

POLICIES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The purpose of the **Policies and Standards Committee** is to apply its expertise to considering QQI draft policy and making recommendations to the Board regarding the approval of these policies in line with the organisation's strategy; it can also agree, or refer to the Board, modifications to policy. It will also consider and may act on recommendations from the executive to determine standards of knowledge, skill and competence for education and training awards or to endorse subject guidelines concerning knowledge, skill and competence for higher education awards.

FUNCTIONS

The **Policies and Standards Committee** will:

- consider QQI draft policy presented to it by the executive and make recommendations to the **Board** regarding the suitability of the policy;
- following periodic review, make recommendations to the **Board** regarding major modifications to policy whereby the original policy direction will be significantly altered;
- advise the executive on procedures relevant to the committee's functions;
- provide advice to the executive and to the **Board** on the development of policy as the organisation evolves;
- adopt, or otherwise, new standards and subject guidelines and NFQ award-type descriptors presented to it for consideration by the executive;
- approve, or otherwise, statutory Quality Assurance guidelines presented to it by the executive;
- approve, or otherwise, statutory Guidelines for review of linked providers by the National University of Ireland presented to it by the executive;
- consider existing award standards presented to it by the executive or the **Programme and Awards Executive Committee** and make determinations regarding their continued appropriateness;
- consider and make recommendations regarding other issues relevant to the work of the Committee referred to it by the executive or the **Board**.

DECISION MAKING AND REPORTING

Decision Making:

- In accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, the Policies and Standards Committee has been devolved authority by the Board to make decisions in the areas set out above. Decisions taken by the **Policies and Standards Committee** will be reported to and noted by the **Board**.
- While it is preferable that decisions are reached by consensus, if this cannot be achieved, decisions will be made by simple majority vote with the Chair having the casting vote;
- A Committee member shall not, without the consent of the **Board**, disclose confidential information obtained by him/her, as a result of having performed duties as a member of the Committee.

Reporting:

- The **Policies and Standards Committee** will submit reports outlining details of its recommendations and determinations at agreed intervals to the **Board**.
- The executive may, on its own initiative, or in response to a proposal from the Committee, set up Policies and Standards **Working Groups**. Such working groups will be set up on the basis of a specific remit and provide preparatory work to be reported back to the Committee;
- **External panels** appointed to provide advice on matters related to the work of the **Policies and Standards Committee** will submit their findings to the Committee for discussion.

COMPOSITION

The **Policies and Standards Committee** will consist of approximately eight members, including a Chairperson and representation from the QQI Board and Executive (normally comprising of two Directors). Members of this committee will collectively require technical and specialist knowledge in the areas of policy development, quality assurance, qualifications, standards and subject guidelines development. Members of the Policies and Standards Committee, other than Board Members, will serve a term of office of a minimum of 2 years up to a maximum of 5 years. Executive members are appointed on a rotating basis and in certain circumstances, may serve terms beyond 5 years.

Non-members may be invited to Committee meetings, or parts of Committee meetings, as approved by the Chair for the purposes of sharing expertise on topics under review by the Committee.

CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

- The Chairperson is appointed by the QQI Board and is normally a member of the Board. A Vice-Chairperson can be nominated by the Chairperson. Where the Chairperson is not available or not in a position to nominate a Vice-Chairperson, the other members of the Committee who are present may choose one of their number to be Chairperson of that meeting.

COMMITTEE QUORUM

- The quorum shall be 4 members.
- Members may attend by teleconference and this will meet quorum requirements.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

- It is envisaged that the Policies and Standards Committee will meet four times per year from the date of its establishment.

TENURE

- The continued requirement for the Policies and Standards Committee will be reviewed from time to time at the request of the Board.

COMMITTEE REVIEW

1. The Terms of Reference for the Policies and Standards Committee will:
 - a. be agreed by the Board; and
 - b. reviewed by the Committee thereafter, normally every two years.
2. Recommendations to modify the Terms of Reference can be made at any time by the Policies and Standards Committee or by the executive;

3. Recommendations to modify the Terms of Reference will require approval by the Board.

Appendix 1

HOW THE POLICIES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE FULFILMENT OF QQI'S LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS

- As well as supporting the introduction of policy underpinning the functions of the organisation in general, the Policies and Standards Committee will directly contribute to the following general functions set out in Section 9 of the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012:
 - (a) Promote, maintain, further develop and implement the Framework;
 - (c) Review and monitor the effectiveness of providers' quality assurance procedures;
 - (e) Establish the standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners before an award can be made by the Authority or by a provider to which authority to make an award has been delegated;
 - (g) determine policies and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners;
 - (h) establish a Code of Practice for the provision of programmes of education and training to international learners.

Appendix 2

QQI COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Participation as a member of a QQI Committee is on a *pro-bono publico* basis. Each committee member will be reimbursed for all reasonable travel and subsistence expenses associated with membership of the **Policies and Standards Committee**, in accordance with public sector norms.
- Membership of the **Policies and Standards Committee**, with the exception of Board Members, will be for a period of not less than 2 years and no greater than 5 years. Executive members (normally comprising of two Directors) are appointed on a rotating basis and in certain circumstances, may serve terms beyond 5 years.
- All meetings of the **Policies and Standards Committee** will be held at QQI Offices, 26-27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2, unless otherwise advised.
- In the interests of openness, transparency and general good practice QQI requires potential committee members to declare any conflicts of interest, or potential conflicts of interests with regard to participation on the **Policies and Standards Committee**.
- Draft Minutes of each meeting will be provided to the **Policies and Standards Committee** for agreement. A note of the decisions taken at each meeting will be published on the QQI website.