

**Performance Delivery Agreement
between the
Department of Further and Higher
Education, Research, Innovation and
Science
&
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)**

2020

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1. Introduction and Context

This is the sixth management and accountability agreement between the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (formerly the Department of Education and Skills and referred to in this document as “the Department”) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (referred to as “QQI”). It is an important feature of the Agreement each year to set out the purpose of the Agreement; the respective roles and functions; the mutual commitments and the services and activities planned by QQI for the coming year. The purpose of the Agreement is to:

1. Set out the respective roles and responsibilities of both parties;
2. Provide clarity on the strategic and operational aspects of the organisations’ relationship;
3. Provide a basis and framework for the delivery of high-quality services and to set in place for 2020, the parameters and timeframe within which those services will be delivered by QQI;
4. Establish structured arrangements for communications, reporting and liaison;
5. Facilitate continued improved communication, engagement and co-operation between both organisations.

This Agreement has been developed in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions, national strategies and Government policies, as well as the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and the QQI Corporate Plan.

This Agreement is not a legally binding agreement or a contract and is not exhaustive in its identification of responsibilities. It does not in any way limit any additional actions or policies being implemented between the two organisations. The Agreement does not supersede any specific agreements between the two organisations in relation to particular work areas.

Both organisations will ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with the Agreement and its implications and that all dealings between the two organisations are conducted in accordance with its principles and provisions.

1.2. Duration of Agreement

The services and activities to be delivered as part of this Agreement will be finalised at the first PDA review meeting of each year with a view to ensuring appropriate linkages are in place between the Agreement and QQI’s Corporate Plan.

The Agreement will be reviewed on an annual basis. The content of this Agreement may be amended or modified as required and provided mutual agreement is obtained from both signatories.

1.3. Flexibility and Amendment of Targets

Both parties recognise that it may become necessary to change, modify, add to or otherwise alter, agreed performance targets during the course of this agreement. A necessity for amendments may be prompted by changes in e.g. proposed legislative amendments, government/ministerial priorities or policies, prevailing operating circumstances and/or broader political, economic, financial or related priorities. The impacts and effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will also be considered in this context.

Where amendments become necessary, the Department will engage in meaningful and timely consultations with QQI. Such consultation will include consideration of any increase or reduction in effort required to achieve amended targets and any related impact on total output requirements. In the course of all consultations, the Department will be cognisant of the resources required by QQI to deliver additional priorities or the need to deprioritise some objectives if additional delivery requirements emerge. The Department also acknowledges that there may be co-dependencies in some instances where the delivery of objectives also requires the commitment of other stakeholder agencies or national objectives under the remit of the Department. At all times, QQI is committed to working with all stakeholders in delivering the Department's objectives for the education and training system.

1.4. Reporting and Liaison Structures

In addition to regular meetings and ongoing dialogue between management in the relevant areas of responsibility in the two organisations, three meetings at senior management level, including the CEO, will be held to review progress on the implementation of the strategic objectives outlined in this Agreement. The three meetings will take place in Quarters 1, 3 and 4.

QQI will agree an Oversight Agreement with the Department and QQI will comply with the Oversight Agreement. QQI notes that this Performance Delivery Agreement operates within the parameters of the Oversight Agreement.

1.5. Compliance Notification

Where QQI becomes aware of non-compliance or potential compliance issues in respect of any obligation, this should immediately be brought to the attention of the Department by the nominated liaison person or the Chief Executive of QQI.

The Department brings to the Board's attention, if necessary on an exceptional basis through the Chair, any strategic issues essential for the Board's oversight of QQI's performance of which the Board may otherwise be unaware.

2. Respective Roles and Functions

Education and training is central to individual, societal and economic development and is a vital component for overall national development. The Department and QQI have a common mission of supporting lifelong learning and assuring the quality of the delivery of education and training. Their respective roles are set out below.

Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

The mission of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, set out in the Department's National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the Further Education and Training Strategy 2020-2024 is to facilitate individuals through learning to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, economic, and cultural development.

Its key functions in relation to lifelong learning, quality assurance and qualifications are:

- To support Government in determining national policy relating to lifelong learning, quality assurance and qualifications;
- To support Government in developing the legislative framework to ensure that national policies relevant to the quality assurance of further and higher education and training can be implemented;
- To provide high quality opportunities for upskilling and reskilling that meet the needs of individuals and the labour market;
- To provide high quality learning, research and innovation opportunities in the further and higher education sector;
- To be accountable to the Oireachtas for the public funding assigned to QQI;
- To hold QQI accountable for the performance of its functions.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

QQI is an independent agency with autonomous responsibility for its own operations. Its qualifications and external quality assurance policies and methodologies are influenced both by national legislation and European models such as the European Standards and Guidelines. It develops these in consultation with further and higher education and training institutions and the wider qualifications system. However, its processes, procedures, decisions and judgements are not influenced by third parties.

QQI is governed by a Board whose non-executive members are appointed by the Minister. The Board cultivates and relies on the cooperation, expertise and independent judgement of its members in order to provide the necessary leadership to support the success of the agency in delivering on its functions.

QQI has responsibility for the external quality assurance of further education and training and higher education and is responsible for the National Framework of Qualifications. QQI also validates programmes and makes awards within the NFQ for further and higher education and training providers without their own awarding powers. The functions of QQI as defined in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (referred to as "the Act") include (The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 had been signed into law but not yet commenced in full at the time of signing this Agreement):

- To approve the quality assurance procedures of providers of further and higher education and training, other than universities¹;
- To review and monitor the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of providers of further and higher education, including universities;
- To promote, maintain and further develop the National Framework of Qualifications;
- To set standards and validate programmes of education and training for further and higher education providers (other than designated awarding bodies) and to award qualifications and issue certificates
- To advise the Minister in relation to national policy on quality assurance and enhancement in education and training;
- To establish a code of practice for the provision of education and training programmes to international learners and authorise the use of an International Education Mark by providers who comply with the code.

Under its Statement of Strategy 2019-2021, QQI's priorities are:

QQI's priorities	<i>which link to/support the Department's Strategy/Action Plan for 2019</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the National Framework of Qualifications 	<i>Goal 1, Shape a Responsive Education and Training System that meets the needs and raises the Aspirations of all Learners</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the National Framework of Qualifications 	<i>Goal 2, Advance the Progress of Learners at Risk of Educational Disadvantage and Learners with Special Educational Needs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and Impact 	<i>Goal 3, Equip Education and Training Providers with the Skills and Support to provide a Quality Learning Experience</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the National Framework of Qualifications • Analysis and Impact • Collaboration and Engagement 	<i>Goal 4, Intensify the Relationships between Education and the Wider Community, Society and the Economy</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational Capacity 	<i>Goal 5, Lead in the Delivery of Strategic Direction and Supportive</i>

¹ 'Universities' here refers to the 7 Universities in place at the time of enactment of the 1997 Universities Act.

It is acknowledged that QQI also currently operates the ACELS Scheme for English language providers on a contractual basis at the request of the Department. Qualifax, the national learners' database, is maintained by QQI at the request of the Department.

In addition, QQI plays a key role in providing policy advice to the Minister and the Department on the current status of the further and higher education and training system and in the development of future education and training policy. QQI may undertake to conduct research into relevant matters, raising policy issues with the Department where it considers action is required, and will ensure that the Department is kept fully informed of or involved, where appropriate, in all initiatives/developments under consideration in this context. This should include, where appropriate, the participation of the Department in any working groups or processes established to progress work in a particular area. QQI will also ensure that there is prior consultation with the Department on draft policy documents in advance of final approval or publication.

Internationally, QQI is involved in a number of projects, initiatives, agreements and networks with the aim of improving the quality of education and training across Europe and the world. Currently QQI's contribution to European and international initiatives includes its role as the national contact point for the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF); as the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC); as the National Europass Centre; through participation in the national Bologna steering group; as the national contact point for and member of ENQA; and as one of the national contact points for ESCO (European Skills/Competencies, qualifications and Occupations). QQI is the national reference point for the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training. At the request of the Department, QQI supplies the Irish representative to Thematic Peer Group B on the recognition of qualifications, established following the Bologna Process Ministerial Meeting in Paris in 2018.

Mutual Commitments

Both parties are committed to the promotion of partnership, responsiveness and mutual co-operation in their ongoing interactions.

The Board of QQI has responsibility to support the delivery of QQI's Strategy. In doing so, the Board maintains oversight of the overall performance of QQI and provides any input necessary to ensure the delivery of the organisation's long-term strategy. In this role, the Board through the Chair, contributes to the PDA engagement process and in this context addresses issues which may have an impact on QQI's performance or on the effectiveness of the relationship with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. .

Both parties undertake to ensure that no unnecessary delays arise in respect of decision making, responses to correspondence, information requests or related

matters. In relation to parliamentary questions or other parliamentary business, QQI will provide appropriate material within the specified timeline. The Chief Executive's Office in QQI will be copied on all such requests. In addition, QQI will continue to inform the Quality Unit when making requests to the Minister to attend QQI events. When such requests are accepted, QQI will supply appropriate briefing and speech material to the Quality Unit within the specified timeline.

Both parties commit to keep each other fully apprised and updated on any relevant emerging issues or planned public announcements or publications. A progress report will be prepared by QQI to complement the PDA review meetings in 2020. The Department will be cognisant of the demands placed on QQI in delivering the service and activity commitments set out in this Performance Delivery Agreement and will support QQI wherever practicable.

Multi-Annual Strategic Planning

In accordance with the Act, QQI delivers its strategic goals and objectives on a multi-annual basis. QQI's Strategy Statement 2019-2021 sets out the approaches and outcomes to be achieved by the end of 2020. The Statement was submitted to the Minister having been approved by the Board on 22 June 2018.

3. Key Deliverables 2020

The following provides an overview of the priority deliverables for the Department and QQI in 2020. These deliverables focus on the commencement and implementation of the Quality and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019. The timeframe for these deliverables is subject to the filling of a limited number of identified key roles in QQI which will be considered separately and as a priority from the wider staffing proposals at the agency.

Appendix 1 of the PDA 2020 provides a broader list of QQI's service commitments and measures for 2020 in line with the agency's overarching Statement of Strategy.

	Deliverable	Activity	Lead Body	End date
1.	Assessment of the funding and resourcing requirements of QQI and for its new legislative functions	Submission of Funding Model proposal	QQI	Q3
		Review of proposed Funding Model	DES	Q3
		Submission of revised QQI staffing proposal	QQI	Q3
		Review of revised QQI staffing proposal	DES	Q3
2.	Implementation of the statutory scheme for Corporate Fitness	Policy Input	QQI	Q3
		Drafting of Ministerial Regulations	DES	Q3
		Stakeholder Consultation	QQI	Q4
		Legislative commencement	DES	Q4
		Roll out of function	QQI	Q4
3.	Implementation of the statutory scheme for the Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)	Policy Input	QQI	Q3
		Initial policy approach agreed	DES	Q3
		Procurement of external expertise on PEL options	QQI	Q3

		Proposal for the design of PEL scheme and Learner Protection Fund finalised.	QQI	Q4
		Ministerial Regulations drafted	DES	Q1 2021
		Legislative commencement	DES	Q1 2021
		Roll out of function	QQI	Q1 2021
4.	Implementation of the statutory scheme for the inclusion of awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	Proposal for the statutory scheme for the inclusion of awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	QQI	Q4
		Review and agreement of proposal	DES	Q1 2021
		Establish the process for listing awarding bodies and including their awards in the NFQ	QQI	Q1 2021
5.	Implementation of the statutory scheme for International Education Mark (IEM)	Policy Input	QQI	Q4
		Policy approach reviewed and agreed	DES	Q4
		Stakeholder Consultation	QQI	Q1 2021
		Publish a statutory code of practice for English Language Education (ELE)	QQI	Q1 2021
		Publish procedures for International Education Mark (IEM) authorisation for English language education providers		
		Publish a statutory code of practice for international education in higher education provider		Q1 2021
		Publish procedures for IEM higher education authorisation for higher education providers		
		Roll out of function		Q2 2021

Corporate Governance and Financial Accountability Framework

Corporate Governance

QQI will ensure that appropriate governance and assurance mechanisms and structures are in place in QQI in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016.

4. Funding of QQI

The Department will allocate funding to QQI for the performance of its functions in accordance with the Financial Accountability Framework and Financial Policies and Procedures. QQI shall keep proper records and in particular adhere to Section 23 of the Act.

Monies will be advanced to QQI in line with agreed procedures which are set out in the grant allocation letter which issues from the Department each year. These procedures will be kept under review to ensure they remain fit for purpose. QQI will provide financial reports and statistical data as required, including data to support the preparation of budget and performance assessment and reporting.

The Performance Delivery Agreement will provide an opportunity to look at funding from a multi-annual perspective with a view to achieving a closer connect between QQI's future activities and the necessary grant aid year on year.

The Department in each financial year will advance to QQI such a sum from monies sanctioned by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform which is not greater than the sum required for the purpose of defraying expenditure incurred by QQI in the performance of its functions under the Act, taking into account the projected income from fees and other sources expected by QQI in each year. It is acknowledged that fee income is difficult to predict.

The 2020 Budget Allocation for QQI confirmed by the Department is €4.579m. The Chief Executive is the accountable person responsible for requesting the drawdown of these funds from the Department. The funds will be drawn down in accordance with the schedule agreed between QQI and the Department. The Department will hold copies of the original signature of the Chief Executive as well as three mandated substitutes.

It is the responsibility of QQI to prepare accurate estimates of funding requirements. The Department will consider these estimates within the context of available funding, but it may not be possible to meet the full funding requirements of QQI in any given year. In such instances QQI will be expected to manage within the allocated budget and prioritise its actions accordingly.

QQI will work alongside the Department to establish a sustainable funding model that provides greater predictability of non-exchequer funding and which is transparent, fair and equitable.

5. Audit, Risk, Control and Compliance

5.1. Written Procedures

QQI shall comply with the Public Financial Procedures published by the Department of Finance and at all times keep appropriate records.

QQI will ensure that there are written financial procedures in place which reflect, and are in compliance with, the requirements of the Public Financial Procedures and other relevant financial regulations and guidelines and reflect the updated requirements of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular 13/2014. These procedures will be kept under ongoing review having particular regard to the findings of the annual internal review of the effectiveness of QQI's system of internal controls and audits. QQI is committed to complying with the Public Spending Code and to providing specific details relevant to QQI as appropriate and where applicable.

5.2. Risk Management and Compliance

QQI will adopt and maintain a structured approach to risk and control and, where appropriate, enhance its risk management and keep it under continuous review for improvement. This should include:

- an annual review of the effectiveness of QQI's system of internal controls, including financial, operational and compliance controls and risk management must be carried out as soon as possible following the end of each financial year;
- detailed procedures must be in place, outlining QQI's control procedures and the in-built control and financial monitoring, control and verification checks implemented to ensure accountability and compliance with best financial practice;
- where specific issues have or will emerge, QQI will keep the Department informed of efforts to address and resolve these matters. QQI will submit a report to the Department on the resolution of any such issue and the actions that have been taken to prevent any reoccurrence;
- QQI will establish a quality assurance system to measure customer satisfaction, and highlight opportunities to improve work processes.

6. Financial Accountability Framework

6.1. Objective

The objective of this Financial Accountability Framework, operating as an integral part of the wider Performance Delivery Agreement, is to ensure that there are appropriate structures in place in QQI to provide for the necessary assurances to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in respect of any funding advanced to QQI for the performance of its functions/administration of the agency.

6.2. Financial Procedures

QQI will have written financial procedures in place which reflect, and are in compliance with, the requirements of the Public Finance Procedures and other relevant financial regulations and guidelines. These procedures will be kept under ongoing review having particular regard to the findings of the annual internal review of the effectiveness of QQI's system of internal controls and audits.

6.3. Management of Resources

QQI will, on an ongoing basis, assess and review the deployment of its resources, ensuring appropriate skills development through effective training plans. QQI will comply with the arrangements for the Delegated Sanction Agreement for the recruitment and promotion of staff, workforce planning requirements and relevant employment law. Should performance or compliance issues arise from the loss of skills or staff, QQI will immediately bring this to the attention of the Department.

The staff numbers in QQI will remain in line with the Delegated Sanction Agreement of December 2015 which comprehends a WTE at or below 78 unless otherwise agreed with the Department.

In preparation for the commencement of the revised Legislation QQI has completed a workforce planning exercise in 2019 that was subsequently revised in 2020. This exercise will be used to inform the Department of any additional financial, ICT and staff resources that may be required to implement QQI's significant new or expanded responsibilities such as additional functions including the Learner Protection Fund and the evaluation of a provider's corporate fitness. Any additional demands will need to be considered within the confines of the Delegated Sanction Agreement and in the context of available resources.

Following the workforce planning exercises in 2019 and 2020, QQI and the Department are reviewing the funding and resourcing of the agency. This includes assessing the staffing level of the organisation.

In the course of all consultations, the Department will be cognisant of the resources required by QQI to deliver additional priorities or the need to de-prioritise some activities if additional delivery requirements emerge.

6.4. Monitoring and Reporting

QQI will put in place monitoring and verification arrangements to ensure best practice is followed and financial controls are adhered to, in order to safeguard the public funding provided from the Exchequer. QQI will effectively manage the public monies provided, ensuring that value for money is delivered.

QQI will submit an annual set of accounts and report on activity as provided for in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

7. Governance

The governance objectives of this Agreement are to ensure that QQI:

- follows the strategic direction laid out by the Department by ensuring the delivery of the agreed services and activities and the achievement of the agreed targets.
- effectively performs its statutory functions.
- has a proper accounting framework for the monies advanced to it by the Department and that appropriate structures are in place to provide assurance to the Department.
- has standards and codes of practice to ensure integrity and professionalism and to maintain its reputation in the performance of its functions and ensuring that such standards are adhered to by its staff.

QQI will ensure that it has appropriate governance and assurance mechanisms and structures in place. QQI will ensure that it continues to adhere to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and that such circulars as may issue from time to time from the Departments of Finance/Public Expenditure and Reform are implemented, where appropriate. QQI shall, in accordance with *Section 25* of the Act, submit to the Minister an annual report not later than 30 June each year.

In line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies – August 2016, QQI will comply with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 02/2016 requiring State bodies to comply with expenditure approvals on IT and telecommunications projects, systems and infrastructures.

QQI will also ensure adequate and appropriate data collection and analysis systems in support of the delivery of its remit. This will include appropriate data sharing arrangements with relevant stakeholders, consistent with the General Data Protection Regulation and national legislation.

QQI will ensure that it complies with all relevant Statutory Obligations which affect the corporate governance of QQI.

8. Review Meetings

The overall engagement of QQI and the Department will be governed by PDA Review meetings, which will be additional to the regular meetings and ongoing dialogue between management in the relevant areas of responsibility. The purpose of the PDA Review meetings will be to review the overall performance of this Agreement, to review the performance of each party and to set future medium and long-term strategies for developing the relationship.

In general, the PDA Review meetings will take place three times per year, with the meetings below to take place during the period covered by this Agreement.

Type of Meeting	Level of Attendance	Date
PDA Review	Senior Mgt DES/QQI	End Q1 2020

Mid-year PDA Review	SG/QQI Chair/Senior Mgt DES/CEO	End Q3 2020
Progress 2020 and Draft PDA 2021	Senior Mgt DES/QQI	Dec 2020

9. Change Process

Both parties are cognisant of the implications for resourcing arising from the amended legislation and effecting the continuing change process in QQI. QQI will work collaboratively with the Department, via the Implementation Working Group, to address how resourcing needs are best met for the implementation of the legislation.

10. Sign Off and Review Arrangements

This Performance Delivery Agreement covers the period from January to December 2020. This Agreement is jointly signed by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science with responsibility for Higher Education and Qualifications and the Chief Executive of QQI. The agreement is renewed on an annual basis.

Both organisations will ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with this Agreement and its implications, and that all relevant dealings between the two organisations are conducted in accordance with its principles and provisions.


This Performance Delivery Agreement will be fully reviewed at the end of 2020.

The performance of QQI will be reviewed periodically on the basis of achievement of the deliverables set out in section 3 of this Agreement. Where QQI becomes aware of non-compliance or potential compliance issues in respect of any obligation, this should immediately be brought to the attention of the Department by the nominated liaison person or the Chief Executive of QQI.

Signed on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science:




William Beausang
Assistant Secretary



Date

Signed on behalf of Quality and Qualifications Ireland:



Padraig Walsh
Chief Executive

____3 Sept 2020____
Date

Appendix 1

Service Commitments and Measures 2020

The following section provides an overview of the key services and activities for 2020 which, when delivered in conjunction with the 2019 and 2021 plans, will contribute to a realisation of QQI's mission for the three-year period up to and including 2021.

It is acknowledged that, in addition to commitments below, QQI continues to devote considerable resources to important areas of work which are not central to its statutory mandate.

***Subject to resourcing**

Strategic Priority 1: Develop, promote and protect the integrity of the NFQ			
	Business Commitment	Activity	End date
a.	We will regulate access to the NFQ for awarding bodies & qualifications and maintain, develop and promote the NFQ as the central feature of a flexible, responsive system for quality assured qualifications in Ireland	Establish statutory scheme for the inclusion of awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	Q4*
		Establish the process for listing awarding bodies and including their awards in the NFQ	Q4*
		Publish final report on the re-referencing of the NFQ to European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-certification of comparability with the Qualifications Framework – European Higher Education Areas (QF-EHEA)	Q4
b.	We will streamline our system of standards and awards to permit providers to deliver flexible, responsive & nationally benchmarked programmes of education and training leading to our awards	Publish Green Paper on Qualifications	Q2
		Consult on the Green Paper on Qualifications and host associated event(s)	Q2-4
		Convene a stakeholder group to advise on Quality and the Qualifications System	Q2
		Consult with stakeholders on draft broad standards (Core and Vocationally Specific) at NFQ levels 1-4	Q4
c.	We will regulate access to QQI awards to private education and training providers and provide security to their learners through the introduction of a statutory learner protection fund	Establish the statutory learner protection fund	Q 1, 2021
		Submit QQI advice to Minister for Education and Skills on regulations on Corporate Fitness	Q1

d.	We will authorise the use of the International Education Mark (IEM) by providers of higher education and English language education (ELE) to international learners	Publish a statutory code of practice for English Language Education (ELE)	Q4*
		Publish procedures for International Education Mark (IEM) authorisation for English language education providers	
		Publish a statutory code of practice for international education in higher education provider	Q4*
e.	We will provide comprehensive information and be recognised as an authoritative voice on high-quality education and training provision and qualifications available in Ireland	Publish procedures for IEM higher education authorisation for higher education providers	
		Publish five year trends report on QQI Awards	Q2
		Launch the Irish Register of Qualifications	Q3

Strategic Priority 2: Use our unique position as the agency that spans all post-secondary education & training to analyse and demonstrate the impact of measures taken to improve the quality of education and training for the benefit of learners

	Business Commitment	Activity	End date
a.	Our independent evaluations of providers and our research and analysis of provider-led evaluations will be used to provide high-level advice to policymakers and funders on quality in the education and training system	Conduct mid-term thematic analysis of Cinnte reviews	Q3
		Commence inaugural review of Quality Assurance of Education and Training Boards	Q4
		Publish Annual Institutional Quality Report summary (Insights on Higher Education)	Q3
		Establish AIQR model for Private HE Providers	Q4*
		Publish Policy for Cinnte Review of Private Higher Education Providers	Q3*
		Develop Terms of Reference and Handbook for Cinnte Private HE Reviews Cycle	Q4*
		Publish a schedule of work for Thematic Analyses of External QA Activities	Q2
		Publish Thematic Analysis on re-engagement of providers	Q3
b.	We will provide guidance to and evaluate providers to stimulate and promote quality	Publish response to consultation feedback on the Green Paper on Assessment	Q1

	enhancement in education and training provision	Publish QQI analysis of report (part II) on evaluation of provider-led programme approval in higher education	Q3
c.	We will rigorously analyse and report on the outputs of our qualifications system to inform education and labour market decision-makers.	Publish a programme of work on data analysis	Q1

Strategic Priority 3: To support a high-quality education and training system through mutually beneficial strategic partnerships			
	Business Commitment	Activity	End date
a.	We will strive to inform and influence policy through our relationships with government, public funders and other stakeholders	Finalise second Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education	Q1 complete
		Finalise second Memorandum of Understanding with SOLAS	Q3
		Respond to relevant public consultations relating to education and training	Q1-4
		Establish a Social Media Plan	Q4
b.	We will engage with government departments, agencies, social partners and professional recognition bodies to contribute to coordinated policy in relation to skills requirements, regulations and associated occupational standards and qualifications	Host a series of events with Professional bodies to develop common expectations	Q2-Q4 Completed and extended
		Publish a report on points of engagement between the education and training sector and employers, industry and enterprise and business sectors	2021
		Conduct a Survey of QQI Stakeholders	Q3
c.	We will work with providers and awarding bodies to promote shared responsibility for a high-quality education and training system that stimulates transparency and improvement	Hold enhancement events on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff development/CPD conference (13 February 2020) 2. Implications of the new legislation (IoT's transition to designated awarding bodies); 3. Thematic Analysis of programme Approval and Re-approval (IOTs; Universities and professional Bodies) 	Q1-4 Completed QI Completed Q1 To Come Q3 - Q1 2021
		Deliver Programme for Engaging with Providers on Essay Mills (National Academic Integrity Network)	Q1-4
d.	We will engage with learner representative bodies to encourage best practice in providers	Support the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) and the Further Education and Training Learners Forum	Q1-Q4
e.	We will work with our EU colleagues and other international partners to	Executive staff participate in peer QA Agency governance and in international reviews	Q1-4

	influence European quality and qualifications policy & to inform our work here in Ireland	Complete Erasmus-funded European Network of Information Centres-National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC/NARIC) recognition projects 2020	Q1-4
		Participate in Thematic Peer Group (TPG) - Bologna follow-up to the Paris Communiqué on the Lisbon Recognition Convention 2020	Q2
		Contribute to EQF Advisory Group, ESCO (European classification of Skills, Competences, Occupations and Qualifications) Working Group and UNESCO world-wide reference levels	Q1-4
		Implement Joint Europass/National Co-ordination Point (NCP) action plan	Q1-Q4
		Host national European Union (EU) Initiatives Reference Group meeting	Q4
		Participate in annual five country (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland) event in Belfast	Q1

Strategic Priority 4: To build internal capacity to sustain, improve and communicate our performance			
	Business Commitment	Activity	End date
a.	We will continue to support and develop our people to build and foster a flexible, engaged, adaptable and motivated executive	Implement recommendations arising from KeepWell Mark assessment in 2019	Q1-4
		Commence preparatory work to achieve the next level of the KeepWell Mark for the organisation	Q4
		Roll out of a comprehensive recruitment and induction programme in keeping with the recommendations from the workforce planning report	Q1-4
		Develop a succession and talent management plan	Q1
		Review and update Workforce Plan	Q2
		Develop a Training and Development strategy for the organisation informed by the skills gap analysis and PMDS	Q2
		Deliver a management training programme	Q4
		Implement recommendations arising from the HR Strategy and from the Staff Engagement Survey	Q1-4
		Develop a phased based action plan for future accommodation needs in consultation with relevant partners	Q3

		Establish a protocol for internal communications (in association with HR)	Q1
b.	We will formulate and seek agreement for a transparent and sustainable funding model, underpinning confidence in the execution of our strategy	Complete FMMM (Financial Management Maturity Model) assessment and develop a programme of enhancements	Q2
		Conduct an analysis of capital spend requirements for the three-year strategy (2019-2021)	Q3
		Commence multi-annual Budget process	Q2-3
		Publish updated Financial Information Packs for panel members	Q2
		Publish an updated explanatory information booklet on fees	Q3
		Implement plan for new funding model to inform 2021 budget estimates	Q3
c.	We will invest further in our ICT infrastructure and internal capability as a means of further improving organisational productivity and enhancing service levels to our clients	Implement Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, including development of software for new functions	Q1-4
		Develop a Fees Calculator for validation of further education and training programmes	Q4
		Implement customer charter action plan	Q1-4
		Propose fees for new functions	Q4*
		Award contract for redesign of the QQI website	Q3
		Implement recommendations arising from Review of ICT Security	Q1-4
d.	We will demonstrate best practice in relation to our functional and corporate governance in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and adherence to relevant legislative and regulatory obligations.	Deliver approved internal audit cycle	Q1-4
		Complete review of Risk Management Policy	Q1
		Conduct external review of QQI Governance Structure	Q3
		Develop a Management Assurances Framework	Q4
		Deliver procurement training for relevant staff	Q3

		Complete progress report on Strategy Statement 2019-2021	Q1
		Implement an updated Data Protection plan to strengthen GDPR compliance	Q1-4
		Implement the Crisis Communications Plan	Q1-4
		Re-establish the Programme Office	Q2

Potential Risk Factors

It is important to note that some elements of the Plan are contingent on factors outside QQI's control – for example, the commencement of amending legislation by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (see Section 6.3) and the associated resources to effectively implement it.

