹ This is in cognisance of the fact that under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (the 2012 Act) such providers seek to have their QA procedures approved by QQI on a voluntary, rather than compulsory basis.



Using the QA Guidelines...

Finally, refer to the *Sector-Specific Statutory QA Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers*

2 SCOPE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

QQI approval of the quality assurance procedures of voluntary providers pertains to those programmes leading to QQI awards and related services. This extends to the overall governance and management structures in place in the provider to support the delivery of such programmes.

The scope and complexity of the quality assurance procedures to be established by voluntary providers is typically linked to, and influenced by, the provider's context, overall goals and scope of provision. This includes but is not limited to:

- The levels and award types in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to which the programme for which QQI validation is sought leads
- The programme's field of learning and /or professional domain
- The teaching and learning modalities

Additional QA procedures will be required if a voluntary provider wishes to change the scope of its approved quality assurance (refer to section 4 below)



Useful Links

[QQI website](#)

[Online QA Guidelines](#)

[QA Guidelines \(main site\)](#)

[Initial Access to Programme Validation](#)

[Programme Validation](#)

[Application for Validation \(FET\)](#)