

QQI Corporate Plan 2026



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

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Glossary

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
ECEIA	European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
ELE	English Language Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETB	Education and Training Board
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IRQ	Irish Register of Qualifications
LAB	Listed Awarding Body
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NStEP	National Student Engagement Programme
PEL	Protection of Enrolled Learners
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Introduction

This corporate plan sets out what QQI will deliver in 2026. It explains our priorities, actions and measures for the year ahead.

QQI is an independent state agency which is responsible for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's further and higher education system. Our regulatory role enables our mission to build public confidence and trust in Ireland's tertiary education system. We act transparently and with integrity to realise our vision of a flexible, responsive and quality assured system.

Our 2026 strategic priorities turn this mission and vision into practical delivery. We will future-proof the NFQ and strengthen qualifications recognition. We will provide trusted regulation, guidance and advice, based on evidence. We will support improvement with comprehensive, monitoring and robust quality assurance. We will use research, insight and analysis to inform decisions and support innovative change.

Quality is a shared responsibility with learners, providers, employers and government. As a regulatory body, QQI evaluates the quality assurance policies and procedures of its providers. Our approach will be consultative, collaborative and inclusive. Clear communication and support for consistent implementation will underpin delivery. Ongoing learning and innovation will strengthen our services.

This plan aligns with the QQI Statement of Strategy 2025–27. It sets clear accountabilities for our work in 2026. We will track progress and focus on measurable impact. We will serve the public interest by maintaining confidence in the system.

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

We are committed to a vision of Ireland that delivers a flexible, responsive and quality assured tertiary education system where learners can have confidence that their learning experience will be of a high quality and their qualifications and learning will be valued nationally and internationally.

Our Mission

We promote public confidence and trust in the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's tertiary education system through:

- protecting the integrity of the National Framework of Qualifications,
 - providing authoritative and comprehensive information about qualifications and learning opportunities,
 - delivering trusted regulation and guidance,
 - enhancing the quality of providers and their programmes and,
 - influencing system change with insights and analyses.
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Our Values

Our approach to our own work and how we work with our partners is governed by clear values and associated behaviours.

We are an **independent** public body, working within the broad framework of Government policy. We exercise our regulatory authority in a transparent, fair, impartial and objective manner.

We value our **shared responsibility** with others to ensure confidence in and continuous improvement of the quality of education and training. In partnership with others, we pursue our priorities and actions in a **consultative, collaborative** and **inclusive** manner.

We embrace and engender **trust** and **integrity** in our decision-making and in our policies, procedures and in our regulation. Our approaches are evidence-based and informed by good national and international practice.

Learning and innovation are at the heart of what we do and how we design our business systems and processes. We grow our expertise and knowledge and learn from our national and international partners to influence, guide, advise and regulate in an authoritative and responsive manner.

We value **research, insight, and analysis** to achieve our priorities and actions with positive and measurable impact.

Corporate Plan 2026

PRIORITY 1– Future-proof the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as the authoritative information source for quality-assured tertiary qualifications
We will further develop QQI's platforms to promote the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as the authoritative source of information on quality-assured qualifications including micro-credentials
Complete the redevelopment of the IRQ to increase the quality and quantity of information published including micro-credentials and TrustEd information, aligned with the European Learning Model to maximise interoperability with national and European platforms.
Develop tools and resources to support end users to understand and use the NFQ appropriately.
Develop and implement policies for maintaining and implementing the NFQ.
We will review and modify the current award types in the NFQ to better serve learners in a more integrated tertiary education system
Publish a new award type descriptor for a single major award at NFQ Level 6 including any knock-on impacts to NFQ Level 5 with agreed transition timelines.
Review, update and streamline the policies and criteria for the NFQ.
We will improve choice for learners through our recognition of listed awarding bodies and include their academic and professional awards in the NFQ
Explore application of LAB approach to proposed Queen's University Belfast /Dundalk IT linkup.
We will develop an authoritative list of English language education and higher education programmes offered to international learners by providers who have achieved the <i>TrustEd Ireland</i> quality mark
We will complete an external evaluation of QQI's performance as an awarding body of tertiary education qualifications in the NFQ
We will undertake a review of individual provider adherence to access, transfer and progression policy and the appropriate recognition of prior learning
Publish an updated QQI ATP policy.
PRIORITY 2– Deliver trusted regulation, guidelines, advice and services appropriate to the requirements of a diverse learner and provider landscape
We will provide authoritative information about the quality of the public tertiary education system through a comprehensive monitoring framework using appropriate quantitative and quality tools
Complete the internal policy analysis as part of the wider process to develop an overarching and integrated QQI Monitoring Framework.
Develop processes for the European Degree Label in line with operational guidelines from the European Commission.

We will engage with further and higher education providers to develop appropriate models for future institutional quality review
Publish a green paper on models for tertiary education institutional review.
We will update our guidelines on assessment to ensure that they reflect changing teaching and learning contexts including the use of artificial intelligence
Rethinking Assessment: Undertake research to underpin future approaches to assessment policy and the quality assurance of assessment.
We will increase autonomy and flexibility for mature private higher education providers by granting them delegated authority to make their own awards, with effective quantitative and qualitative monitoring to ensure oversight of quality
We will devolve more responsibility for programme validation and sharing of national further education and training programmes to the Education and Training Boards to enable them to develop flexible and innovative programmes for their learners
Implement the pilot project to support devolved responsibility for managing validation sub-processes among the ETBs. Where possible, promote and encourage the development of shared structures and systems across the ETB sector to enable responsibility for new programme evaluation to be devolved to individual and/or groups of ETBs.
We will develop quality assurance guidelines for a single system of apprenticeship, for work-integrated learning and for programmes that span the tertiary education sector
Publish statutory quality assurance guidelines on work-integrated learning.
Work in close collaboration with HEA, SOLAS, DFHERIS and HE/FET providers in the development and implementation of the transfer plan for craft apprenticeship programmes.
We will enable greater understanding of overseas qualifications by providers, employers, and international learners, including displaced persons and refugees, through the NARIC Ireland service
We will review the policy and criteria for programme validation to ensure that they are proportionate for the volume and level of the QQI award being offered
Revise QQI procedures for the validation of programmes.
We will streamline the QQI Common Awards Systems and develop more broad standards for QQI awards to enable agile programme development by providers
Publish updated award standards for healthcare at NFQ Level 5.
Commence a review of QQI award standards in agriculture and horticulture at NFQ Levels 5 and 6.
Prepare a strategic vision for an integrated QQI awards system and initiate the development and testing of appropriate ICT enabling functionality.
We will conduct due diligence assessment of private providers for their fitness to offer regulated education and training and provide security to their learners by establishing the statutory learner protection fund.

i) Incorporate the Due Diligence Process into the provider approval process for applicant providers. ii) Implement and deliver the Due Diligence Process (both integrated & standard processes) and iii) monitor its application thereafter.
Conduct a process review of Due Diligence and revise the process to incorporate the learnings, where appropriate.
Implement and manage the approved national Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) scheme in line with legislative requirements and timeframes.
We will issue the TrustEd Ireland quality mark to English language education and higher education providers who comply with a statutory code of practice for providing education to international learners
Complete the TrustEd Ireland authorisation process for Window 1 applicants (HE and ELE providers).
Prepare for Window 2 TrustEd application process; implement the assessment, governance and authorisation elements of this process.
PRIORITY 3: Share valuable system-wide insights, research and analysis with key stakeholders
We will improve our data analytics capacity to create QQI dashboards that provide systems-level indicators on quality and qualifications
Co-ordinate the preparation of a self-assessment report and associated ancillary documentation to support an application for ISSCoP certification for QQI awards-related data.
We will share guidance and thought leadership with providers in assessment and artificial intelligence
Rethinking assessment: Present to the QQI Board and seek response from participating institutions on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the variation in honours bachelor's degree classifications 2012-2022.
We will publish system-level analysis of our annual monitoring and periodic evaluation of providers, using artificial intelligence where appropriate
Establish a series of 3 enhancement webinars for the ETBs to share good practice and further recommendations of the sectoral report.
We will analyse and provide insights on QQI Awards data and trends to inform providers, policy makers, funding agencies and government strategies
We will maximise the impact of our insights, research and analysis through effective communications across all platforms
Agree a prioritisation of QQI's research in line with the objectives outlined in the Statement of Strategy 2025-2027.
Conduct a review of QQI's websites to ensure they serve the needs of our diverse users in terms of content, user experience and accessibility.
We will host events to disseminate our system-level analyses including a biennial conference on a key strategic theme embracing quality and qualifications

PRIORITY 4: Deepen national and international partnerships
We will inform and influence education and training policy through our relationships with government, public funders, providers and their representative bodies, and other stakeholders
We will lead national and international networks to combat the increasing threats to academic integrity
Consider a regulatory policy on academic integrity in the context of the wider QQI Monitoring Framework.
Establish cross sectoral conference working group to support the planning of the 2027 European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia (ECEIA).
We will assist in the development of mechanisms to effectively engage learners in the quality of their education and training through our work with a diversity of learner representative and advocacy bodies
Undertake a review of NStEP with NStEP partners.
We will contribute to good practice in quality assurance and qualifications by deepening our strategic relationships with partner agencies in Europe and worldwide
Plan and hold a conference to promote Europass, the EQF and other European priorities as part of Ireland's European Presidency.
We will use our statutory memoranda with the further and higher education funding authorities to contribute towards developing and improving the quality of an integrated tertiary education system
We will partner with professional and statutory regulatory bodies to streamline national systems of professional accreditation and academic validation of programmes which lead to admission to regulated professions for learners
Pilot a process for revalidation in the FET sector and document processes relating to the introduction of new 'courses' associated with validated programmes in the ETB sector.
We will support capacity-building in the Education and Training Boards in strategic partnership with funding authorities, provider representative bodies and other stakeholders
We will fully integrate the English language education sector within QQI's regulatory and quality assurance frameworks, in collaboration with provider and learner representative bodies
PRIORITY 5: Create a resilient and agile organisation delivering responsive, transparent, and effective services
We will create a diverse and inclusive workplace that identifies QQI as an employer of choice, by enabling a culture that values equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), achieving workplace quality marks and providing a technology-enabled hybrid working environment which is consistent with our climate and sustainability obligations
Implement activities identified in the EDI implementation plan and ensure compliance with Public Sector Duty (EDI).
Implement recommendations from the mid-term review of the KeepWell Mark and achieve the mark for a further 2 years.

Complete work on the building to progress achievement of government targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
Implement the QQI HR Strategy Action Plan over the period 2025-2027 to support achievement of the corporate plan objectives for 2026.
Undertake phase one scoping to support a structured organisational review, including strategic workforce analysis and planning to successfully deliver QQI's strategic priorities and to fulfil our wider legislative remit.
We will build organisational agility and resilience by creating systems and structures that nurture a culture of cross-organisational knowledge-sharing, communication and project management
Implement a 3-year ICT strategy to support QQI's statement of strategy, including a focus on data strategy and governance and further enhancing and strengthening cyber and data security.
Roll out advanced AI literacy and training across the organisation. Implement a robust governance framework for responsible AI and review core systems and processes to identify digital transformation opportunities.
We will implement an internal quality assurance infrastructure that includes a comprehensive data strategy and efficient records management systems
Complete phase 2 of the review and enhancement of QQI's internal quality management system as part of the wider Information & Quality Governance Programme of work.
We will work with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to ensure that QQI has stable, predictable, and sustainable income streams leading to greater transparency of fees and charges for QQI services, and greater value for money
Complete phase one scope of strategic, sustainable financial planning for QQI, including methodology for scenario and risk-based approaches, benchmarking and reserves policy.
We will improve our services to stakeholders through user-centred design of information and communications technologies, business processes and platforms, and exploration of the potential of artificial intelligence, in line with guidance for its use in the Irish public service
Implement targeted improvements to QHub for validation and certification processes: (i) update the appearance and functionality of the validation element(ii) develop a module for the validation and certification of programmes against defined awards standards.
Migrate all QA approval and programme validation processes from legacy systems into QHub.
Conduct a survey of QQI's stakeholders whose feedback will inform delivery of QQI's services.
Review and update QQI's Consultation Framework.
We will transform our learner certification from physical to digital form
We will observe all relevant national and international legislative, regulatory and compliance obligations

Implement the updated statutory appeals process and provide training for the new appeals panel.

Complete the mid-term review of strategy and review QQI's mission, vision and values.

