

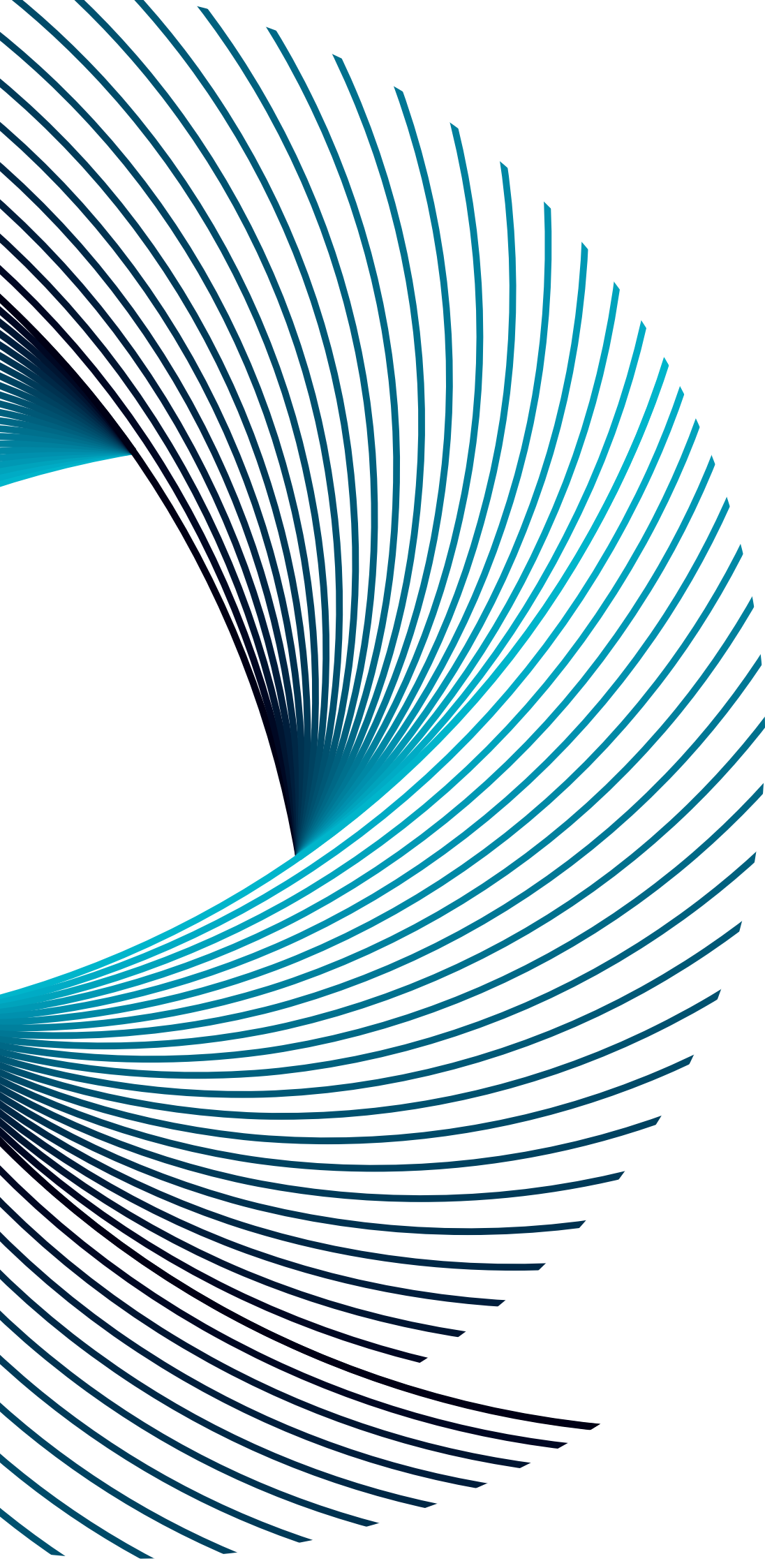


QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



Quality and Qualifications Ireland
CORPORATE PLAN
2017



Quality and Qualifications Ireland

CORPORATE PLAN 2017



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INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth corporate plan we have published since our establishment in November 2012 and the second which contributes to meeting the objectives set out in QQI's Strategy Statement 2016-2018.

We have a broad range of legislative and other functions relating to qualifications and quality assurance, and the corporate plan reflects this diversity. However, these functions all inter-link in their focus on the quality assurance and improvement of qualifications, research and institutions; in their objective of providing information and communication around these functions; and in QQI's wish to continuously improve the quality of its public service. Collectively, these are the key approaches that underpin our Strategy Statement 2016-2018 and on which actions will be designed each year to deliver on our intended outcomes.

QQI continues to place significant emphasis on its relationships with government departments and agencies, professional and regulatory bodies, and providers and institutions and their representative bodies. We would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support received on a number of fronts to date as the organisation grew from an amalgamated body to an organisation in its own right. We look forward to collaboratively working towards achieving the objectives of the 2017 Corporate Plan.

OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

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

Extensive high-quality education and training opportunities with qualifications that are widely valued nationally and internationally.

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.

CORPORATE PLAN 2017 IN CONTEXT

QQI AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to our ongoing Comprehensive Policy Development Programme. In 2017 we will publish an updated policy on Delegated Authority for Making Awards and a new policy on Focussed Reviews of Providers. We are also committed to expanding our suite of Quality Assurance Guidelines, and our 2017 publication schedule will include:

- Quality Assurance Guidelines in Blended Learning;
- Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards; and
- Topic-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research degrees.

In line with QQI's policy development framework, we will be publishing a number of consultation documents (Green Papers) throughout the year, including a Green Paper on E-learning and the impact of digital technology.

QQI AND ENHANCEMENT

A key area of focus for QQI is quality assurance. This involves promoting and spreading effective practice amongst providers in an ever-evolving quality assurance system. There are a number of enhancement initiatives taking place in 2017:

- increasing student engagement;
- reviewing the gender balance of experts in institution-led quality review panels;
- QQI is producing a:
 - system report on the interaction between professional body accreditation and quality assurance evaluations,
 - Code of Practice on the quality assurance of research degree Programmes (in collaboration with higher education institutions)

QQI AND THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

The NFQ was officially established in 2003. Fifteen years on, we are re-visiting our strategic approach for the next phase of NFQ development. In Q2, we will publish the findings from an independent Policy Impact Assessment of the NFQ, sharing the results and implications with our stakeholders. Informed by the impact assessment, QQI will set out how it intends to keep the NFQ relevant and responsive to national and international priorities. As part of this work, we will prepare a position paper on the future referencing of the NFQ to the European Qualifications Framework.

QQI AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

We will continue to validate the existing apprenticeships programmes from SOLAS and will also work with FET and HE providers on the development and validation of the new apprenticeship programmes approved for development by the Apprenticeship Council.

In 2017, QQI will commence the 3rd cycle of Institutional Reviews of Higher Education. Two of the Institutes of Technology will have submitted self-evaluation reports for QQI by Q4.

The approval of provider quality assurance procedures under the 2012 Act will commence in Q1 and Q2 with the universities and institutes of technology. This will be followed in Q3 by initial dialogue visits to the Education and Training Boards, with approval of quality assurance procedures in this sector taking place in Q4.

QQI AWARD STANDARDS

QQI's strategic approach to qualifications is to ensure that the standards leading to QQI awards are relevant and remain fit for purpose. We are committed to researching and reviewing new qualification models/approaches for both the further and higher education and training sectors (including approaches to credit). In 2017, we are also committed to reviewing a significant number of our existing awards standards.

QQI EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

We will be engaging with stakeholders throughout the year through workshops and consultations on a variety of topics. We also have a number of other events planned to give us the opportunity to consult and communicate with our stakeholders in a way that promotes and enhances shared experiences.

Some of the key events that we will be undertaking in 2017 include:

- A series of validation and reengagement workshops in Q1 and Q2;
- A further education and training quality assurance event in Q2;
- An English language education seminar in Q4; and
- A higher education quality assurance conference in Q4

QQI AND COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

QQI has a broad remit and a wide range of stakeholders. One of our priorities in 2017 is to better communicate our key functions, interactions and policies to our stakeholders. We aim to improve the quality of the information available and increase accessibility across a range of media.

Our primary focus for the coming year will be on developing our use of digital media. We are developing a suite of communications material on a variety of topics, such as quality assurance, the NFQ, and our role in recognition. These will be available through a number of different communication tools, increasing our stakeholder reach.

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

In 2017, we want to improve our customer and stakeholder experiences. A key objective is to optimise and maintain a user-friendly website. We will be reviewing our website in 2017 looking specifically at the content, the ease of navigation (intuitive locations for content), and the relevance of the information available.

We will also be looking at our Customer Charter and implementing the associated action plan which will improve the overall service for stakeholders.

QQI CORPORATE PLAN 2017

QQI's Strategy Statement 2016-2018 sets out the organisation's Goals to 2018; the Approaches it will take to achieving these Goals over a three-year period; and the Outcomes that will be achieved. These are categorised under broad headings of Qualifications, Quality Assurance, Communication and Information and Delivering High Quality Services. QQI's Corporate Plan 2017 identifies the Approaches that are being driven this year under these headings and the Goals to which these will contribute.

QUALIFICATIONS

Goal	Committed Approach	Associated Indicators	Delivery Target
1	To support the development of education and training programmes with clear occupational and/or educational purposes and learning outcomes for informed career and other choices		
1.1	Complete review of the application and effects of the NFQ	Publish review of the applications and effects of the NFQ	Q2 2017
1.2	Develop NFQ standards and guidelines for employers, learners, awarding bodies and policy makers	Host Consultation Policy Forum on the NFQ	Q4 2017
		Review award standards (complete 6 reviews)	Q1-Q4 2017
		Develop and published standards in music (L6) and dance (L6)	Q3 2017
		Publish standards in electronic technology	Q2 2017
		Develop background research paper to support policy development in relation to next generation FET qualifications	Q4 2017
1.3	Promote NFQ qualifications to stakeholders by maximising the use of QQI's online communication channels	Process requests for recognition of qualifications on a case by case basis through NARIC recognition services (Estimated 1,000 in 2017)	Q1-Q4 2017
		Enhance the NARIC qualifications online comparability database by increasing the comparability statements available by 10%	Q1-Q4 2017
1.4	Make QQI awards in accordance with our policy and criteria	Maintain 6 awards certification periods, delivering in excess of 175,000 paper certificates (parchments) 2017	Q1-Q4 2017
1.2	To support the development of lifelong learning pathways for personal, social and professional development		
1.2.1		Host a series of qualifications related workshops for education and training providers and employers	Q3 2017

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Goal	Committed Approach	Associated Indicators	Delivery Target
2	To oversee an improved quality assurance system that is comprehensive, that balances accountability and enhancement, and promotes local responsibility		
2.1	Introduce a comprehensive system of quality assurance guidelines	Publish Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines in blended learning	Q2 2017
		Publish discussion document (Green Paper) on e-learning and the impact of digital technology	Q3 2017
		Approve quality assurance procedures of 16 ETBs	Q4 2017
		Conclude re-engagement with 23 public higher education institutions with degree awarding powers	Q2 2017
2.2	Ensure our quality assurance procedures are sufficient to address innovations in education and training	Publish QQI's Internal Quality Assurance policy	Q1 2017
		Pilot voluntary provider re-engagement	Q4 2017
2.3	Validate programmes of education and training in accordance with QQI policy and criteria	Complete other programme validation activity (90% of accepted applications processed within 25 weeks)	Q1-Q4 2017
		Validate apprenticeship programmes as submitted by providers (expected 14 from SOLAS, 6 new apprenticeships)	Q1-Q4 2017
2.4	Implement new risk-based approaches to monitoring and review that are systematic and proportionate	Complete annual dialogue meetings with HEI's (IOTs - 3 institutions in 2017)	Q1 2017
		Publish schedule for cyclical review of public higher education institutions	Q1 2017
		Publish handbooks for cyclical review of public higher education institutions	Q3 2017
		Publish commissioned review report of Mary Immaculate College	Q2 2017
		Commence higher educational institutional review cycle	Q4 2017
2.5	Develop a series of events and publications to help providers improve the teaching and learning environment	Enhancement project – publish commissioned system report on professional body accreditation and quality assurance (PARN)	Q2 2017

		Promote and facilitate QA improvement in education and training by hosting FET (private) event	Q3 2017
		Promote and facilitate QA improvement in education and training by hosting FET (public) event	Q3 2017
		Enhancement project – collaborative Code of Practice – Guidance for HE on Research Provision (HE)	Q3 2017
		Promote and facilitate QA improvement in education and training by hosting HET event	Q4 2017
		Enhancement project – addressing gender balance in QA activities	Q4 2017
		Host English Language Education (ELE) seminar	Q4 2017
2.6	Implement a programme of work with international partners for transnational education	Publish report from IQAVET network	Q1 2017
		Publish commissioned review report of IUIL Luxembourg on behalf of the Ministry	Q2 2017
2.7	Take firm action where providers fail to fulfil their responsibilities and place learners or standards at risk	Implement Higher education institution monitoring	Q1-Q4 2017

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

Goal	Committed Approach	Associated Indicators	Delivery Target
3	To provide clear, authoritative and comprehensive information to stakeholders and the public regarding QQI's roles, responsibilities and activities		
3.1	Build mutually supportive relationships with all QQI stakeholders to better communicate and collaborate with them	Host two consultative forum events, one in May and one in November 2017	Q2 and Q4 2017
		Transition Year Ireland – promotion of QQI Award and NFQ throughout the year at regional TYI workshops and TYI Expo September 2017	Q1-Q4 2017
3.2	Develop strong working relationships with key sectors, organisations and bodies through a series of MOUs	Confirm annual MFA with DES	Q1 2017
		MoU with SOLAS – implementation plan agreed and commenced	Q2 2017
3.3	Devise and implement a communications and information strategy to increase awareness of the NFQ, NFQ Awards, including QQI awards and the IEM	Publish annual certification Statistics Report based on 2016 data	Q2 2017
		Publish information guides to QQI's key functions	Q2-Q4 2017
		Web launch of QQI podcasts and blog page promoting NFQ	Q3 2017
3.4	Optimise and maintain a user friendly website	Review of QQI Website: Content and Navigation	Q2 2017

3.5	Promote and support the use of all internal information and communication systems	Circulate bi-annual QQI Ezine to stakeholders	Q2 and Q4 2017
		Complete QQI Award Brand impact review	Q1 2017
3.6	Develop a database of providers, programmes and qualifications in Ireland	Promote Programme and Awards database	Q2 2017

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

Goal	Committed Approach	Associated Indicators	Delivery Target
4	To proactively enable and encourage QQI staff to develop, thrive and be fully engaged in their work		
4.1	Ensure that the individual and collective skills and abilities of QQI staff support the ongoing delivery of a high quality service to providers and stakeholders	Complete Human Resource annual programme of work	Q4 2017
		PMDS reviews and planning completed	Q1 2017
		Implement Quality Customer Service Charter and Action Plan	Q1-Q4 2017
5	To enhance QQI's self-service systems, processes and technological capabilities to improve the quality and effectiveness of the service it delivers		
5.1	Address obstacles to accessibility to QQI services for people with disabilities	Assess recommendations from QQI website review	Q3 2017



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