



Quality Assurance Manual

ECO-UNESCO

Version History of ECO-UNESCO's QA Manual

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V109222	QA Manual V1	Redesigned to meet the requirements of QQI QA guidelines/ QQI re-engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciara Muldoon (Education and Training Coordinator) • Elaine Nevin (National Director)
V209222	QA Manual V2	Addition of section on Protection for Enrolled Learners (page 68)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciara Muldoon (Education and Training Coordinator)
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V40423	QA Manual Version 4	<p>Changes made at request from QQI Reengagement Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P. 74: BOD TOR updated to V30423 Change the quorum for decision-making to 50% plus 1 for the Board of Directors • P. 60: Changed the reference on p.60 to role of the RAP <i>ratifying</i> the outcomes of appeals procedures from previous certification periods to state that the RAP <i>notes</i> the outcomes of these. • P 83: Changed the reference on p.83 to the quorum for valid voting on the RAP to “A quorum is 100% of the members, however as in the event that the Education and Training Coordinator acting as the Internal Verifier, they will have a conflict of interest/no right to vote.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciara Muldoon (Education and Training Coordinator)
V50224	QA Manual Version 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational chart updated • ‘Tutors’ section updated (pg 12) • ‘Senior Management Team’ updated and amended to ‘executive team’ • Edits made to ‘Youth Employability’ (pg 13) • All mentions of ‘Operations Manager’ updated to ‘Operations and Development Manager’ • Edits made to ‘PEL’ section (P66) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciara Muldoon (Education and Training Coordinator)
V50224	QA Manual Version 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of names under BoD and ETC ToR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciara Muldoon (Education and Training Coordinator)

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Chapter One: Governance and Management of Quality

(Aligned to Core Guideline 1)

ECO-UNESCO Profile

ECO-UNESCO is one of Ireland's leading environmental education and youth organisations working to channel the passion, creativity, and energy of young people into positive environmental action. We inspire, educate, empower, and support young people to act through a range of programmes and services.

Founded in 1985, ECO-UNESCO is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. We work directly with young people aged 10-18 and 18-25, in formal and non-formal education settings (including schools, youth groups and communities), through experiential workshops, youth programmes, accredited and non-accredited training courses, employability programmes, events and action projects. Accredited QQI training courses are a key component of these programmes.

In addition, we deliver innovative programmes for a wide range of stakeholders including young people, teachers, youth leaders, local authorities, businesses and community leaders as well as participants from youth and community NGO's.

We are funded by a variety of sources from national to European government and agencies contributing to both the overall development of the organisation and project specific work. We also receive funding from corporate sources, consultancy and membership and programme fees.

We work on an all-Ireland basis. Our headquarters are based in Dublin, and we operate across the island of Ireland, working with youth groups, schools and local authorities.

We work in partnership with UNESCO (the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation) through its Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme and are part of UNESCO's Global ESD Net 2030.

Mission, Values and Aims

- **Mission**

Our mission is to protect the natural environment and empower young people by developing their knowledge, skills and confidence that channels their passion into positive and creative actions that help create a sustainable planet.

- **Values**

Our values are:

- ✓ **Respect:** Respect for young people, our participants, volunteers, employees and our stakeholders.
- ✓ **Passion:** Passion for the environment and for our young people, and an acknowledgement that the natural environment plays an important role in all our lives and in the development and education of our young people.
- ✓ **Fun:** We value youth-led approaches, creativity and innovation, action based learning, and fun as we work together to protect the environment and impact the lives of young people.

• Aims

Our aims are to:

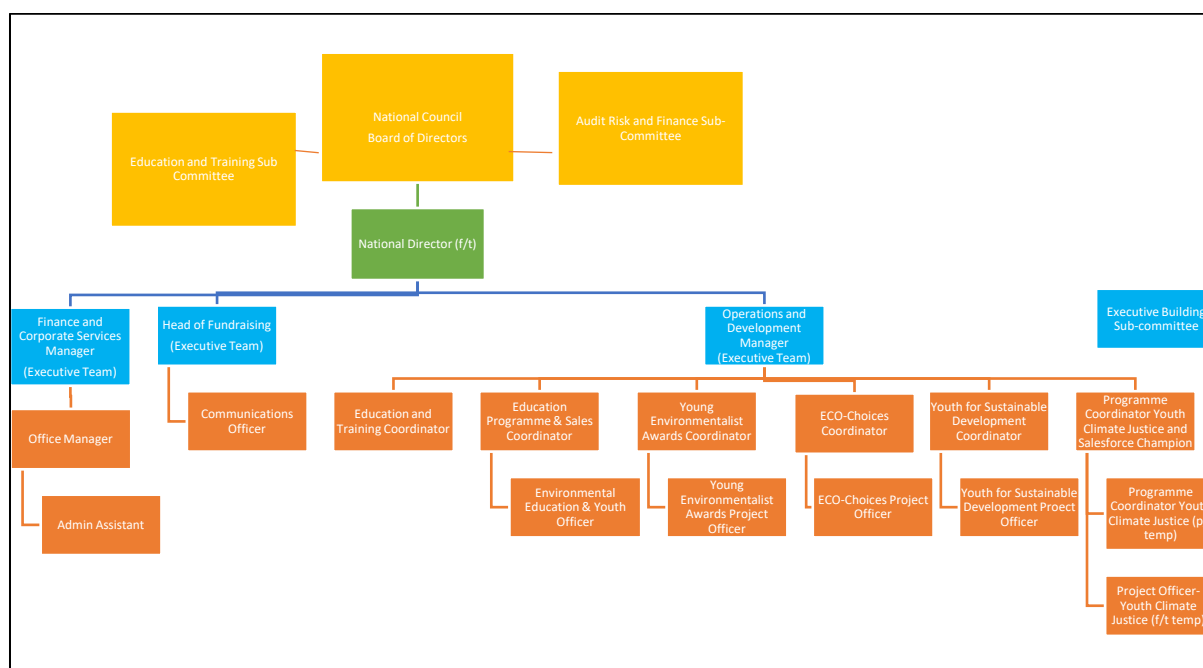
- ✓ Raise awareness, understanding and knowledge of the natural environment among young people.
- ✓ Engage, inspire, and empower young people by facilitating their personal development and well-being through practical environmental projects, activities and skills development.
- ✓ Promote the protection and conservation of the environment by empowering young people to lead in action oriented environmental projects and activities and by promoting positive and environmental behaviour.
- ✓ Advocate for environmental education, education for sustainable development, the natural environment and youth development.
- ✓ Promote the ideals of UNESCO and work with like-minded organisations in Europe and globally.

Key stakeholders

Our key stakeholders include; our learners, staff, QQI, our funders (e.g. Irish Aid), UNESCO, and the schools and youth services we work with.

Organisation Structure

2.3 Organisation Chart



• Executive Team

The Executive Team is made up of the National Director, the Operations and Development Manager, the Head of Fundraising and the Finance and Corporate Services Manager. They are collectively responsible for the management, financial planning and tracking and overall operations of ECO-UNESCO on a day-to-day basis and report to the Board of Directors.

- **National Director**

The National Director, reporting to the Board of Directors, is responsible for resourcing and leading ECO-UNESCO and overseeing implementation of strategy. The National Director is responsible for compliance, financial management and ensuring the organisation adheres to its policies including Health and Safety, Child Safeguarding and to all HR policies. The National Director is responsible for ensuring ECO-UNESCO is compliant to all its legal and governance commitments and collates and monitors risks including academic risks and mitigation measures identified.

- **The Operations and Development manager**

The Operations and Development manager is the line manager for the Programmes & Services Team which include Programme Staff and the Education and Training Coordinator. The Operations and Development manager supports the Education and Training Coordinator in implementing changes recommended by the Education and Training Committee.

- **The Education and Training Coordinator**

The Education and Training Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the quality assurance of all accredited courses delivered by ECO-UNESCO. With the Operations and Development manager, she is responsible for maintaining and managing the QA system and documents and is a member of the Results Awards Panel and the Education and Training Committee.

- **Tutors (Programme Staff)**

Our accredited courses are delivered by our course tutors who may also have the role of Programme Coordinator or Officer. They deliver, assess, manage and administer their courses.

Detailed Role Descriptions for all of the above are available in Appendix 2.

Scope of Provision

We offer a variety of programmes and services focused on environmental protection and youth empowerment. We cover a wide range of environmental and sustainability related areas including waste, energy, climate action, climate justice, ecology, biodiversity and focus our work on practical actions and solutions. In addition, we encourage the development of core competencies in our programmes encouraging critical thinking, systems thinking, futures thinking, communications and team building skills. We build confidence and self-esteem in young people.

Our provision includes:

Environmental workshops: We deliver workshops for children and young people on themes of waste, energy, biodiversity, water, climate change, plastic, ECO Art and Design, and outdoor discovery days.

The Young Environmentalist Awards Programme: An all-Ireland environmental awards programme that recognises and rewards young people who raise environmental awareness and improve the environment. Over 250 youth groups and schools and over 4000 young people participate in this programme annually. Over 50,000 young people have participated in the programme since its inception.

Youth for Sustainable Development Programme: A youth programme which promotes Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the non-formal education sector through a Peer Education approach. A course leading to the QQI L5 award 5N2709 is delivered as part of this programme.

ECO-Choices: A health and well-being programme, which works with marginalised young people by developing their life skills; using our natural environment as a source of recreation; and environmental education methodologies. A course leading to the QQI L3 award 3N2908 is delivered as part of this programme.

Green Youth Employability: Our Youth Employability programme is aimed at improving the employability skills of young people. A course leading to the QQI L3 award 3N2908 or a QQI L5 award 5N2709 course may be delivered as part of this programme.

Online courses: We have developed online courses on our ECO-Academy on topics such as “Fashion Focus”, “Climate Justice” and “Youth for Sustainable Development”. These are available for anyone who wishes to sign up at; <https://learn.ecounesco.ie/all-courses/>

Teacher and Educator Training: We deliver the Six Steps to Success training programme to teachers and youth leaders guiding participants through the Young Environmentalist. We also deliver bespoke training to teachers upon request on themes of environmental education, youth work and sustainability.

ECO-Sustainability Award: We provide support and training to organisations to help implement a whole organisation approach to sustainability.

Education resources: We develop and produce educational materials and resource packs.

● Accredited Courses

We deliver accredited courses leading to minor awards from Levels 3- 6 on the NFQ delivered either face to face and/or online (synchronously) in the areas of sustainability, environmental education and youth and community development. These courses are often delivered as part of an ECO-UNESCO programme.

We are currently validated to deliver courses leading to the following minor awards;

- ✓ Community Development (Level 3) [3N2908]
- ✓ Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production (Level 3) [3N0890]
- ✓ Growing Vegetables (Level 4) [4N0671]
- ✓ Sustainable Development (Level 5) [5N5905]
- ✓ Peer Education for Sustainable Development (Level 5) [5N2709]
- ✓ Work Experience (Level 5) [5N1356]
- ✓ Ecology and the Environment (Level 6) [6N3645]

Governance

● Policy Statement

Our governance structure is designed to ensure that best practice is being maintained across the organisation and allows the best possible outcomes for our learners.

At ECO-UNESCO, we:

- ✓ work in compliance with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code
- ✓ work within the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work
- ✓ comply with relevant QA guidelines issued by QQI.

We are a registered company [Registered company number 106860] and a registered charity [Registered Charity Number 20015145 and CHY number 7225], governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.

- Corporate Governance

The Board of Directors

We are governed by a voluntary Board of Directors who have diverse skills and expertise in the fields of organisational management, accountancy, corporate governance, education, sustainability, and environmentalism. Our Board of Directors ensures the highest standards of corporate governance by ensuring the organisation adheres to the Charities Governance Code and to all requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

The Board liaises with the National Director to keep an overview of the organisations' affairs and to provide support as appropriate. They also provide oversight and direction and ensure that our activities are in line with our mission and objectives as outlined in the constitution. The functions of the Board include policy setting, strategic planning, and the monitoring of policy implementation. The Board also signs off on our annual return to the Companies Registration Office, our annual report to the Charities Regulator and our Annual Audited accounts.

A Board Handbook is available for all members with details of statutory requirements of becoming a director, duties of directors, and code of conduct for directors.

Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee (ARF)

The ARF is a subcommittee of the Board which is responsible for financial and risk oversight and reports to the Board. The National Director maintains an organisational risk register which is the main management tool for the identification and management of risk and is reviewed on an ongoing basis by senior management, the ARF, the Education and Training Committee, and the Board. Risks are categorised as; governance, operational, reputational, financial and academic and rated in terms of their likely impact and probability.

- Academic Governance

Education and Training Committee (ETC)

The ETC is a subcommittee of the Board of Directors which maintains oversight of academic and quality standards in relation to learners and courses and makes recommendations to the Board to ensure high standards of education and training. Our ETC comprises a learner, an external member, a tutor and the Education and Training Coordinator to give all departments a voice in the governance of education and training and to foster an organisation-wide culture of quality. Establishment of the ETC ensures decisions on education and training matters are made independently of commercial considerations. The Education and Training Committee reports to the Board of Directors who must respect the role of the Committee.

Terms of Reference for the Education and Training Committee is available in Appendix 1.

Results Approval Panel (RAP)

The Education and Training Committee appoints members of the panel. The panel confirms that results are fully quality assured and signed off before they are submitted to QQI for certification. It also ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes. Members must carry out their roles without bias and make their determinations based on the information provided.

Terms of Reference for the Results Approval Panel is available in Appendix 1.

Management of Quality

● Quality Policy Statement

We are committed to providing our learners with high quality, engaging and inclusive environmental education in accordance with our mission and values. We have a well defined quality assurance procedures to implement our quality policy on a day-to-day basis and are committed to embedding a quality culture across all our provision. We recognise that shared ownership of quality systems is essential to ensuring that the wider team engages with and supports these systems and key in ensuring that we work towards excellence in all areas of our provision. We encourage a culture of open and honest communication and welcome feedback from all stakeholders in the quality process.

We strive for high standards in the environments in which we deliver and the resources that we provide our team, and our governance and senior management team endeavour to demonstrate their commitment to quality in their day-to-day job functions and lead by example. We promote a quality assurance ethos and develop quality assurance procedures which are implemented in the day to day running of ECO-UNESCO.

Responsibilities

- The Board of Directors delegates responsibility to the National Director and the senior management team for the QA system.
- The Senior Management Team is responsible for resourcing, supporting, maintaining and ensuring the implementation and embedding of the QA system
- The Education and Training Committee maintains oversight of the implementation of the QA system.
- All members of governance panels, management, staff members and tutors have a role in implementing the QA system and this is written into terms of reference, role descriptions and discussed at induction.

● Scope of the QA System

The QA system applies to all who work with or on behalf of us in the design and delivery of courses including staff, tutors, and learners. It also applies to those who are responsible for governance and to those who have direct responsibility for assuring quality.

Our QA system is designed to meet the requirements set out in the following QQI guidelines;

- ✓ Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines published by QQI (April 2016)

- ✓ Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines – Independent/Private (April 2016)
- ✓ QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised (Updated 2018)
- ✓ QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training (2017)

Our QA system is underpinned by the following pieces of legislation;

- ✓ The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012)
- ✓ Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) (2019)
- ✓ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018)
- ✓ Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005)
- ✓ Employment Equality Acts (1998–2015)
- ✓ Equal Status Acts (2000–2015)
- ✓ Children First Act (2015)
- ✓ The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act (1998)
- ✓ Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)
- ✓ Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2019)
- ✓ The Data Protection Act (1988)
- ✓ The Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)
- ✓ The General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- ✓ The Data Protection Act (2018)
- ✓ Misuse of Drugs Act (1977 & 1984)
- ✓ Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances Act) (2010)
- ✓ Intoxicating Liquor Acts (1988 – 2004)
- ✓ Public Health (Tobacco) Act (2002) and Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act (2004)
- ✓ Child Care Act (1991)
- ✓ The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work General Application Regulations (2007-16)

● Aims of the QA System

We have developed the policies and procedures contained in this manual in alignment with QQI’s Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016).

The aims of our QA system are to;

- ✓ Increase the confidence of learners and other stakeholders including QQI.
- ✓ Help us to improve what we do and the way we do it.
- ✓ Help us to identify where there are gaps in quality.
- ✓ Standardise and streamline our delivery.

● Maintaining the QA System

It is the responsibility of tutors, within their scope, to implement the QA system on a day-to-day basis when delivering and assessing courses, while the Education and Training Coordinator coordinates the implementation with input from the National Director and the Operations and Development manager, as needed.

We maintain our QA documents in electronic format on SharePoint for ease of use, access and security. Maintaining our QA documents electronically makes revision and version control easier and reduces the

need for emails and paper. We use a system of hyperlinks across QA documents to ensure that if a QA procedure or document is changed, the change is consistent across all sources of information.

- **Reviewing the QA System**

We constantly review, amend and renew our QA system to reflect experience and changing context, and formally every two years when we consider;

- ✓ Changes to relevant regulation, accreditation requirements and/or legislation
- ✓ The outcomes of external QA events e.g. QQI QA or validation panel reports and findings
- ✓ Issues raised by staff, tutors, learners, external authenticators, or other stakeholders in relation to policy or procedure.

The Education and Training Coordinator and the Operations and Development manager work with staff from across ECO-UNESCO to review the aspects of the QA system that relate to their roles to ensure that it continues to be effective and fit for purpose. If a gap is identified the Education and Training Coordinator works with the colleague to fill the gap. This resulting report is scrutinised by the Education and Training Committee.

New or significantly revised policies must be approved by the Education and Training Committee before they are implemented.

- **Aims of our QA System Review**

- ✓ To ensure that the QA system reflects experience and changing contexts.
- ✓ To ensure that the documents are up to date and aligned to the current context.
- ✓ To check that the QA system is integrated and compliant with our organisation-wide policies and procedures e.g., data protection, employment, child protection.
- ✓ To check if the policy or procedure is being implemented as documented.
- ✓ To recommend improvements or edits to the QA system and its implementation.

- **Learner Involvement in Quality Assurance**

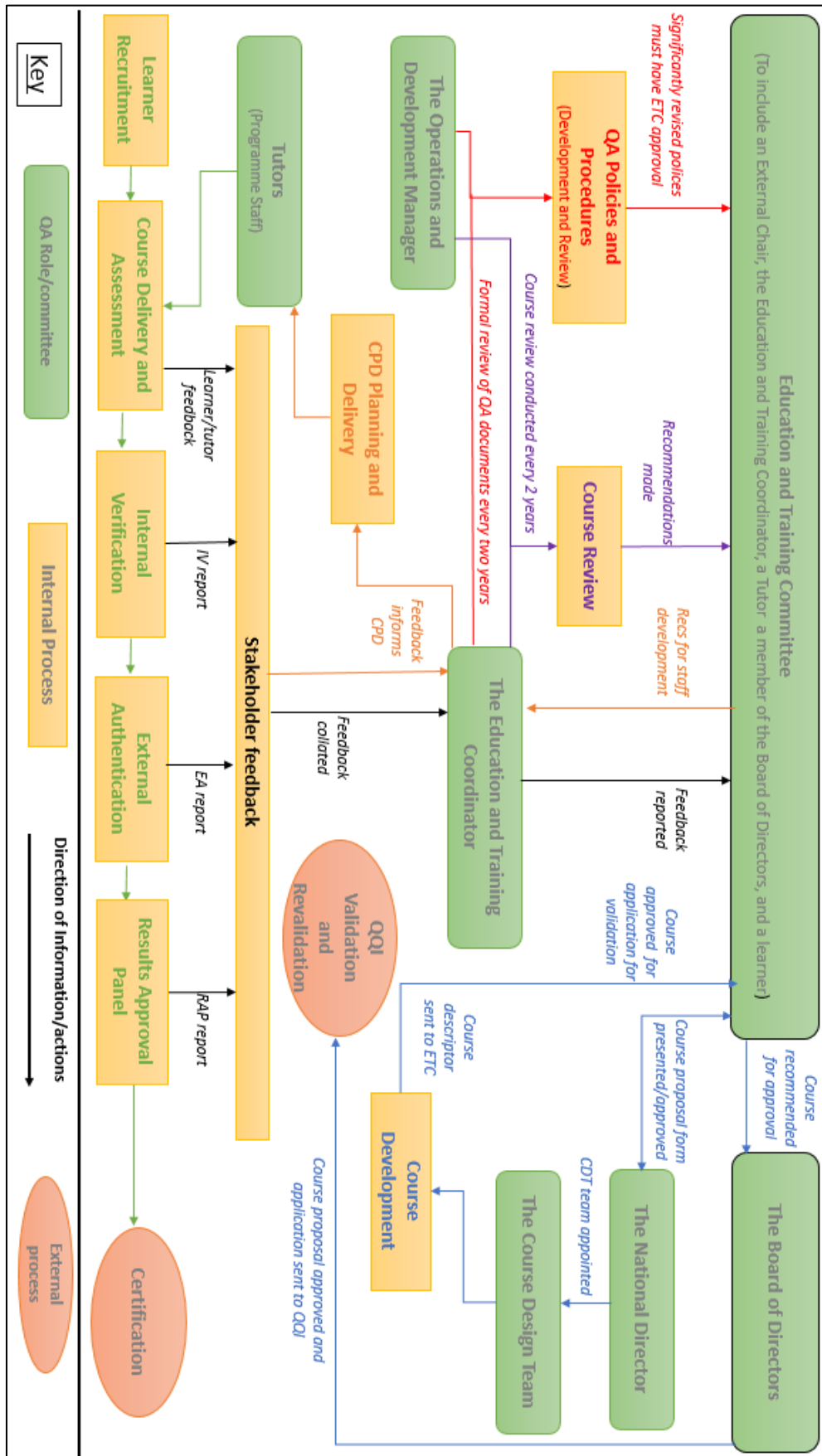
We place great importance on the voice of our learners, and the empowerment of young people feature in our organisation's aims.

We collect learner feedback mid-way through their course, and again upon completion of the course. This feedback is monitored by the Education and Training Coordinator and shared with the tutor, and the Education and Training Committee in aggregate form.

In addition to this, our learners are provided with a learner handbook at the start of their course which clearly outlines their right to appeal a result and the steps they should follow to do so. The learners are also signposted to how they can make a complaint on our website.

There is a learner member on our Education and Training Committee which gives voice to learner issues. This learner's period of tenure includes the time that s/he was registered, plus two years thereafter.

● QA Schema



Chapter Two: A Documented Approach to Quality

Assurance (Aligned to Core Guideline 2)

Policy Statement

The QQI Core QA Guidelines (2016, page 9) require that our ‘quality assurance system is fully documented; there are robust, documented policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of provision’. The QA documents that make up our QA system are designed to be consistent; accessible; easy to read, presented in usable formats, written in plain English and available to staff and the public as required. We are committed to getting the views and input of staff, tutors, and other stakeholders when designing documents. We endeavour to ensure that all references and cross-references are correct and easy to follow. Policies are, by definition, high-level statements that set out clearly the ‘why’ we do something and the principles that inform our approach to a particular quality area. We support our policies with procedures which we write with a level of detail that makes it clear how we do something. We design the procedures to be fit for purpose and appropriate to our context, informed by and aligned to relevant QQI’s quality assurance guidelines they support. We have arrangements for monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and renewing our policies and procedures, and the QA documents we use to implement the QA system (Ref: QQI Reengagement Application Guide February 2017 V 0.1)

A *policy* is a statement or series of statements that set out a provider’s position and commitment(s) on a particular area of education and training provision. It should show that a provider is aware of its obligations in the area and is committing to deliver on these obligations.

A policy:

- ✓ Is written for all stakeholders, internal and external to inform them of our position on a particular aspect of our role.
- ✓ Sets out broad parameters.
- ✓ Is approved by our Board of Directors and/or the Education and Training Committee, as appropriate
- ✓ Is reviewed every two years to ensure it is implementable, aligned to the legislative and regulatory context, and are fit for purpose
- ✓ Is available to all stakeholders on our website.
- ✓ Has the backing of governance and senior management.
- ✓ Informs the learners of what they should expect from us
- ✓ Informs staff of what is expected of them

Procedures

A *procedure* describes a process intended to deliver all or part of a policy commitment. It;

- ✓ Is written to be easily available and understood by those who operate the process or engage with it.
- ✓ Addresses the practicalities of the process – definitions, purposes, responsibilities, actions, supporting and reference documents the ‘how’, ‘when’ and ‘by whom’
- ✓ Is designed with the intention of delivering quality and consistency

- ✓ Is reviewed every two years or more frequently as required to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose and to streamline them if possible
- ✓ Evolves over time as we identify and implement improvements.

Responsibilities

- The Education and Training Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the QA documents that make up our QA system.

Elements of our QA System

The following are the elements that make up our QA system;

- ✓ The QA Manual – the core document which set out our policies and procedures
- ✓ Terms of Reference included as an appendix to our QA Manual
- ✓ Role Descriptions for individuals who have a role in implementing the QA system included as an appendix to our QA Manual
- ✓ Risk Register
- ✓ Corporate policies e.g. risk management, health and safety, child protection, data protection.
- ✓ Learner and Tutor Handbooks
- ✓ QA Document Register
- ✓ QA Reference documents, which provide pertinent details for consultation such as QQI QA Guidelines, Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012)
- ✓ QA Support documents
- ✓ Flowcharts/graphics e.g., QA Schema, organisation chart
- ✓ Glossary of commonly used terms in our QA system included as an appendix to our QA Manual

The QA Manual

Our QA Manual is the core document in our QA system and is structured to be coherent with QQI QA guidelines to help to ensure and demonstrate compliance. It is formatted to match the chapter headings set in Section 2 of the *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers*. These guidelines detail the QA principles that underpin the design of our QA system.

1. Governance and the Management of Quality
2. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
3. Courses of Education and Training
4. Staff Recruitment, Management & Development
5. Teaching and Learning and Learner Support
6. Assessment of Learners
7. Information and Data Management
8. Public Information and Communication
9. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The QA manual is maintained electronically on SharePoint and is also on our website. All stakeholders have access to our QA manual on our website.

The QA manual is regularly checked for consistency, accuracy and structure and is written in a user-friendly and easy to read manner presenting key procedures in diagrammatic form, when appropriate.

QA Support Documents

We maintain a suite of QA support documents. These are functional documents that support the implementation of our policies and procedures. Examples are learner and tutor feedback forms, complaints form, *Internal Verification report*, *Results Approval Panel Report template*. We maintain a list of these documents on our *QA document register* and review and update them on an ongoing basis.

Design of QA Documents

We use plain language when writing; a style of writing which involves the orderly and clear presentation of information which helps the reader to understand the message the first time they read it. We write with the user in mind and aim to present information clearly and accurately. We do not include personnel names in our QA documents – we use role titles. The naming of files and folders is an important part of organising, sharing, and keeping track of our QA documents. We have a documented file naming convention included in our style guide. We have a version control system to manage different versions and drafts of documents. Version control is a process of naming and distinguishing between draft documents which lead to a final (or approved) version, which may be subject to further amendments. It provides an audit trail for the revision and update of draft and final versions.

● Use of Templates

We use templates when creating QA documents whenever possible. A template is a predesigned document we use to create documents quickly without having to think about design. With a template, most of the document design decisions such as headings, font style and size, and spacing are predetermined. Using templates enables us to create a consistent look for our QA documents.

● Use of Visuals

We use visuals in our QA documents to support the narrative and make the various processes clearer from the user's perspective. Visuals take many forms; process maps, schema, organisation charts, flowcharts. The following are the key visuals included in the QA manual;

- ✓ A visual representation of the organisational structure
- ✓ A process map of our QA system based on the QA schema designed by QQI
- ✓ A process map for course design and development
- ✓ A process map for course validation
- ✓ A process map for appeals

Learner and Tutor Handbooks

Our learner and tutor handbooks are key QA documents. The information in the handbooks is consistent with the related information in the QA manual. The information is presented in a format and style that suits the reader. We update the handbooks annually with the input of users and reissue them with a new version number and date. The handbooks are written in plain, reader-friendly language. The contents provide or point to the QA policies and procedures which are most relevant to the audiences. We keep these

handbooks as short and concise as possible, signposting to more detail available on the website (for learners) or on SharePoint (for tutors). We make these handbooks available at or in advance of induction.

Chapter 3 Courses of Education and Training (Aligned to Core

Guideline 3)

Policy Statement

Our aim is to develop courses which meet the needs of our learners and the sectors we serve and are in line with ECO UNESCO's strategic plans. In order to ensure this, we constantly analyse training needs. A decision to develop a course is based on identified needs backed up by reliable data and when we can access subject matter expertise. All courses have a learner-centred approach and promote learning about the environment and sustainable development with a focus on developing learners' leadership skills, confidence, self-belief and self-esteem. Our course design teams consult with internal and external stakeholders as part of the design process and new courses are reviewed by management and governance before they are signed off or submitted for validation. Any courses being designed to lead to an award on the National Framework of Qualifications are developed in line with the requirements of the framework and associated policies and procedures on learner admission, transfer, progression, recognition and certification. We do not offer a course leading to a QQI award before it is validated by QQI. Courses are reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis and the information collected is analysed and the course adapted to ensure it remains up to date and fit-for-purpose.

Responsibilities

- The Education and Training Committee maintains oversight of course design and approval, delivery, quality, and resources.
- The Education and Training Coordinator and the Operations and Development manager are responsible for course development, delivery and review.

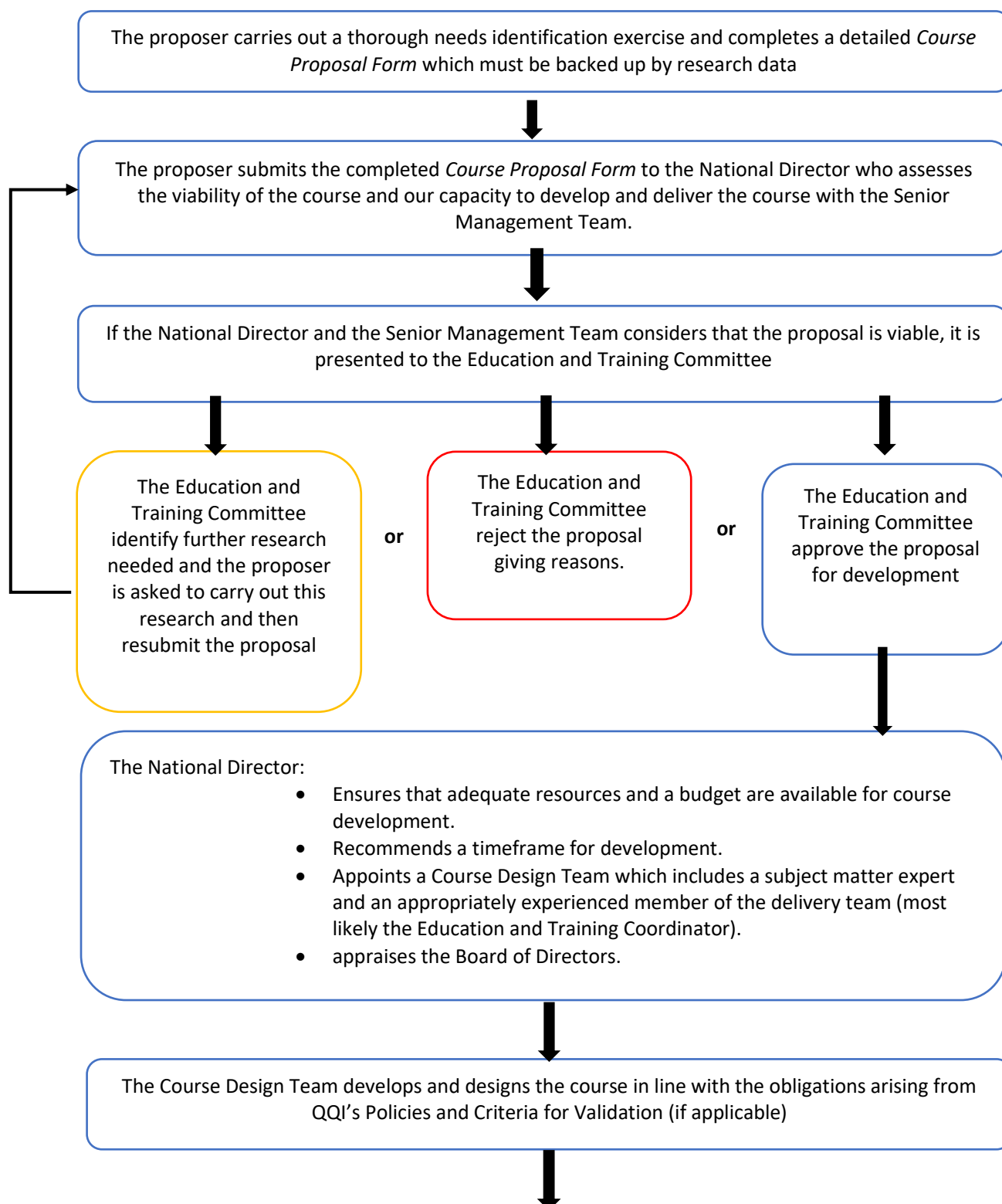
Needs Analysis

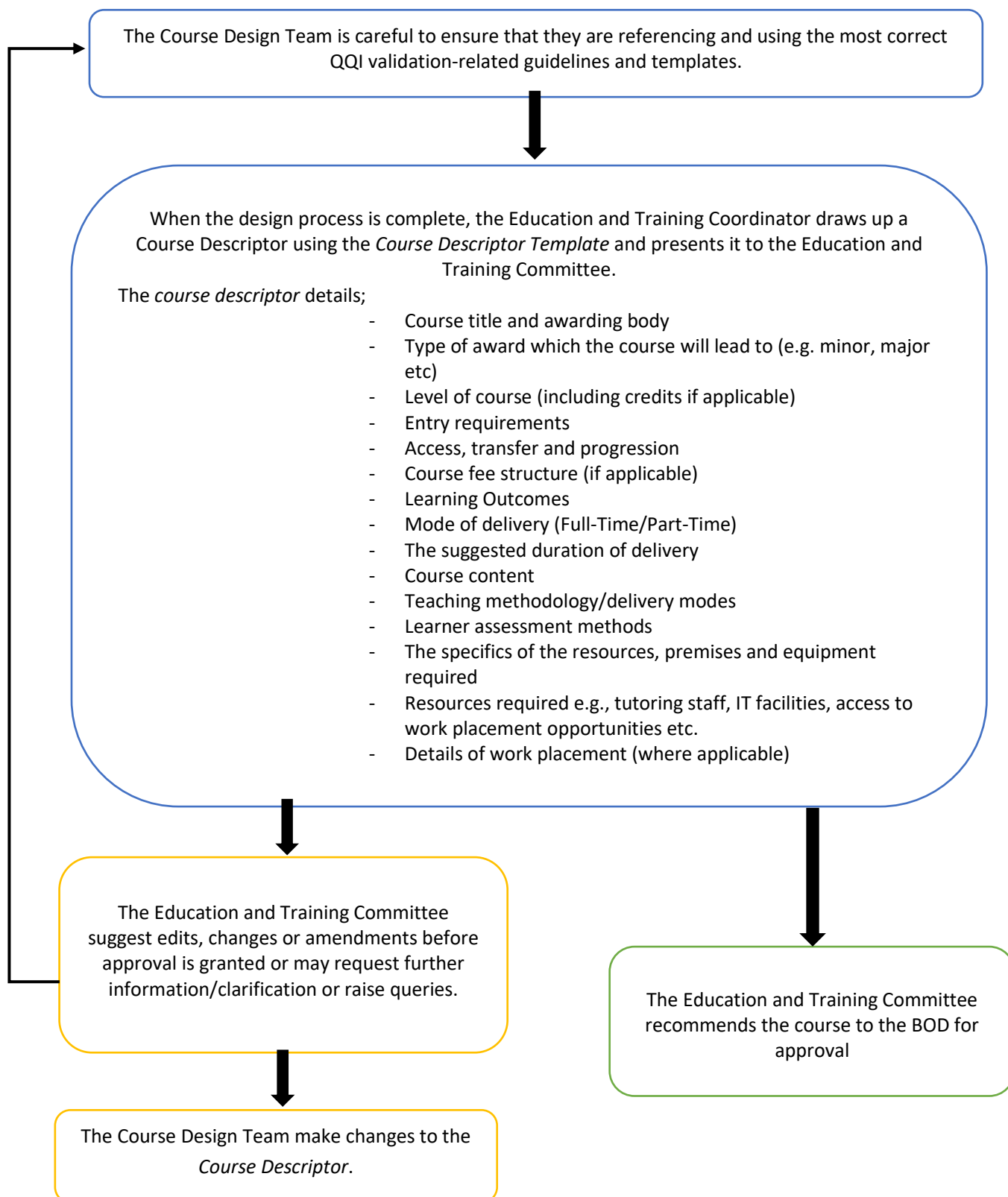
We analyse the training needs of the sector we serve by;

- ✓ Collecting and analysing feedback from learners and tutors and other stakeholders
- ✓ By horizon scanning of current topical environmental and sustainability issues (including but not limited to current affairs, comparable providers, new QQI qualifications, and the organisation's strategic plan)
- ✓ Keeping abreast of national and international policy with regard to environmental and sustainability issues
- ✓ Collecting feedback at sectoral conferences and other sector gatherings and events
- ✓ Undertaking research within the sector, networking with experts, knowledge of the sector and planned changes.
- ✓ Informally through regular discussion between tutors, learners and the Education and Training Coordinator.

Course Design and Development

• Procedure for Course Design and Development

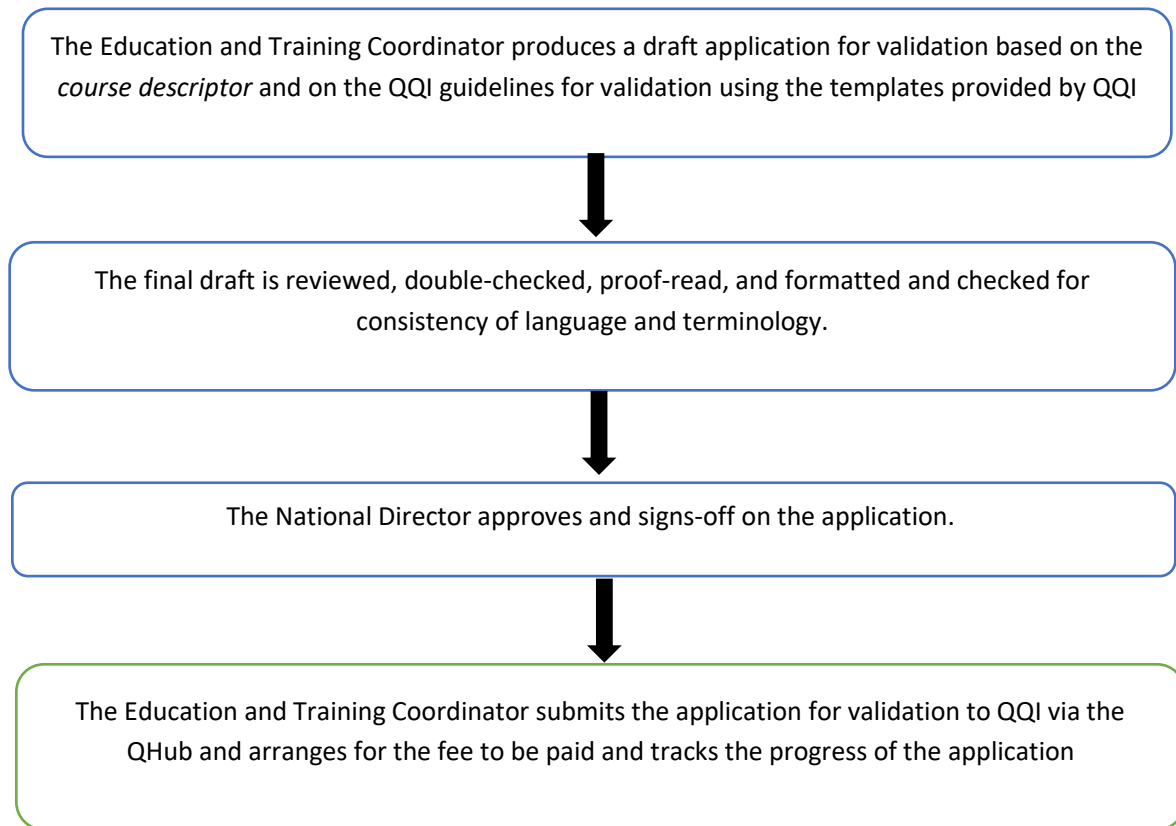




Course Validation

'Validation is a quality assurance process intended to ensure that a proposed course can enable a learner to acquire and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify the award(s) being offered in respect of that course.' (QOI)

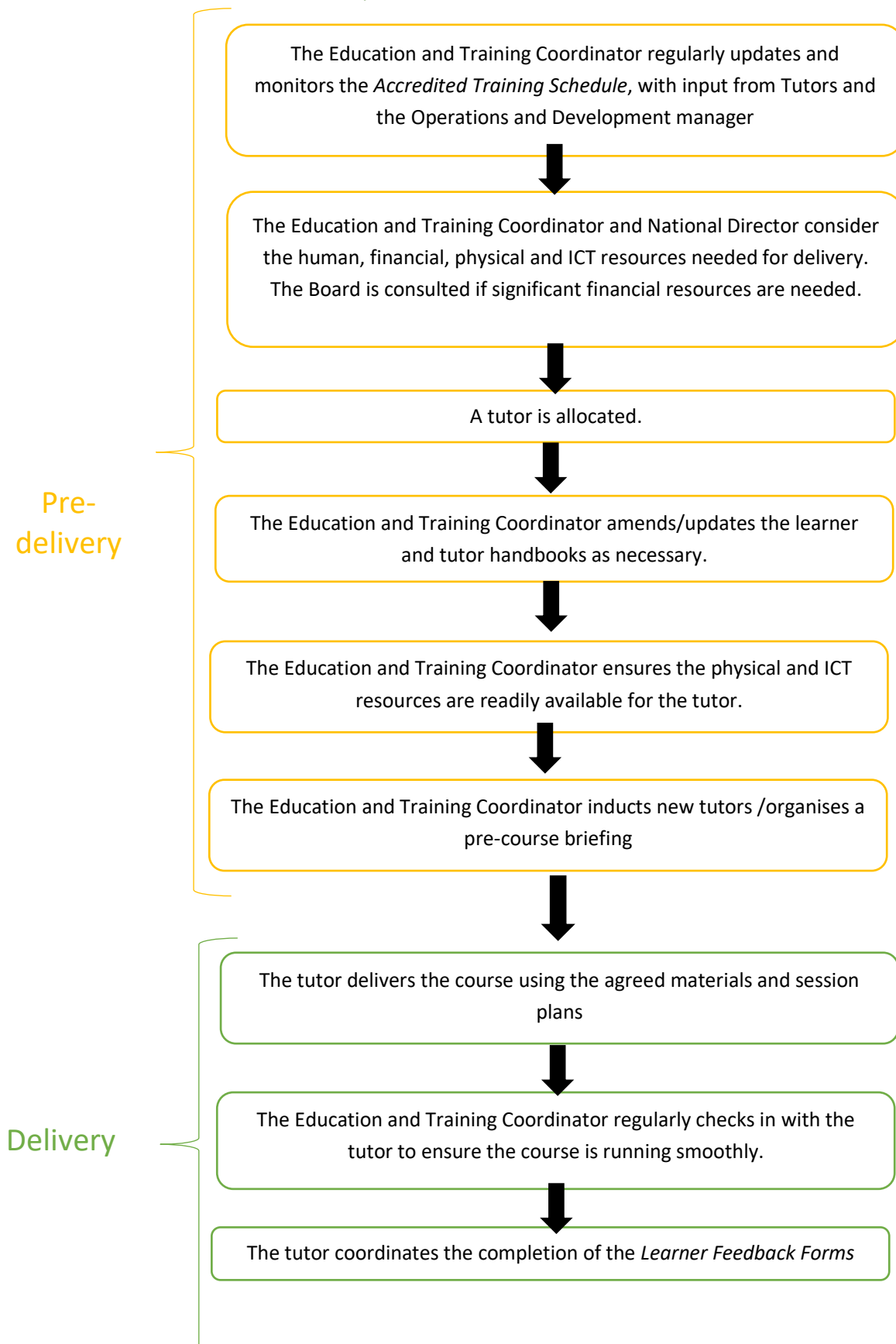
- Procedure for Submitting an Application for Validation

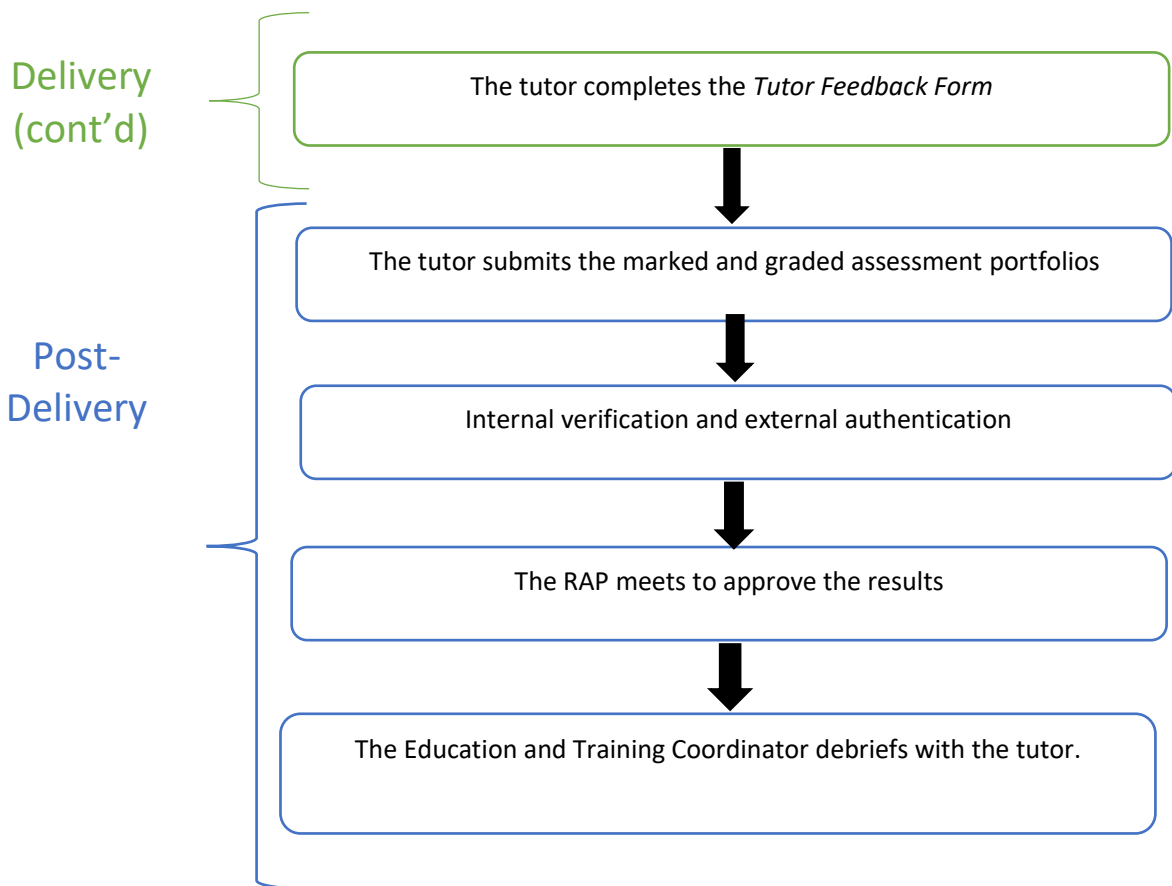


Course Delivery

The Education and Training Coordinator plans and organises course delivery with the tutors; updating the *Accredited Training Schedule* and ensuring that the venue, equipment, tutor, learner information and other resources are in place. If the Education and Training Coordinator identifies a need for new or additional equipment or resources, she alerts the National Director who sources what is needed.

- Procedure For Course Delivery

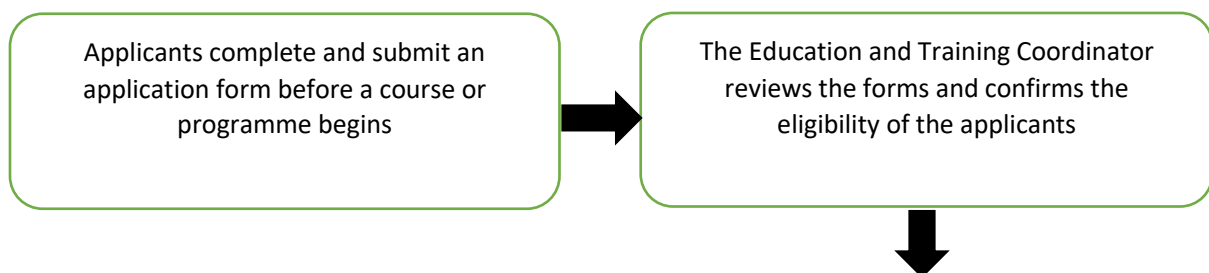


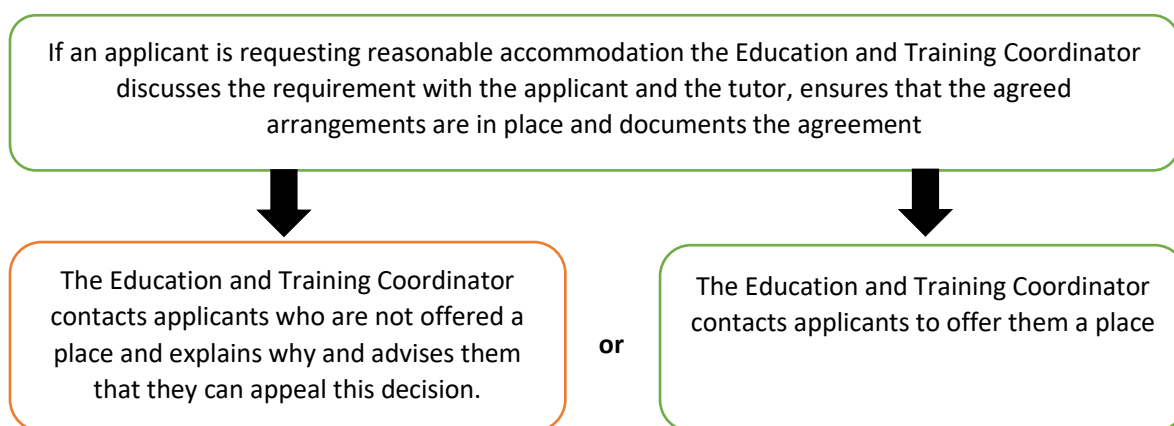


Admissions

We welcome all applicants as long as they meet the minimum entry requirements/are eligible for entry by RPL and we can accommodate them if they have specific needs. Applicants who do not have the required literacy/numeracy levels are guided to an appropriate support agency e.g. NALA and invited to reapply when they have the required level.

- Procedure For Admissions



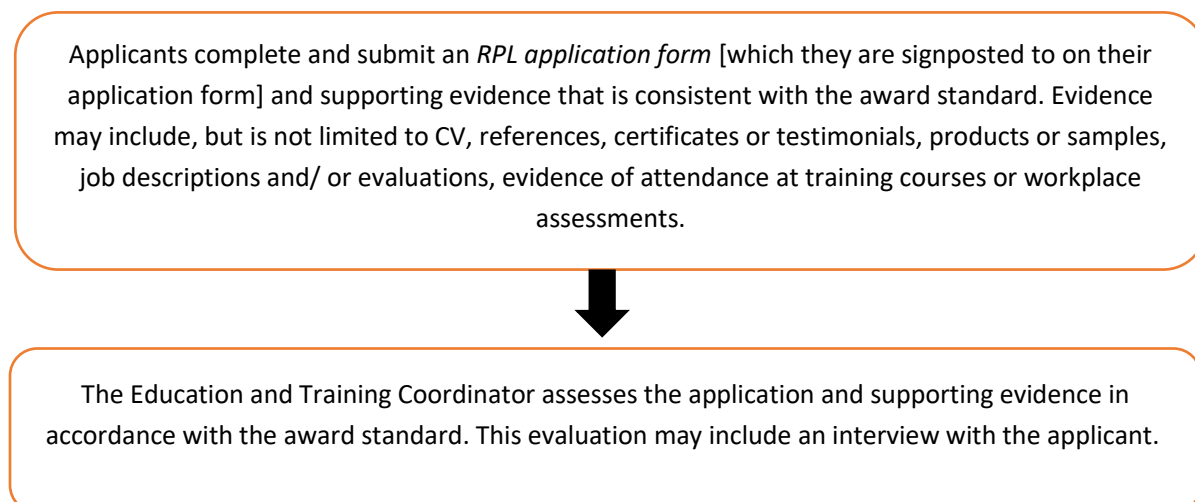


We facilitate learners to transfer and progress inwards and outwards from our courses and let learners know that they have the option of transferring or progressing to other providers that offer courses leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualification in related areas. The course design teams research transfer and progression options when they are designing a course and consult with other providers who offer similar courses at the same or higher levels. Details of suitable pathways are written into the course descriptor and agreed with QQI as part of the validation process. We include information on transfer and progression in the course information, on our website, in the learner handbook and at induction. The tutors explain the National Framework of Qualifications, the level and type of award to which our courses lead and how learners might use their award to progress. The NFQ is a 10-level system used to describe qualifications in the Irish education and training system and how the different award levels and award-types interlink.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can *“be used by the learner to gain entry to a course; gain exemptions within a course; gain credit towards an award: a learner may gain a credit towards an award using previous certification and/or attain an Award: a learner may be awarded a Major or Minor Award on the basis of previously acquired learning for which they do not have a formal certificate”* (CEDEFOP, 2011, p7).

- Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning





The Education and Training Coordinator advises the applicant of the outcome. If the applicant is not accepted, the Education and Training Coordinator explains the rationale behind the decision and advises the applicant that they can appeal the decision if they wish. Appeals are examined and decided on by an independent examiner who investigates if correct procedures were followed.



The Education and Training Coordinator advises the tutor at the pre-course briefing if there are any RPL learners and asks the tutor to monitor and report on their progress.

Managing and Quality Assuring Work Placements

When a work placement is required, learners can complete their work placement with ECO-UNESCO if an appropriate placement is available and the resources are available to support the placement. If a work placement is in-house, we ensure that the role of tutor and workplace supervisor are clearly defined and separated. We also engage with appropriate host companies who provide placements. Generally, the learner is responsible for sourcing a placement and makes the initial contact with the host organisation to request and arrange a placement which must be approved in advance by the Work Experience tutor. If learners find it difficult to secure a suitable placement, s/he can ask the Work Experience tutor to help them. The Operations and Development manager maintains a *Work Placement Database* which lists organisations that have hosted learners which the Work Experience tutor can access.

• Quality Assuring Work Placements

The work experience tutor;

- ✓ Briefs the learners on the workplace component
- ✓ Gives the learners a copy of the *Guide to Sourcing a Work Placement* and encourages them to begin their search as soon as possible.
- ✓ Signs off and approves the placement before the learner begins the placement



When the placement is agreed, the Work Experience tutor;

- ✓ checks that the learner has been allocated a workplace supervisor by the host company.
- ✓ ensures that appropriate and adequate insurance is in place.
- ✓ checks that the company has a child safeguarding statement and child protection policies in place.
- ✓ briefs the workplace supervisor on assessing and rating the learner's performance including the learning outcomes, required placement hours and completion of the *Workplace Supervisor Report*.
- ✓ Talks through our *Guidelines for Workplace Supervisors* with the supervisor. This is



As early as possible in the placement, preferably in the first week, the tutor or Education and Training Coordinator visits the workplace and meets the learner and the workplace supervisor to ensure that the placement is progressing well. They discuss any issues arising from either side and also gather feedback.



The tutor or Education and Training Coordinator also checks-in with the learner by phone or video call during the work placement to ensure that the placement is continuing to go well. Both of these check-ins are documented on the *Work Placement Register*.



When the placement finishes, the tutor contacts the supervisor to thank them and asks them to complete the *workplace supervisor feedback form*.

Chapter Four: Staff Recruitment, Management & Development (Aligned to Core Guideline 4)

Policy Statement

The policy covers staffing from prior to appointment through to development and upskilling. We consider the quality of our staff as the single most important factor in achieving success as a teaching and learning organisation and in ensuring learner success. We aim to ensure that individual staff members are supported and encouraged to contribute to the organisation at many levels as well as to pursue their own personal and professional development. Our recruitment processes are designed to ensure that we identify and appoint the best qualified candidates who have required competence to effectively teach and support learners to a high standard. We promote the development of an effective staff team through encouragement and positive feedback, ensuring honest communications and acting quickly on any concerns and issues raised. Our approach to employment is guided by our Equality Policy which aims to promote equality of opportunity. We consider the management and development of staff to enable the continuous improvement of the learning environment and individual as critical. The policy applies to staff who are involved in the management, administration, and delivery of courses. Our ongoing staffing needs are regularly reviewed by the senior management team and the Education and Training Committee maintains oversight of academic staffing from a quality perspective.

Employee Recruitment and Induction Policy

ECO-UNESCO will;

- ✓ where a new vacancy arises in the organization, take the time to ensure effective job design in order to optimize benefit to the organization and to maximize the potential for recruiting suitable qualified and experienced candidates and review the job role and prepare a job description that accurately reflects the tasks and responsibilities involved in undertaking the role.
- ✓ ensure we are up to date on employment legislation and our contractual obligations as employers, so that all relevant laws and contracts are properly taken into account in our recruitment process.
- ✓ establish appropriate selection criteria that accurately reflect the skills, experience, qualifications and qualities you are seeking for the role.
- ✓ plan the selection process to ensure we involve appropriate people, follow effective procedures, set achievable timeframes, and make fair and consistent decisions.
- ✓ publicly advertising the position and/or internally advertising the job to an existing employee/volunteer in a way that maximises the opportunity to find the right person for the job.
- ✓ undertake an applicant assessment and/or selection process that treats all applicants fairly and clearly identifies who meets the selection criteria and recruit staff which has required experience and expertise to fill their designated roles.

- Recruitment and selection

In relation to recruitment and selection ECO-UNESCO will;

- ✓ Select candidates on the basis of Merit – ensuring the candidate with the talent, skills, competencies and experience most suited to the post is selected.
- ✓ Ensure transparency of recruitment procedures.
- ✓ Ensure the application process is open to any eligible candidate who wishes to apply.
- ✓ Develop inclusive recruitment practices that acknowledge the diversity of applicants and candidates.

- Roles and Responsibilities:

When a vacancy arises the National Director and the Operations and Development manager take responsibility for the review and development of job descriptions. The National Director and Operations and Development manager oversees the operations of the recruitment process with the Officer Manager taking responsibility for the administration process.

- Equality of Opportunity:

ECO-UNESCO is committed to equality, non-discrimination and equal access and participation apply to the employment practices and procedures. ECO-UNESCO is committed to a code of practice, which respects and encourages diversity in all areas of its work.

- Advertising

ECO-UNESCO will;

- ✓ ensure advertisements reach a range of candidates (by advertising in a variety of media for example).
- ✓ publicly advertise vacant positions in the organisation and/or internally advertising the job to an existing employee.
- ✓ Provide a job specification that specifies essential and desirable requirements, skills, knowledge, experience and competencies for the position.
- ✓ Ensure the job descriptions and advertisements do not directly or indirectly exclude any potential applicant or include any unnecessary requirements that would unfairly exclude an applicant in relation to any of the nine equality grounds
- ✓ Ensure all advertisements make reference to ECO-UNESCO's commitment to equality of opportunity.

- Application process, Short-listing and selection process

- ✓ All Candidates must complete an Application Form.
- ✓ A selection/interview will be developed in advance which can consist of but is not limited to members of management, board members and external personnel. Where and when appropriate an additional member of the panel may be allocated and will usually be a senior member of staff. Short-listing of candidates is based exclusively on the information available in a person's application.
- ✓ Internal applicants are subject to the same procedures as external candidates. Where an internal candidate is unsuccessful feedback should be given as soon as possible and areas for training and development identified which will be handled within normal staff development procedures.

- ✓ The process is documented and the outcome and the reasons for decisions about each applicant.

- Interviews

- ✓ The selection panel consults in advance to prepare and agree questions for interview, in order to ensure that the same range of topics is covered for each candidate and that these reflect the job description, person requirements and the individuals
- ✓ an agreed and objective system of rating candidates (by experience, skill, qualifications etc as relevant) is developed.
- ✓ All candidates receive the same information in advance of any selection procedure. When a short list has been compiled candidates are informed as soon as possible and provided with information regarding any exercise used as part of the selection procedure or preparation they should undertake.
- ✓ The aim of the interview is not only to pick the best candidate for the job but also to allow candidates to clarify their understanding of the nature of the job. To ensure this, questions establish whether or not the candidates fully understand the nature of and terms and conditions of the job.
- ✓ Each interviewer completes an interview record for each candidate, which is the basis for any decisions made. The original sheets and any other notes, application letters, short-listing and interview records are retained by ECO-UNESCO for a minimum of 13 months.

- Successful Candidates/References/Vetting

- ✓ Successful candidates are informed as soon as possible. A firm offer is not made until essential material such as references have been received.
- ✓ References for successful candidates are obtained, one of which is either a current or immediate past employer. This is done after the interview. All offers (verbal/letter) are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. References are verified by telephone and/or in writing by management.
- ✓ Unsuccessful as well as successful candidates are notified as soon as possible afterward the interview panel's decision is finalised. Successful candidates are given a conditional offer, subject to references.
- ✓ New relevant employees depending on the nature of their role may have to be Garda vetted and will be required to complete a Garda Vetting form. Garda Vetting is conducted in respect of any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons. Garda vetting can only be conducted on the written consent of the candidate being vetted
- ✓ Appropriate referee, qualification, police or other checks on prospective employees or volunteers are undertaken

- Recruitment Of Tutors

When a vacancy for a tutor arises, the National Director reviews the role description and updates it if necessary. The role description details the role and responsibilities and the requirements in terms of qualifications, skills and experience as set out in the course-specific statement of required qualifications.

Statement of Required Qualifications for tutors

It is tutors' responsibility to submit copies of all relevant, current award certificates and evidence of their pedagogical and professional qualifications and update them if there are changes.

Tutors must be capable of delivering the course specified in the relevant Course Descriptor and must have appropriate technical and pedagogical qualifications.

For example;

- ✓ Third-level qualification in the subject matter area (minimum Level 8 on the NFQ or equivalent)
- ✓ Minimum of two years' experience delivering training
- ✓ A minimum of two years working in the subject field/ relevant occupational experience

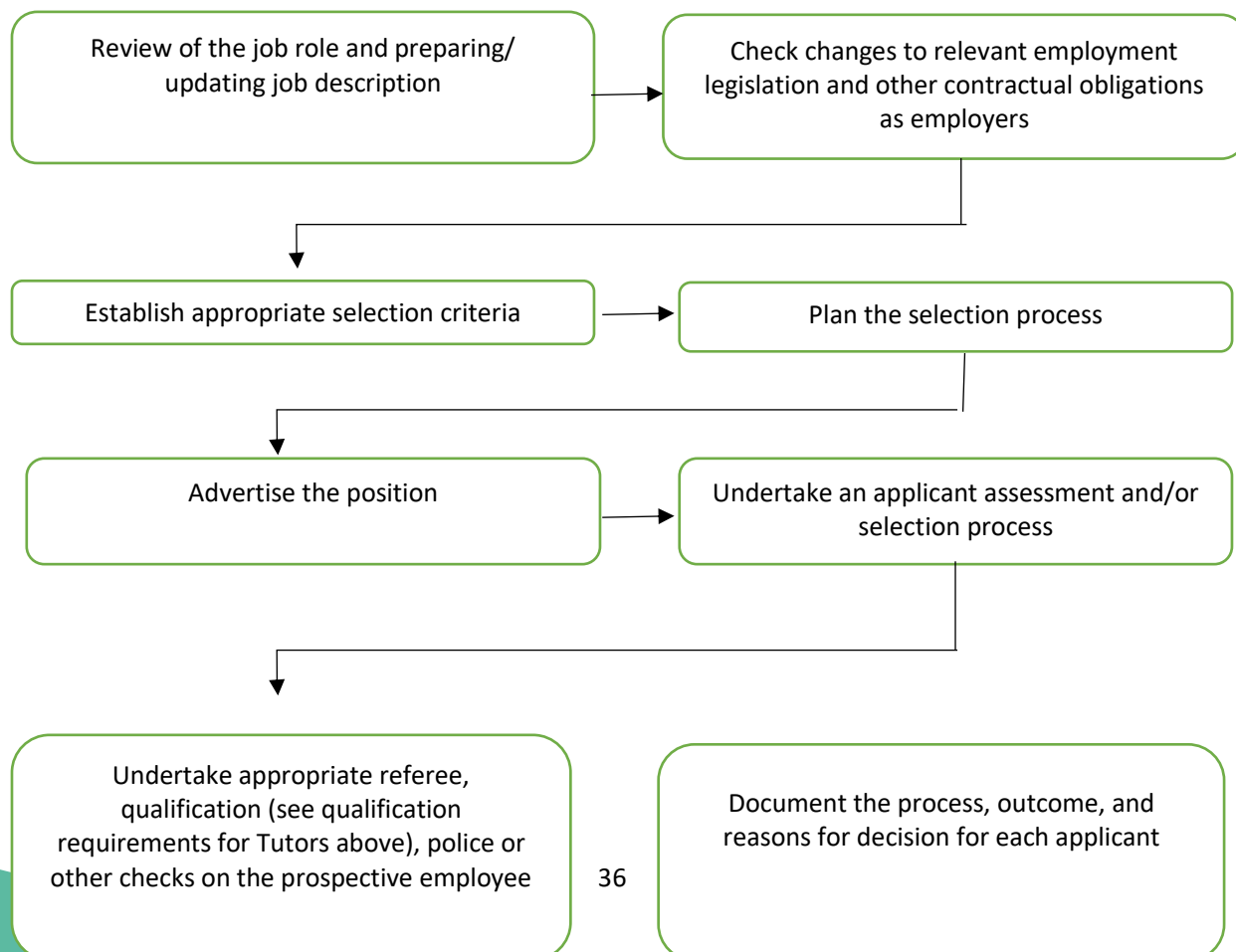
Tutors must;

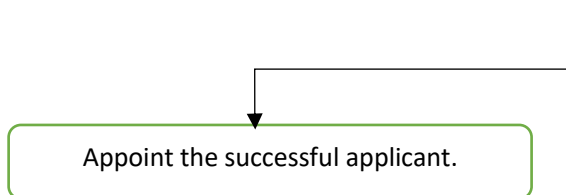
- ✓ Be Garda vetted.
- ✓ Have a recognised training qualification (minimum Level 6 on the NFQ or equivalent)
- ✓ Have excellent facilitation, presentation, interpersonal and communication skills.
- ✓ Be willing to engage in upskilling and CPD activities including safeguarding training in line with our Child Protection Policy.

When a vacancy for a tutor arises, the Education and Training Coordinator with the Operations and Development manager draws up a role description detailing the role and responsibilities of the position, the requirements in terms of qualifications, skills and experience as set out in the course-specific statement of required qualifications, and terms and conditions.

Tutors who work with/have access to learners aged 18 or under or vulnerable adults must be Garda vetted and undergo safeguarding training in line with our Child Protection Policy

• Summary of Recruitment Process





- **Appointment Letter**

Once a candidate is selected and cleared all the post-interview verification, he/she is eligible to receive an offer of employment that details all the aspects of the job.

The main aspects would include-

- ✓ Name of the candidate
- ✓ Designation offered
- ✓ Commencement of employment date
- ✓ End of employment date
- ✓ Contract duration
- ✓ Salary offered
- ✓ Terms and conditions of employment

The offer letter is then signed by the concerned authority in the Organisation and issued to the selected candidate. If the candidate is happy to accept the offer, then he/she is expected to return a copy of the signed offer letter as an acknowledgement of acceptance.

The candidate would then resign from his/her current services and serve the notice period as agreed with their Line Manager in their current employment.

- **Staff Induction**

All new staff members are inducted. This includes:

- ✓ Organization orientation
- ✓ Individual responsibilities
- ✓ Health and Safety Responsibilities
- ✓ Child Protection Responsibilities
- ✓ Policies and procedures
- ✓ Introduction to work colleagues
- ✓ Contextual information
- ✓ Any other information deemed appropriate

All staff who have received induction training must sign a completed Induction Training Form.

All new staff are given

- ✓ a copy of the Staff handbook

- ✓ a copy of the Health and Safety Policy
- ✓ a copy of the Child Protection Policy Guidelines
- ✓ a copy of the Data Protection Policy

- Communications

Tutors are provided with an ECO-UNESCO email address, a Teams account and a mobile phone (where necessary). Tutors are required to check their work-emails twice a week at a minimum when delivering a course. Tutors must never use their personal phone, email or social media to communicate.

- Probation

There is a probationary period of 6 months for all new staff members. During probation there should be dialogue between the Manager and the Employee with regard to performance, conduct, attendance and any other issues impacting on the new Employee's ability to settle into the role and the Organisation. Issues may also be addressed formally by way of probation review meeting(s).

Where an Employee successfully completes probation, this will be confirmed to them by their Manager.

Where there are issues which affect an Employee's ability to successfully complete probation, then probation may be extended at the discretion of Management.

Where there are serious misgivings with an Employee's fit in the Organisation or their role, then the employment relationship may be terminated at the end of the probation period.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to terminate employment during probation, due to the nature of the issue(s) arising. Dismissal may arise without application of the full disciplinary process during probation.

Supports for Tutors

- Tutor Induction

The Education and Training Coordinator inducts new tutors before they begin delivery. The tutor is given and expected to have read the tutor handbook before the induction meeting. The induction is based on the following checklist;

- ✓ ECO-UNESCO's accredited courses
- ✓ The QA system and the tutor's responsibilities in implementing it
- ✓ QQI and the NFQ
- ✓ The course context
- ✓ Tutor role and responsibilities
- ✓ The ECO-Academy
- ✓ The tutor handbook
- ✓ Use of SharePoint and Microsoft Teams
- ✓ Diversity and reasonable accommodation

All tutors are inducted. The induction includes information on;

- ✓ Reasonable accommodation and Compassionate Consideration

- ✓ Dealing with incidents of academic misconduct
- ✓ Introduction to work colleagues (as appropriate)
- ✓ Dealing with academic misconduct
- ✓ Learner induction and handbook
- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Marking and Grading

- Pre- and Post-Course Briefings

The Education and Training Coordinator meets the tutor for a pre and post course briefing

The pre-course briefing covers;

- ✓ The start dates, times and location of the sessions.
- ✓ Learner profiles
- ✓ The course aims and learning outcomes*
- ✓ The session plans and materials available*
- ✓ The assessment strategy
- ✓ The *assessment schedule**
- ✓ The *assessment portfolio checklist**
- ✓ The *assessment briefs, individual marking sheets and summary marking sheets**
- ✓ The arrangements for reasonable accommodation.
- ✓ RPL applicants

*Copies of these documents are available on the [QQI SharePoint folder](#).

The post-course briefing covers;

- ✓ Tutor feedback
- ✓ Recommendations for future iterations

- Tutor Handbook

The tutor handbook is made available to tutors on SharePoint before induction and supplements the [ECO-UNESCO Staff Handbook](#) which is given to new staff during their ECO-UNESCO Induction.

The tutor handbook is divided into two sections;

Part A

- ✓ Overview of the Handbook
- ✓ QQI and the NFQ
- ✓ Who to Contact in ECO-UNESCO
- ✓ ECO UNESCO's Commitment to Tutors
- ✓ Tutor Responsibilities
- ✓ Equal Opportunities
- ✓ Health, Safety and Welfare
- ✓ Tutor Supports
- ✓ ECO-Academy
- ✓ ECO-UNESCO's Quality Assurance System
- ✓ Transfer and Progression

- ✓ Tutors Supporting Learners
- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Course Evaluation
- ✓ Course Ownership

Part B

- ✓ Course Overview
- ✓ Learning Outcomes
- ✓ Assessment Brief
- ✓ Feedback links
- ✓ Templates
- ✓ Guidelines
- Administrative Support

Our tutors are supported throughout their delivery by the Education and Training Coordinator. We assist tutors in the successful delivery of content and encourage a practice of continuous improvement supported by learner and tutor feedback.

Tutor CPD

We are committed to the continuous professional development of our tutors. The Education and Training Coordinator actions tutor development based on learner/tutor feedback and tutor requests. We maintain a record of training and development activities undertaken by tutors.

Tools utilised for tutor CPD include, but are not limited to;

- ✓ Staff meetings and training sessions
- ✓ Peer observations
- ✓ Micro-teach demonstrations
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Attendance at conferences and seminars

We also encourage our team to network with peers in other organisations and form communities of practice.

Quality Assuring and Managing Tutor Performance

We use a variety of methods to quality assure and manage tutor performance. The Education and Trainer Coordinator and Operations and Development manager monitor the below to note emerging trends, identify CPD needs, evaluate tutor performance and inform staff reviews (detailed below).

- ✓ Feedback from Internal Verification and External Authentication
- ✓ Learner attendance
- ✓ Tutor feedback
- ✓ Learner feedback
- ✓ The appeals and complaints register
- ✓ Assessment results

- Performance Reviews

We review the performance of all staff and tutors on an annual basis. The aims of these reviews are to;

- ✓ Help an employee to improve performance, establish training needs and recognise potential.
- ✓ To provide for giving feedback on performance, to set targets and to prepare a training plan for the coming year.

The objectives of the review are to:

- ✓ Carry out an appraisal of the year's work based on job description/work competencies
- ✓ Provide a forum in which to discuss with individual employees how they are progressing and to acknowledge work well done and to suggest changes in attitude, skills or job knowledge.
- ✓ Ascertain an employee's view on how he/she perceives his/her role in the company.
- ✓ Set down an outline plan of work for the coming year.
- ✓ Update the Job Description if appropriate and ascertain training needs and agree a plan based on these.

Contingency Planning

If a tutor needs to be replaced at short notice (e.g., due to illness or a family emergency), the Education and Training Coordinator arranges for a replacement from our existing pool of tutors or, if necessary and practical, covers the session herself. Our tutors follow session plans which enable a replacement tutor to pick up seamlessly and avoid learners being disadvantaged. The replacement tutor updates the regular tutor with regard to;

- ✓ content covered (including any change in activities)
- ✓ Portfolio work completed (if applicable)
- ✓ Learners present/absent
- ✓ Overall level of engagement/participation in activities.

If a replacement tutor is not available, we reschedule the session for a later date and let the learners know immediately.

Chapter Five: Teaching and Learning (Aligned to core Guidelines 5 & 7)

Policy Statement

At ECO-UNESCO, we believe that education is for everyone, and that people everywhere have a part to play in protecting the environment and helping to create a sustainable planet. To support this, we strive for excellence in teaching and learning through the continuous professional development of our tutors and by placing our learners' needs at the heart of all we do.

We encourage the development of core competencies in our programmes encouraging critical thinking, systems thinking, futures thinking, communications and team building skills. We utilize formal and non-formal learning approaches to deliver and, alongside preparation for assessment, our teaching and learning strategies are designed to develop leadership skills, confidence, self-belief, and self-esteem. We believe that teaching and learning is not only an opportunity for learners to gain knowledge, skills, and qualifications, but also an opportunity for them to be engaged, inspired, and empowered, in line with our organisational objectives. It is important that our learners are able to use the knowledge, skills, and confidence they acquire to protect the natural environment and help to create a sustainable planet.

Our equality policy clearly sets out our commitment to providing high quality services in an inclusive, accessible, and flexible manner. We seek to support all learners to the best of our ability whatever their specific needs and celebrate diversity. We endeavour to address all learning styles and types of intelligence in our delivery and promote an inclusive learning environment. Our tutors are briefed on the importance of promoting diversity in the images, videos or example situations they use.

Responsibility

- The Education and Training Committee maintains oversight of teaching and learning strategies, the quality of the learning experience, the teaching and learning environment and the adequacy of learner supports.
- The Education and Training Coordinator and Operations and Development manager are responsible for ensuring that learning resources including session plans, curriculum content, assessment strategies and reading and resource lists are updated and expanded as necessary.
- The tutors are responsible for implementing teaching and learning strategies in line with our documented strategy.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

We use a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners and promote inclusive learning. The strategies we use have direct relevance and application to our mission and objectives. We plan sessions and design activities that allow learners to consolidate the content covered and think critically about how what they learn in sessions can help to protect the natural environment and create a sustainable planet.

Our learners are aged between 14-24. Therefore, our tutors must deliver using both andragogical and pedagogical approaches and utilise varied strategies to develop knowledge, skills, and confidence, and to make the learning experience interesting and engaging.

The teaching and learning strategies used by our tutors include (but are not limited to)

✓ Cooperative learning

We utilize small group tasks and activities in our sessions as much as possible in order for our learners to learn from each other and develop the soft skills of teamwork and communication. Cooperative learning may take the form of completing a task, participating in a discussion, brainstorming, problem solving and project work.

✓ Experiential Learning

Whenever possible, we facilitate our learners in participating in hands-on tasks such as conducting a survey, becoming involved in a community project or growing vegetables. We believe that this engages our learners more in the subject of their learning and strengthens the connection between what they are studying and how it can be used outside the classroom.

✓ Reflective Learning

Tutors encourage our learners to reflect and review tasks and to evaluate their progress and encourage an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as learners.

Learning Environment

We recognize that the quality of the learning environment has a significant influence on the success of teaching and learning and we work hard to ensure that both our in-person and online learning environments are safe, comfortable, welcoming and conducive to learning. The specifics of the resources, premises and equipment required for a course are identified at the course design stage and are detailed in our course descriptors. The quality of the learning environments is monitored and managed by the Operations and Development manager with input from the Education and Training Coordinator and tutors, who advise the Operations and Development manager on any concerns about the learning environments.

Our courses are currently delivered either in person in our Education and Youth Space at the ECO-UNESCO head office, in person at an Off-Site Training Venue or online using the secure platform Microsoft Teams.

- Onsite Training Facilities: The Oak Room and The River Room

Our onsite facilities comply with all fire, health, and safety regulations and has been risk assessed and are easily accessible by public transport.

The Education and Youth spaces contain;

- ✓ Flexible desk arrangements
- ✓ A whiteboard and markers
- ✓ A projector, speaker and cables
- ✓ Flip charts
- ✓ Plug ports and extension leads
- ✓ Comfortable chairs
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ A First Aid kit
- ✓ An air filtration system
- ✓ A fully equipped toilet and kitchenette

Learners also have access to iPad, Wi-Fi, study space, and learning materials in both rooms.

- **Quality Assuring Off-Site Training Venues**

If we are considering using an off-site training venue, we first ensure that the venue is suitable for the course and the learners and meet our standards for health, safety and welfare of learners and accessibility. The Operations and Development manager or Education and Training Coordinator benchmarks the facility against our requirements as set out in the *Training Venue Checklist* and we do not begin delivery until we have approved the venue. If any modifications or changes are needed, they must be fully implemented before the course begins and there must be a named person onsite to act as contact person us. We have questions on our learner and tutor feedback forms about the quality of the training venue and the facilities provided.

IT Infrastructure

- **Microsoft Teams**

We utilize the secure platform Microsoft Teams to deliver synchronous remote sessions.

- **Google Jamboard or Mural**

We use Jamboard and Mural, a digital interactive whiteboard. The tutor shares their screen with the learners who use the link to the to post thoughts, brainstorm ideas and visually contribute their thoughts to discussions.

- **The ECO-Academy**

The ECO-Academy, our LMS and online e-learning hub, gives learners electronic access to all materials used in class, their learner handbook, assignment brief and the course descriptor. Learners also complete their Academic Integrity Training through the ECO-Academy.

Learner Supports

We are committed to providing a supportive environment for our learners. Ensuring our learners feel valued, empowered and confident offers them the best chance of success in their learning journey.

- **Learner Induction**

The tutor inducts the learners at the beginning of the course using our standard induction presentation giving them an overview of ECO-UNESCO and an introduction to their course, the topics they will study, how they will be assessed, the learner handbook, and signposting them to support staff and external organisations.

- **Learner Handbook**

The learner handbook covers details of the course the learners are studying, how it is assessed and the various policies and procedures which directly impact the learners. The learner handbook includes;

Part A

- ✓ Welcome to ECO UNESCO

- ✓ Who to contact at ECO UNESCO
- ✓ QQI and the NFQ
- ✓ Learner Charter
- ✓ Complaints
- ✓ Learner Supports
- ✓ Induction
- ✓ The ECO-Academy
- ✓ Reasonable Accommodation
- ✓ Pastoral Care
- ✓ Feedback on your work
- ✓ Transfer and Progression
- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Academic Integrity
- ✓ Presentation and Submission of Assignments
- ✓ Assessment Results
- ✓ Repeating Assessments
- ✓ Appeals
- ✓ Your Feedback

Part B

- ✓ Overview of your course
- ✓ Certification
- ✓ Learning Outcomes
- ✓ Assessment Brief

- **Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation is the adaptation of training delivery as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the training would otherwise be unfair. In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation.

We ask learners if they have specific learning needs when they apply for a place on a course and there is a question on the application form asking applicants if they have any special requirements/ need additional supports. These could include, but are not limited to;

- ✓ Restricted mobility
- ✓ Neurological conditions
- ✓ Visual or auditory impairment
- ✓ Mental Health conditions
- ✓ Chronic illness

The Education and Training Coordinator makes the tutor aware and discuss any adjustments which should be made during delivery with the learner's input (or their parent/guardian if appropriate). These could include, but are not limited to;

- ✓ Printing handouts on different coloured paper or using a larger font.

- ✓ Seating the learner in a more accessible location
- ✓ Permitting the learner to use a fidget or stress ball in class.
- ✓ Adjusting games, activities and assessment requiring movement.
- ✓ Use of a scribe or reader
- ✓ Oral (as an alternative to written) assignments.

If the tutor thinks a learner is struggling during the course, s/he discusses the issue with the learner privately and/or brings it to the attention of the Education and Training Coordinator who supports the tutor in putting appropriate supports in place.

If we cannot facilitate the learner, the Education and Training Coordinator contacts the learner and explains why. If the learner is not satisfied with the decision, they can appeal it in writing to the Operations and Development manager within three working days of the decision. There must be substantive grounds for the appeal.

The Operations and Development manager asks the Chair of the Education and Training Committee to review the request and the decision and come to a decision on the appeal. This decision is final.

The Education and Training Coordinator notifies the learner of the outcome of the appeal in writing.

The Education and Training Coordinator makes the external authenticator aware of any reasonable accommodation provided in the internal verification report. She also retains a record of requests and accommodations provided and correspondence with applicants paying particular attention to the sensitive nature of the data.

- One-to-One Support

Tutors and staff are available to offer advice and assistance when learners request support, this is highlighted in the learner handbook and induction. We also offer individual and group tutorials when learners need additional support.

- Pastoral Care

We support learners' general wellbeing by encouraging them to speak to their tutor if they need to talk, and signpost them to external support organisations e.g. Childline, Jigsaw, Pieta House and Belong To when appropriate. We use posters in our youth space to highlight these supports.

- Supports for Learners who have English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL)

If we have any concerns about a learner's level of English, the Education and Training Coordinator, carries out an assessment when they apply. If the learner does not have a sufficient standard of English for entry, she directs them to an appropriate support agency e.g., CDETB or NALA and encourages them to reapply when they have the required level of English.

To support ESOL learners on our courses, we;

- ✓ Explain clearly what supports are available at induction and in the learner handbook.
- ✓ Use plain language during delivery and in our learner handbook, assignment briefs and other learner documentation.
- ✓ Use visuals as much as possible during delivery.
- ✓ Permit the use of dictionaries or online translators in class when necessary.

The Education and Training Coordinator supports and guides our tutors on how to support ESOL learners.

The tutor monitors the progress of ESOL learners carefully throughout the course and if s/he thinks a learner is struggling for any reason including language, discusses the issue with the learner privately and/or brings it to the attention of the Education and Training Coordinator. We offer individual and group tutorials when learners need additional support (page 45 of the QA manual Chapter Five: Teaching and Learning Learner Supports).

Learner Complaints

ECO-UNESCO treats every complaint seriously. All complaints are treated with the utmost confidentiality, however, complaints which fall under a statutory requirement (e.g. safeguarding) may require the disclosure of some or all details to a third party e.g. Tusla. All complaints are reviewed in a consistent manner and resolved fairly to the complainant's satisfaction as far as this is possible.

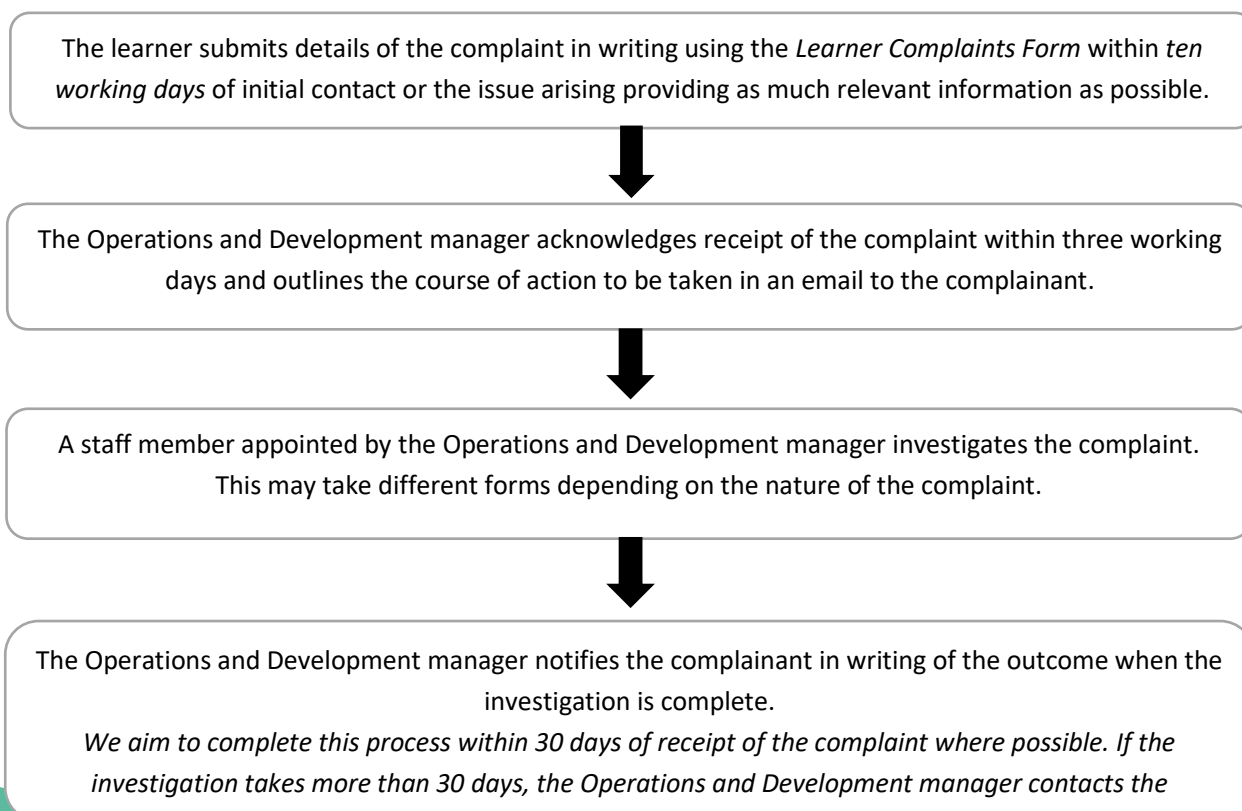
The complaints procedure comprises two stages;

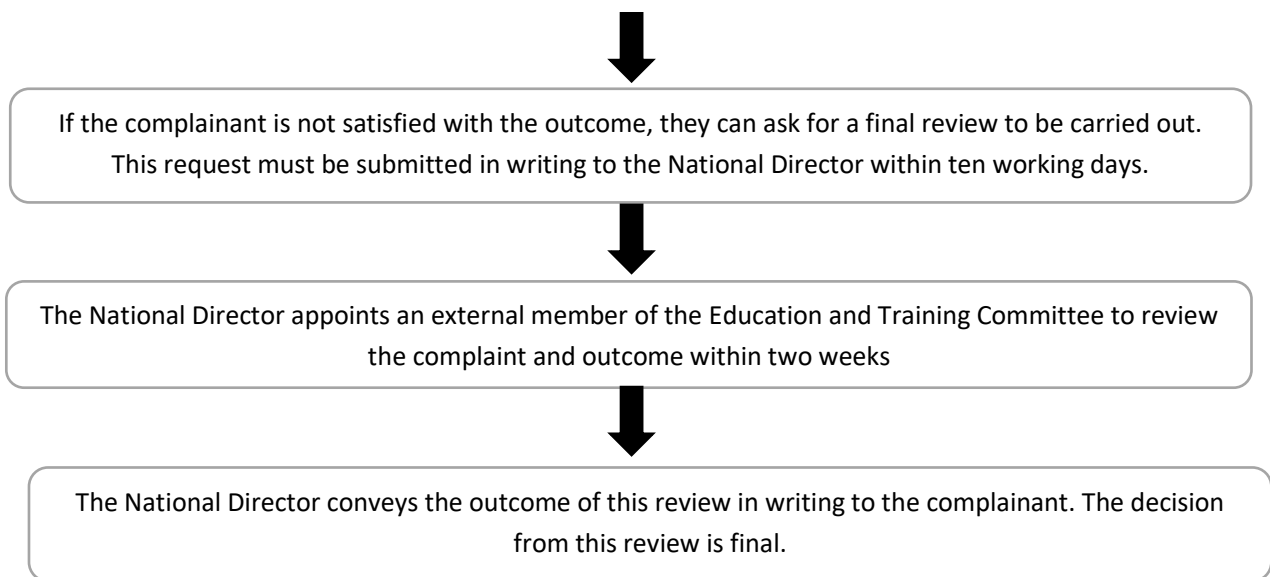
Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

A learner can make a complaint informally to any member of staff, who will discuss the issue with the learner and attempt to agree on a solution. Learners should allow the staff member sufficient time to investigate or remedy the issue on the understanding that the staff member will do so as soon as possible.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the complaint is not resolved informally to the satisfaction of the learner, or if the learner feels that they cannot make an informal complaint, the learner can make a formal complaint by following the procedure below.





The complaints procedure is available on our website at [Complaints-procedure-V10622.pdf](#) (ecounesco.ie).

Chapter Six: Assessment of Learners (Aligned to Core Guideline 6)

Policy Statement

It is our policy to assess our learners fairly, consistently, appropriately, and in a manner which is well-understood by our staff and learners. Our assessment methods are underpinned by our organisational objectives, and we promote the use of learner-centred assessment across our courses. We provide detailed information to learners on how and when they will be assessed, and clear, timely feedback in a supportive, encouraging, informative and respectful manner.

We use formative assessment, in addition to summative assessments, throughout the course in order to monitor and support our learners' progress.

We have systems in place to protect the integrity of assessment documentation and materials, assessment evidence, assessment results and records. Assessment evidence is securely stored, internally verified, and externally authenticated by appropriately qualified individuals.

We develop and agree our assessment policies, processes, and procedures with QQI and regularly review and update them. The course design team devises assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria when developing the course while the Education and Training Coordinator ensures all documentation and templates are up to date and fit for purpose.

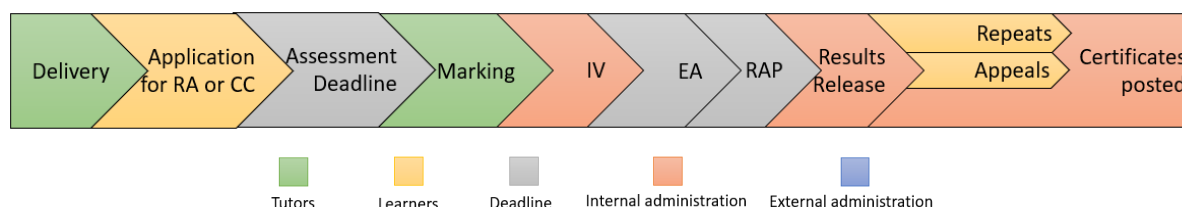
Our assessment policy and procedures are designed to be consistent with QQI's assessment policy and to meet the requirements of the following QQI guidelines.

- ✓ *Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers 2013 Revised 2018*
- ✓ *FETAC Guidelines for Internal Verification*
- ✓ *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for External Authenticators*

Responsibilities

- The Results Approval Panel maintains oversight of our assessment processes, approves results and makes recommendations for corrective action to the Education and Training Committee.
- The Education and Training Coordinator is responsible for coordinating assessment.
- The tutors mark and grade the assessments and are responsible for ensuring all assessment activities are carried out as set out in the course descriptors.

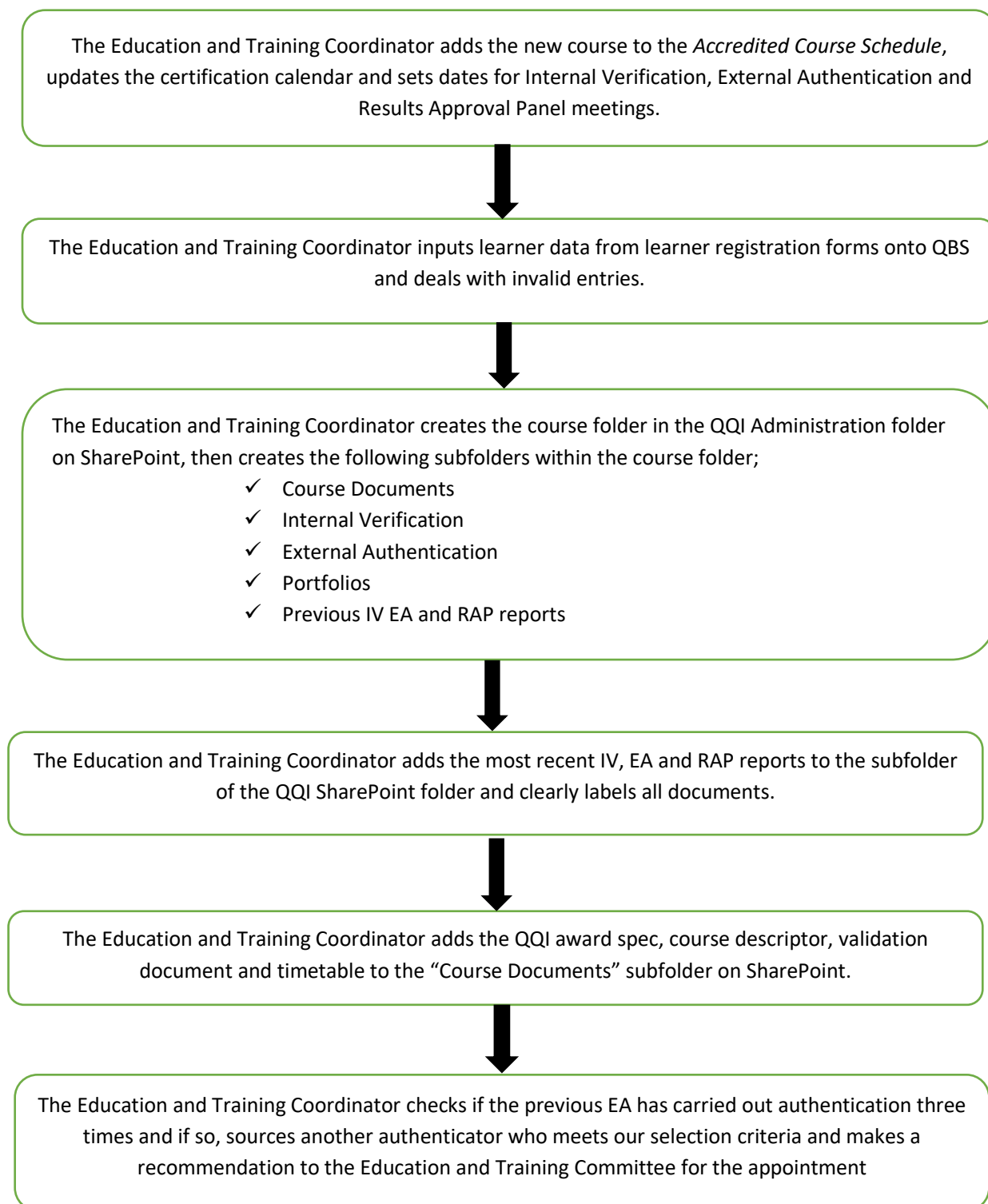
Overview of Assessment Process



Assessment Planning and Design

The Course Design Team consider all aspects of assessment and set out a comprehensive assessment strategy at the design stage, which is subsequently agreed with QQI as part of the validation process. The assessment strategy contains detail on how formative and summative assessment and feedback is provided, assignment briefs, and marking schemes based on the award specification. The strategy also

contains the course and learner profile and resources required for assessment. The detail of this assessment strategy is set out clearly in the course descriptor. We plan for assessment before a course begins to ensure each step of the assessment process takes place seamlessly. The below steps are carried out as close to the start of delivery as possible.





The Education and Training Coordinator sources EA/references/CVs etc, issues the EA contract and arranges for the signing of the contract.

Information to Learners on Assessment

We make assessment information and an assessment timetable available to learners in the learner handbook and at induction. The learner handbook includes assessment briefs and a set of instructions and assessment criteria for each piece of assessment, and submission procedures. The briefs are based on the assessment strategy validated by QQI and are designed using a standard template.

Assignments are submitted securely and electronically [via the ECO-Academy, email or Microsoft Forms] and must be submitted by the date on the brief unless an extension has been granted. Each submission must be accompanied by the *learner declaration* signed by the learner which is included as part of the academic integrity training.

The learner handbook also includes;

- ✓ An overview of Academic Integrity
- ✓ Appeals
- ✓ Reasonable Accommodation in the context of assessment
- ✓ Compassionate Consideration

Learners are also required to complete our Academic Integrity Training on the ECO-Academy on the first day of their course.

Information to Tutors on Assessment

The Education and Training Coordinator meets the tutor for a pre-course briefing where they discuss the assessment strategy, formative and summative feedback, the assessment schedule, the submission of assessment portfolios, assessment briefs, individual and summary marking sheets, and arrangements for reasonable accommodation.

Tutors must also be familiar with the *QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers V2 2018* on which the design of our QA procedures is based and with this chapter of the QA manual.

There are resources to support assessment in the QQI folder on SharePoint and information and guidelines on assessment in the Tutor Handbook.

Compassionate Consideration

- Policy

We recognize that occasionally learners may experience circumstances outside of their control which impacts their performance or ability to complete/participate in assessment. We encourage these learners to apply for Compassionate Consideration following the procedure detailed below.

Examples of such personal circumstances include, but are not limited to;

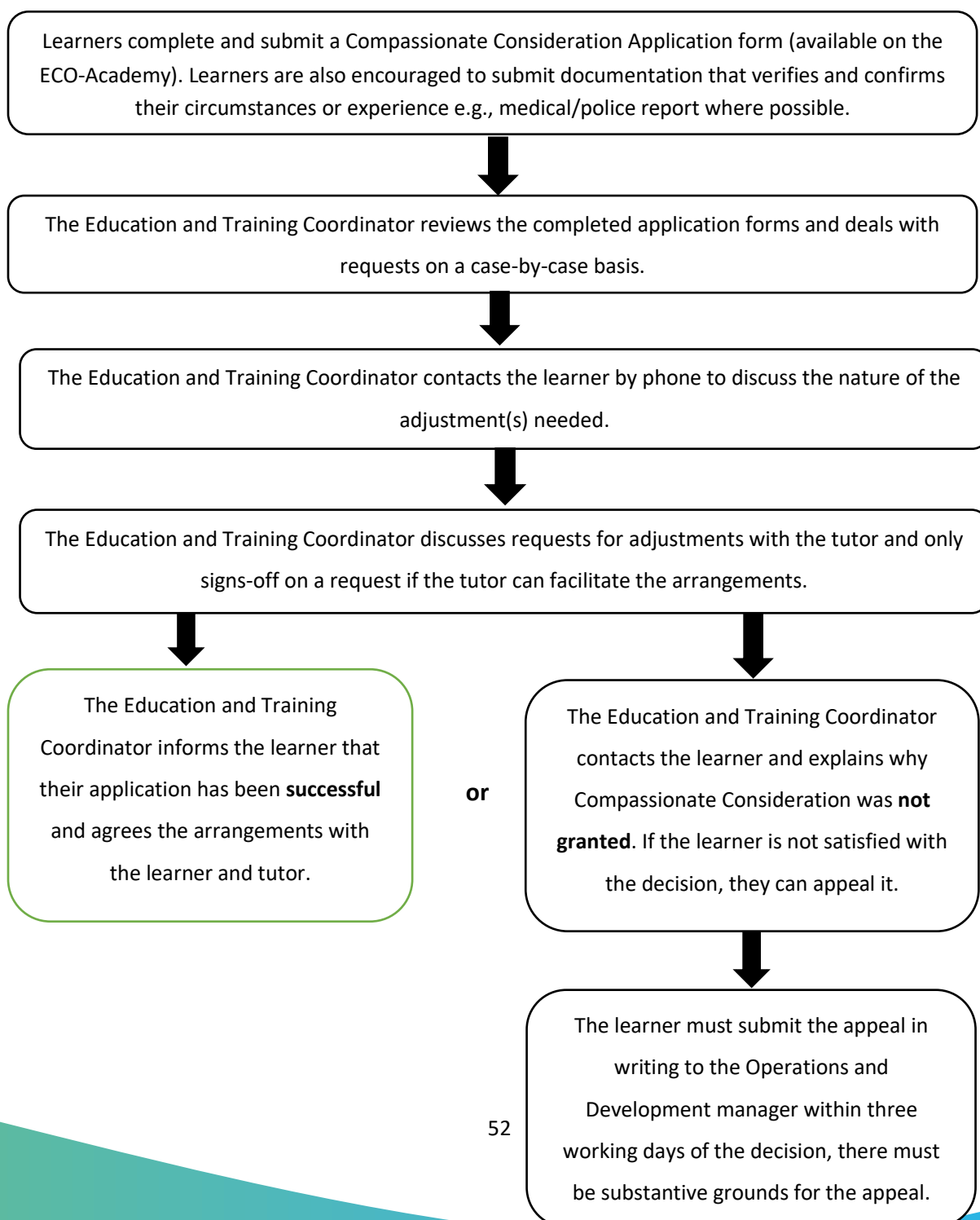
- ✓ Illness (both physical and emotional)
- ✓ The severe illness or death of a close family member
- ✓ A difficult personal experience (such as being the victim of a crime)

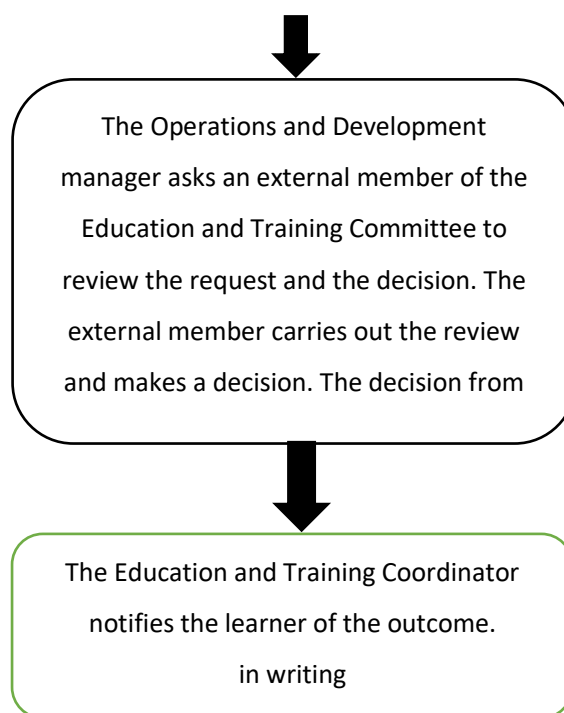
*Generally speaking, these circumstances must have occurred within **3 weeks** of an assessment deadline.*

Examples of the adaptations we can provide include, but are not limited to;

- ✓ An extension to an assessment deadline
- ✓ The opportunity to resubmit an assignment

• Procedure for Application Compassionate Consideration





If the learner's application for Compassionate Consideration (or appeal) has been approved, the Education and Training Coordinator records details of any compassionate consideration arrangements provided in the internal verification report and makes the external authenticator aware of any provided.

Reference Documents

- ✓ [*Teaching and Learning Making learning accessible for learners with disabilities in further education \(Ahead publication\)*](#)
- ✓ [*A Conceptual Framework of Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) for the Irish Further Education and Training Sector*](#)

Security of Assessment

The Education and Training Coordinator and tutor are responsible for secure storage (hard copy and electronic) of assessment documentation etc on SharePoint or in a locked cabinet, granting access on a needs-only basis.

The Education and Training Coordinator;

- ✓ records the outcomes of assessment and adds details of assessment submission and results for each learner to their learner record which is maintained electronically under course name and number.
- ✓ uploads results data to the QBS at the earliest available time

Copies of the assessment brief are printed only when they are needed.

Tutors are responsible for the security of assessment related materials while in their possession and must report any breaches to the Education and Training Coordinator as a matter of urgency.

Our procedure for dealing with breaches of academic standards is highlighted at induction and in the handbooks and there is a copy on ECO-Academy.

Learners submit their assignments securely and electronically [via the ECO-Academy, email or Microsoft Forms]. Tutors then upload the marked assignments to the relevant SharePoint folder for Internal Verification.

Academic Integrity

We expect and encourage high standards of academic integrity; that tutors and learners act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Breaching academic integrity is academic misconduct. Academic misconduct is any action which gains, attempts to gain, or assists others in gaining or attempting to gain an unfair academic advantage in assessment.

We are committed to ensuring that the qualifications our learners receive are an accurate reflection of their work, and that their portfolios are true evidence of the knowledge and skills that they have attained during our courses, and we take breaches of academic integrity seriously.

Through this document we endeavour to;

- ✓ Educate and inform learners and tutor in what constitutes academic misconduct and the steps that are taken in there is a suspected breach.
- ✓ Ensure a consistent approach to dealing with breaches/suspected breaches.
- ✓ Promote a culture of academic integrity and best practice.

Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to;

Plagiarism: presenting someone else's thoughts or work as your own and can include:

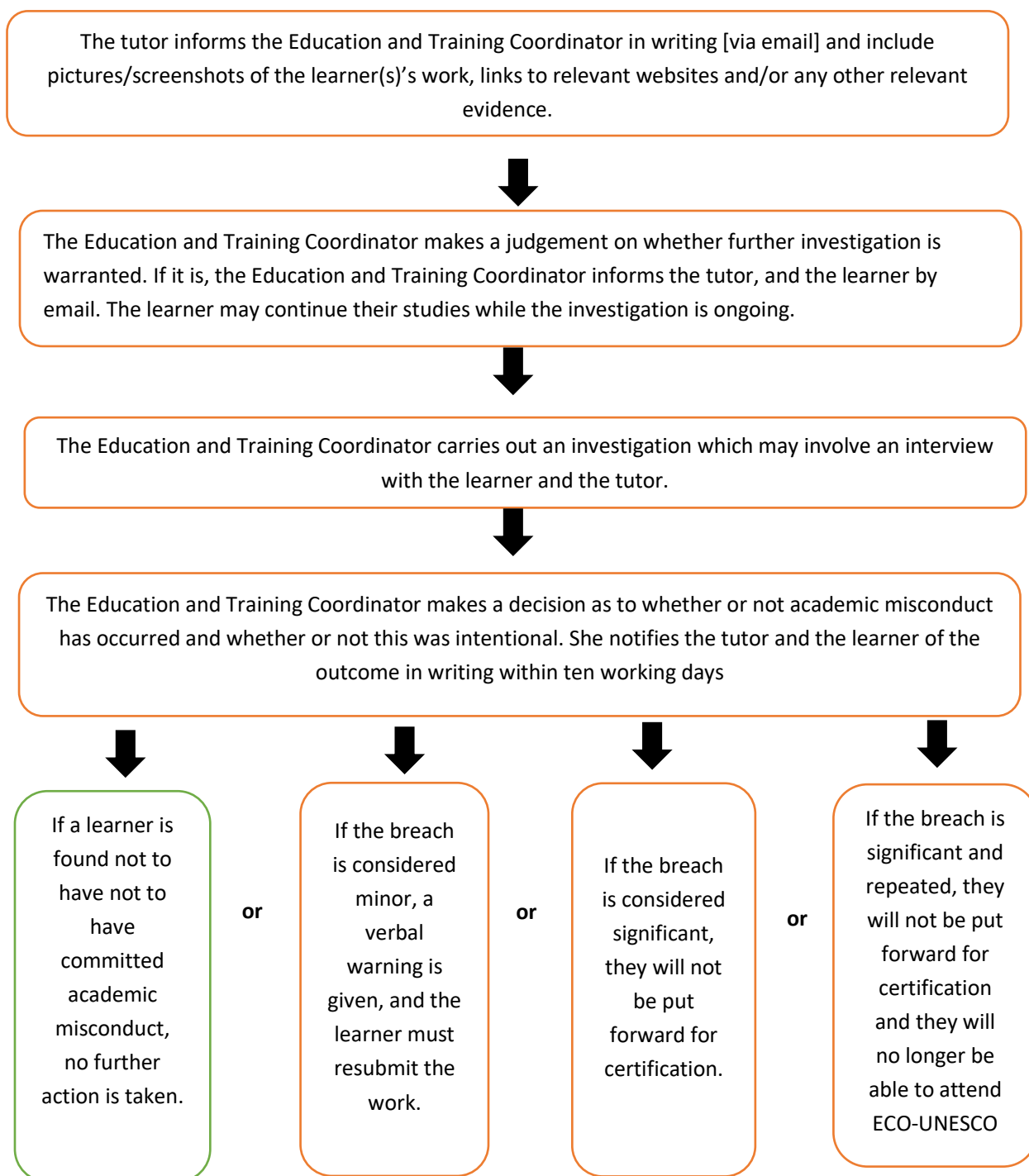
- ✓ Copying from a website.
- ✓ Copying a classmate's work.
- ✓ Copying notes from a tutor's PowerPoint or notes.
- ✓ Self-plagiarising by re-submitting the same piece of work for assessment.
- ✓ Failure to credit the original author.
- ✓ Submitting collaborative work as your own.

Collusion: two or more learners working on a piece of work which will be submitted for individual assessment.

Contract cheating: paying a third party to complete a piece of assessed work.

- Dealing With Suspected Academic Misconduct

If a tutor suspects that a learner has committed academic misconduct, the steps below are followed;



A learner can appeal the decision to the Education and Training Coordinator who refers it to an external member of the Education and Training Committee who has relevant expertise. S/he investigates the case and informs the Education and Training Coordinator of the outcome. The Education and Training Coordinator then informs the learner, and this decision is final.

Marking and Grading

The tutors assess the learners and mark the assessment evidence using the assessment criteria and marking schemes provided. Detailed *marking schemes*, based on the validation document, show clearly how assessment evidence is to be marked and graded. These are reviewed and updated, if required, as part of course reviews.

The Education and Training Coordinator;

- ✓ Monitors the standards of marking and grading, which is addressed at tutor induction and in the tutor handbook.
- ✓ Comments on the standards of marking and grading in the *internal verification report* and highlights any concerns or inconsistencies.
- ✓ Asks the external authenticator to comment on the consistency of marking and grading and record any observations in their report. If there are any concerns, they are discussed at the Results Approval Panel meeting and a decision made with regard to corrective action which the Education and Training Coordinator monitors.

Internal Verification

We carry out our internal verification in line with QQI guidelines set out in the *Quality Assurance Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013 (pages 24 and 25)*.

Tutors submit the assessment portfolios as per the *assessment portfolio checklist* to the Administration folder on SharePoint within ten working days of the completion of the course (unless there is an agreed extension to the date).

The Education and Training Coordinator;

- ✓ reviews/updates the implementation of *RAP report* recommendations from the previous certification
- ✓ reviews chapter 6 of the QA manual, the previous internal verification, and external authentication reports
- ✓ benchmarks the portfolios against the *assessment portfolio checklist* and returns incomplete portfolios to tutors and agrees a revised date for submission.
- ✓ gives the tutors notice of internal verification and external authentication and asks them to be available to answer questions if necessary.
- ✓ checks that our assessment procedures have been applied consistently across assessment activities.
- ✓ verifies the accuracy of assessment results.
- ✓ checks that our assessment procedures have been adhered to.
- ✓ produces the internal verification report.
- ✓ checks that;
 - All documentation is available and completed correctly.
 - Results are recorded and evidence is available for learners based on the sampling strategy detailed below.
 - Marks totalled on summary marking sheets and transferred to individual candidate marking sheets etc.

- The assessment evidence generated in accordance with appropriate assessment techniques and instruments.
- There is sufficient and reliable assessment evidence available for the appropriate sample of learners.
- ✓ Inputs the provisional results on QBS.

External Authentication

We arrange for the authentication of assessment by a suitably qualified independent person as part of the quality assurance of assessment.

The authenticator we use must;

- ✓ Have general subject matter expertise.
- ✓ Be competent to confirm that we are implementing our quality assurance policies and procedures.
- ✓ Understand and appreciate our context, approach and learner profile.
- ✓ Have experience of external authentication and/or external examining.
- ✓ Be independent of ECO-UNESCO, our programmes and tutors.

We rotate the use of authenticators and do not contract the services of the same authenticator for more than three consecutive certification periods.

The Education and Training Coordinator;

- ✓ Agrees arrangements with the External Authenticator (EA) and invites them to attend the RAP meeting.
- ✓ Issues a contract IV report, *EA Report Template* and sampling strategy to the EA in advance of visit.
- ✓ Checks that all folders, documentation and assessment evidence are ready for the EA.
- ✓ Downloads the Provisional Results reports from the QBS
- ✓ Provides administrative support to the EA during the visit and signposts them to the correct SharePoint file (EA visits and RAP meetings are generally conducted onsite however remote visits can be arranged if needed).
- ✓ Stores the EA report securely electronically and maintains them indefinitely
- ✓ Signs the Provisional Results Report and ensures the tutor and the EA signature
- ✓ Arranges for payment of the authenticators invoice

The external authenticator;

- ✓ Confirms that learners have been assessed fairly and consistently.
- ✓ Checks that our marking and grading is valid and reliable.
- ✓ Checks that the assessment evidence meets the national standard for the award.
- ✓ Moderates assessment results by sampling learner evidence according to our sampling strategy.

Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of assessment results and assessment evidence for the purposes of completing internal verification and external authentication. We use a sampling strategy that suits our provision and is fair and consistent, which helps us to identify any deviation from best practice and helps us to ascertain whether our procedures are being implemented appropriately. Our sampling strategy is based on a percentage of learner numbers, i.e., 25% of the total population of learners for each course.

Criteria for Sampling

The sample must:

- ✓ Be representative of all courses/minor awards
- ✓ Be representative of all assessment techniques
- ✓ Be sufficient in size to enable sound judgments to be made about the fairness and consistency of assessment decisions
- ✓ Covers the full range of attainment in terms of grades achieved
- ✓ Include a random selection of evidence for each grade/band
- ✓ Identify evidence which is borderline between grades e.g., learners who have not or learners who have only just achieved within the grading band
- ✓ Ensure new assessor judgments/decisions are sampled at least once during the assessment cycle

The assessment portfolios are clearly identified per location and per assessor so the internal verifier and the external authenticator can ensure the sample chosen includes assessment portfolios from each location and each assessor. If an assessor is delivering the same course to more than one learner group, we combine the portfolios for these groups. Assessment portfolios selected by the external authenticator must include the following in the sample, as appropriate, so as to allow the external authenticator to determine the cut-off points between the grades.

- ✓ The lowest Pass and the highest Unsuccessful
- ✓ The lowest Distinction & the highest Merit
- ✓ The lowest Merit & the highest Pass

The remaining number of assessment portfolios are randomly chosen, across all the grade bands, until the sample quota is reached.

Results Approval

The Education and Training Committee appoints a Results Approval Panel (RAP), which operates according to a documented term of reference (Appendix 1). The Panel confirms that results are fully quality assured and signed off before they are submitted to QQI for certification and ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes.

The Panel discusses each set of results including any concerns and suggests appropriate corrective or improvement actions. The RAP report, which is drawn up by the Education and Training Coordinator is approved and signed off by the Chair on behalf of the panel. This sign-off is the authorisation to submit the approved results to QQI and request certification and to issue them to learners.

The Education and Training Coordinator;

- ✓ Prepares all documentation for the RAP meeting.
- ✓ Reviews the *RAP terms of reference* and agrees the agenda with the Chair.
- ✓ Sends notice of the meeting and agenda and copy of the previous *RAP report* to members.
- ✓ Makes logistical arrangements for the meetings and records the proceedings in the RAP report.
- ✓ Agrees the *RAP report* with the Chair and arranges for the Chair to sign the report.
- ✓ Follows up on and monitors the implementation recommendations agreed by the Panel.
- ✓ Arranges for the chair of the RAP to sign the provisional results report.
- ✓ Informs tutors in advance when the results are being issued to learners.
- ✓ Checks *EA/IV/RAP reports* are all signed, dated, and maintained securely on SharePoint in PDF format.
- ✓ presents the RAP report to the Education and Training Committee.

Issue of Results

The Education and Training Coordinator;

- ✓ issues results and summative feedback to learners. either by email or through ECO-Academy and refer to the appeals and repeats procedures.
- ✓ prints off the *Final Statement of Results* from the QBS and stores it in the course SharePoint folder.
- ✓ manage appeals and repeats.
- ✓ Sends the award certificates to the learners by registered post, when received from QQI.

Feedback to Learners

Tutors provide timely, clear and constructive formative and summative feedback. This is highlighted at induction and in the tutor handbook. We include sessions on Formative and Summative Assessment and Feedback as part of our ongoing tutor CPD, based on needs identified by the Education and Training Coordinator and/or requests from our tutors. The Education and Training Coordinator comments on the summative feedback on the *internal verification report*. We also invite the EA to comment on the quality of the feedback provided to learners. The quality of feedback to learners is considered as part of course review.

● Formative Feedback

We use formative assessment and feedback throughout the course to support the learning process, aid revision and inform learners on how they are progressing. Formative feedback is provided on a one-to-one basis and/or group basis and must contain enough detail to enable learners to evaluate and improve their performance.

● Summative Feedback

Learners receive summative feedback with the approved result which provides the rationale for the grade awarded, advise them how to improve future performance and note areas of strength. Summative feedback must contain enough detail to enable learners to evaluate and improve their future performance.

Repeating Assessment

We want learners to have the best possible chance of success and offer them the opportunity to repeat an assessment if they do not achieve a pass in their initial submission. We do not all allow them to repeat to achieve a higher grade if they have passed and there is only one opportunity to repeat. We remind learners of the option to repeat when their results are issued. If a learner is considering repeating, the Education and Training Coordinator arranges for them to talk to the tutor to get detailed feedback on what they need to improve. The tutor and the Education and Training Coordinator agree dates for submission etc. We offer the learner two check-in sessions with the tutor while they are working on their repeats.

The time allowed for repeats is usually four weeks and the deadline for repeat submission must be at least four weeks before the next QQI certification cut-off date to allow for authentication.

Rechecks

The Education and Training Coordinator issues results and feedback to learners by email when they have been approved by the results approval panel and advises them to contact her within ten working days if they wish to discuss the assessment results.

If a query is received, the Education and Training Coordinator puts the learner in contact with the tutor who rechecks and reviews the marking and grading and explains the rationale for the marking. The tutor also checks that all pieces of assessment were marked and the totting and totalling of marks.

Appeals

If the learner is still unhappy, they can lodge an appeal by completing the Assessment Appeals form and submitting it with a fee of €40 within ten working days of their recheck. The fee is reimbursed if the appeal is successful.

The learner must have discussed the results with the assessor before they appeal and detail the grounds for the appeal and the element or elements of the grading they are appealing. No new assessment evidence may be submitted.

Appeals procedures

The learner completes the assessment appeals form and submits it to the Education and Training Coordinator via email.

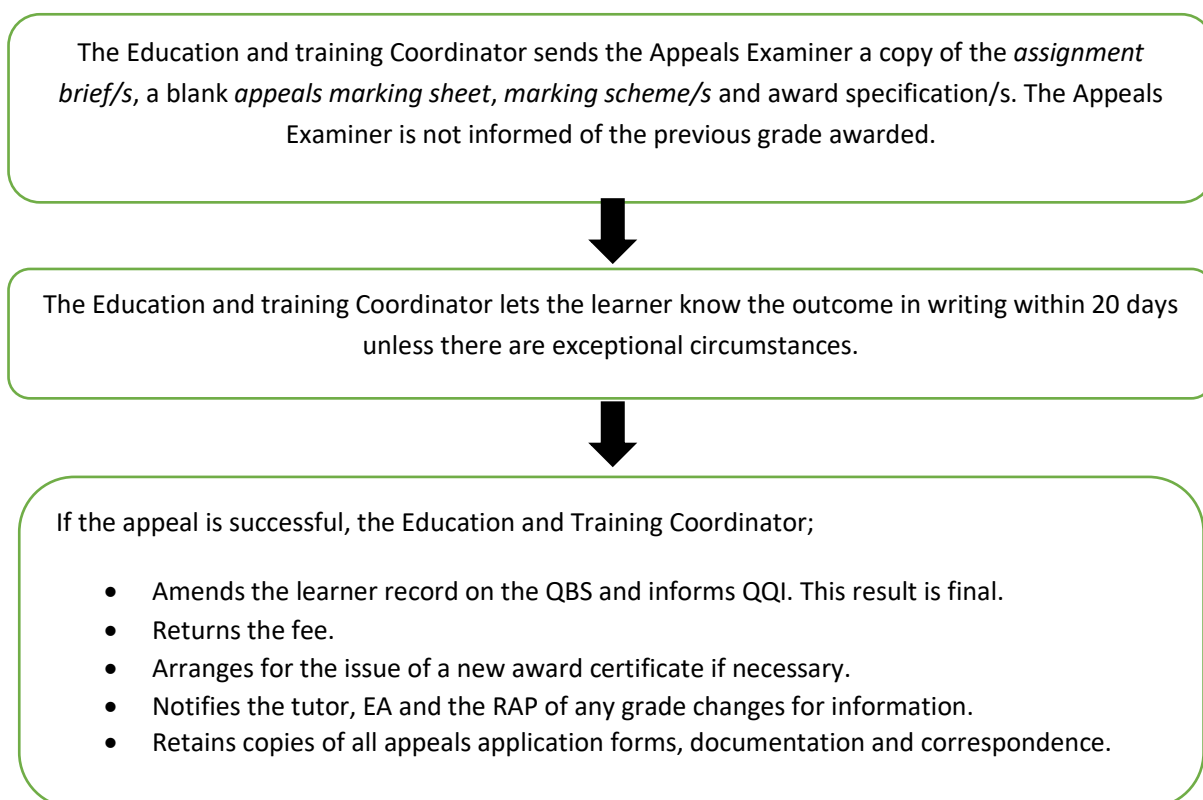


The Education and Training Coordinator acknowledges the appeal, arranges for payment to be made and assigns an Appeals Examiner to examine and remark the assessment evidence.

The Appeals Examiner must:

- Have had no role in the preparation or correction of the assessment under appeal.
- Be an experienced tutor and assessor.
- Have subject matter expertise.





Appeal results from previous assessment periods are noted at the next Results Approval Panel meeting.

Quality Assuring Assessment in the Workplace

Learners who participate in a work placement are allocated a workplace supervisor by the host organisation. One of the responsibilities of the supervisor is to assess and rate the learner's performance under a number of stated criteria and complete the *Workplace Supervisor Report* using the template we provide. The work experience tutor briefs the workplace supervisor in advance of the assessment, setting out the expected learning outcomes. The tutor is responsible for ensuring that the learners and the supervisors are well-informed with regard to the workplace assessment.

The tutor reviews the completed *Workplace Supervisor Reports* countersigns them and may comment on them.

The Education and Training Coordinator make the completed *Workplace Supervisor Reports* available to the external authenticator who reviews a sample, focusing on the work of workplace supervisors who are assessing for the first time, and we ask the external authenticator to comment on the quality of the workplace supervisor reports on the EA report.

Chapter Seven: Information and Data Management

(Aligned to Core Guideline 8)

Policy Statement

We regard the information we collect and the data we generate and hold as an important resource and a key asset that we must manage in order to ensure that we operate to a high standard. Reliable information and verifiable data supports and facilitates informed decision-making and helps us identify what we are doing well and where there are gaps. Staff and contractors who are responsible for data collection, storage, security, maintenance, dissemination, and data quality must do so in a systematic, planned, and secure way. Maintaining the quality of data is crucial so that internal and external decision-makers have confidence and trust in the decisions they make. We have controls and structures in place to generate named data/reports which we submit to management and our governance units to facilitate internal quality management and improvement. The information we collect reflects our specific context and mission. We have a robust learner record system which contains data which we use for review and forward planning. We have procedures in place to ensure that we maintain learner databases securely and that data relating to learner assessment is accurate and complete

- The Board of Directors has delegated responsibility to the senior management team for the management, maintenance and security of data and information
- The Education and Training Coordinator is responsible for the oversight of the data which relates to training provision
- The National Director is the data protection officer and is responsible for ensuring that the information and data presented to governance units is robust, verifiable, and timely.
- All staff members have a responsibility to protect data when carrying out their duties

Learner Records

A learner record encompasses all records, files, documents, and other materials that are directly related to an individual learner. Data included on the learner record includes;

- Name
- Email
- Contact telephone number/s
- PPSN
- Attendance records
- Name of Tutor
- Education details
- Details of reasonable accommodation provided (if any)
- Assessment results
- Complaints/Appeals

We set out clearly why we are collecting personal data on our application forms and data captured from our application forms, certification records and attendance records is stored on our learner record system. The Education and Training Coordinator has access to the learner record system and adds, edits and removes data as needed. We maintain the system on Salesforce CRM and securely on SharePoint, with limited access. Data on the learner record system allows us to track the learner journey from application to certification. Access to the system is through a login with a password. Access to the system is restricted to the staff members who are authorised to make changes to learner records.

Information & Data Management Systems

The data management systems that we use are; Salesforce, The ECO-Academy (our LMS) and SharePoint. Access to ECO-UNESCO's IT systems is controlled by the use of usernames, passwords and/or PIN numbers. Our Information Security Policy is stored on SharePoint.

- Information and Data For Monitoring and Evaluation by Governance

We define a key performance indicator (KPI) as a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively we are achieving our objectives. All the data collected during monitoring and review provides important information about the success of our courses, learner progress, areas requiring improvement and opportunities for further development.

We report on the following KPIs to the senior management team and the Education and Training Committee;

- ✓ Number of applications
- ✓ Number of dropouts/early exits
- ✓ Number of completions
- ✓ Number certified
- ✓ Number of courses
- ✓ Comparison of award outcomes and other course data with those of other providers (QQI Infographics)
- ✓ Number of RPL applications/ 'non-standard' applications
- ✓ Number of applications for reasonable accommodation / number granted
- ✓ Number of incidents of academic misconduct
- ✓ Attendance rates
- ✓ Progression rates
- ✓ Number of CPD events
- ✓ Number of incidents of poor performance
- ✓ Learner rating of tutor performance
- ✓ Tutor and learner ratings of the standards of resources and learner supports
- ✓ Number and level of seriousness of complaints
- ✓ Number of accidents/incidents and appeals.

Data Protection

Our data protection processes are based on the ECO-UNESCO Data Protection Policy 2021.01

We collect and maintain data related to

- ✓ Current and past learners
- ✓ Members of governance units
- ✓ Staff members and job applicants
- ✓ Contractors and consultants.

We use, collect, store, secure and destroy personal data in compliance with statutory obligations and have processes in place to ensure the accuracy, security, and integrity of the personal data we process. We provide privacy notices to those whose personal data we process. We advise them at the point of collection what data we collect, why we collect it, what we use it for, who it will be shared with and for what purposes, their rights as the data owner, how we protect their data and how long we retain it for. We limit the collection of data to that which is necessary and keep it for the minimum time required and then securely destroy it. Hard copy records are stored in a locked cupboard. SharePoint hosts all assessment documentation and materials, learner work, assessment results and records, assessment events (examinations and skills demonstrations), learner enrolments, retention, completion, and progression. Staff members do not use their own laptops or mobile phone to communicate with learners or communicate directly with learners outside of the classroom. If a learner needs support outside of the classroom, we advise them to contact the Education and Training Coordinator by email who will ask the tutor to contact them.

- Protecting Assessment Evidence (Assignments etc)

Assessment evidence is defined as personal data and therefore must be retained and destroyed securely. This data includes PPS numbers, sensitive data submitted to support applications for reasonable accommodation and assessments. When learners are successfully registered on the QBS, the Education and Training Coordinator destroys any hardcopy application forms which contain PPS numbers and dates of birth. The Education and Training Coordinator also arranges for the destruction of hardcopies of all assessments and related materials including recordings of skills demonstrations three months following certification. We retain one full set of assessment evidence securely in electronic form, and we destroy PPS numbers and other sensitive data. In the event of an appeal, the Education and Training Coordinator retains the assessment evidence and related correspondence for one year after the learner has been informed of the outcome. We let learners know how long we retain assessment evidence for, who has access to it and for what purpose, and how we destroy it on our application form.

- Use of the Personal Public Service (PPS) Number

PPSNs are used by QQI to uniquely identify individual learners. PPSNs are valuable pieces of personal information which we safeguard against misappropriation or misuse. We uphold data protection principles with regard to the PPSN and take all reasonable security steps with regard to the storage and handling of the PPSN and associated data. We do not disclose a person's PPSN to anyone without the prior consent of

the learner. Access to the PPSN is confined to the Education and Training Coordinator who inputs it onto the QQI QBS. Staff who have access to PPSNs, must treat the number confidentially and securely.

- Submission of Data to QQI

We use the QQI Quality Business System (QBS) to request certification and to access other QQI systems, e.g., validation and Q-help. Access to the login to the QBS, through a password-protected link, is limited to the Education and Training Coordinator. The Education and Training Coordinator double-checks all certification data for accuracy with the Operations and Development manager before she submits it to QQI. If the QBS rejects an entry as an invalid entry, the Education and Training Coordinator contacts the learner by phone to check the information. A learner may need to email proof of identity to us if this is required by QQI to resolve the invalid entry. The Education and Training Coordinator destroys the proof of identify data when the invalid entry is resolved.

Chapter Eight: Public Information and Communication

(Core Guideline 9)

Policy Statement

We are committed to creating an environment of trust and mutual respect through clear communications with staff, tutors, learners, visitors and other stakeholders.

We provide up to date and accurate information on all our activities to prospective and current learners, individuals and relevant agencies in an accessible information. We ensure that all information published in any format is accurate, helpful and written with the reader in mind. Information about our courses, supports and activities is communicated mainly through our website and all information is approved prior to publication.

Definition

Public information refers to the information that we communicate and publish about our courses, supports and quality assurance.

Responsibilities

- The National Director maintains oversight of the course and quality assurance information we publish.
- The Education and Training Coordinator drafts course information prior to publication and liaises with the Communications Coordinator for style and design guidance.
- The Education and Training Coordinator reviews the website on a monthly basis and updates the Communications Coordinator on any changes in relation to courses.

Communications Media

Website: <https://ecounesco.ie/>

Our website is the main source of information about our courses, learner supports, QQI and the NFQ. Visitors to the website can view our schedule of training.

In addition to this, information can be found on;

- Social Media
 - ✓ Facebook [[ECO-UNESCO | Facebook](#)]
 - ✓ Twitter [[Twitter](#)]
 - ✓ Instagram [[ECO-UNESCO \(@ecounesco\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)]
 - ✓ LinkedIn [[\(8\) ECO-UNESCO: My Company | LinkedIn](#)]
 - ✓ YouTube [[ECO-UNESCO Ireland - YouTube](#)]
- Other Communications Media
 - ✓ Entries in directories [e.g., 2023 edition of 'Ireland – A Directory]
 - ✓ Brochures and written materials
 - ✓ E-mails
 - ✓ Our annual newsletter
 - ✓ Participation in Career Events, Conferences, and Industry Events

Information for Applicants

Our website and brochures provide pre-entry information about the entry requirements, content, assessment and demands of courses to enable applicants to make an informed choice before they apply for a place or start their course (as part of their programme).

We comply with the terms of Section 67 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 QQI which requires provider institution to specify;

- ✓ Whether or not a course leads to an award on the NFQ/the type of award and awarding body.
- ✓ The full name of the course and the award, QQI Code and NFQ Level
- ✓ Access transfer and progression procedures/details of other related awards
- ✓ Protection for Enrolled Learners arrangements if applicable.
- ✓ Learning outcomes
- ✓ Progression routes and job opportunities.
- ✓ Work experience requirements (if any)
- ✓ Start and finish dates and outline of the timetable
- ✓ Fees, grants, fee waivers (if applicable)
- ✓ Terms and Conditions
- ✓ How to enrol

Information for Learners

The tutor is the primary point of contact and source of information for learners throughout the course and responds to all requests for course-related information and information about support. If the tutor is not in a position to respond to queries, s/he redirects them to the website, or the Education and Training Coordinator (as appropriate).

- **Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)**

Arrangements are in place between CDETB and ECO-UNESCO to comply with section 65(4) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 in respect of the seven programmes we deliver leading to a QQI Award. CDETB have confirmed that in the event ECO-UNESCO ceases to provide a programme before their enrolled learner have achieved the award, CDETB agree that the learners may transfer into a similar programme at CDETB.

CDETB have confirmed that they have capacity in terms of space, facilities, staff and all other relevant resources to fulfil obligations under this PEL arrangement.

Learner Induction

The aim of induction is to ensure that learners have all the necessary information regarding the course and supports to help ensure a successful outcome for them. At the start of a course, the tutor inducts the learners using our standard *Learner Induction* Presentation and talks through the following;

- ✓ Learner Handbook
- ✓ Course timetable and assessment schedule
- ✓ Details of appeals and complaints procedures
- ✓ Assessment briefs and assessment criteria

Induction also includes a tutorial on using the ECO-Academy and accessing Microsoft Teams (if applicable).

- **Learner Handbook**

The Learner Handbook forms part of the QA system and is stored on SharePoint and published on the ECO-Academy. It is designed to make clear and comprehensive information for learners available in an easily accessible manner. It is updated and reissued annually by the Education and Training Coordinator

Publication Of Quality Assurance Documents and Evaluation Reports

We publish our quality assurance manual and key findings from quality assurance evaluation reports in an easily accessible format and location on our website as soon as practicable after an evaluation event and in line with QQI requirements. They are first considered and approved for publication by the Education and Training Committee.

We publish;

- ✓ Our QA Manual
- ✓ Learner Handbook

Information related to QQI

As a provider recognised by QQI, we comply with QQI's requirements regarding the provision of QQI information. We are aware that if we provide enrolled learners with information which is false or misleading in any material respect, we are committing an offence. The Education and Training Coordinator ensures that any references to QQI and the NFQ that we publish are correct and accurate and that we use only the current versions of the NFQ graphic and the QQI award brand. As part of our course review process, we review the information about us contained on the Irish Register of Qualifications and contact QQI with regard to any changes or errors. We also review and update our organisation chart annually as required and inform QQI of any organisational changes that may impact on our relationship with QQI. The Education and Training Coordinator is our main point of contact with QQI and is responsible for distributing communications from QQI to other members of the course team and governance units.

Chapter Nine: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

(Aligned to Core Guideline 11)

Policy Statement

We consider monitoring, review and self-evaluation to be an essential part of continuous improvement. We are committed to monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating our courses and the QA system that underpin them, to identify areas of strength and areas where we need to improve. We consult with learners, staff and other stakeholders as part of our monitoring, review and self-evaluation processes and consider their input essential.

We monitor our courses on an ongoing basis to maintain high standards of teaching and learning and learner and tutor satisfaction. We review our courses every two years to ensure that they continue to be effective and fit-for-purpose, and every five years we organise a major review of our courses with the input of an external evaluator in line with revalidation of our courses.

Responsibility

- The Education and Training Committee maintains oversight of monitoring, review, and self-evaluation.
- The National Director is responsible for ensuring that monitoring, reviewing and evaluation processes are properly resourced
- The Education and Training Coordinator and the Operations and Development manager are responsible for implementing and coordinating monitoring, review and self-evaluation processes and reporting on them

Monitoring the Delivery of Courses

We ask our learners and tutors to complete *feedback forms* and we ask workplace supervisors to complete a *Workplace Supervisor feedback form* (when work placement is a feature of a course).

The Education and Training Coordinator examines trends and themes from feedback forms along with the RAP report and appeals or complaints, and presents a consolidated report to the Education and Training Committee

Learner and Tutor Feedback

We invite learners to complete an evaluation form during and at the end of the course, to give one-to-one feedback and to raise concerns and queries with tutors and other members of the course team at any time. The feedback forms are designed to elicit honest feedback about the course content, tutors, learner supports, teaching and learning methodologies, the venue and facilities, and any other matters relevant to the learner. Tutors also complete a tutor feedback form at the end of each course. The contents of all feedback forms are reviewed by the Education and Training Coordinator, discussed with the tutor at the course debriefing and collated and reported to the Education and Training Committee in aggregate form.

Course Review and Improvement Plan

In addition to on-going monitoring, each course is reviewed by every two years to ensure that that quality standards are maintained, the course remains fit for purpose, and meets the needs of learners and other stakeholders. The output is a *course improvement plan* which is presented to the Education and Training Committee for consideration and comment. The Education and Training Coordinator collates and analyses data from a range of sources, including all ongoing monitoring data and involves all members of the programme team and key stakeholders in the review as appropriate.

The following are reviewed:

- Course information and data
- Course content and materials
- The QQI published award specification
- The conditions of validation set out in the QQI Certificate of Validation
- Staffing/CPD
- Quality assurance processes and procedures which underpin the programme
- Learning resources and facilities and learner supports
- Published course-related information
- Application, attendance, completion, retention and progression rates
- Transfer and progression routes
- Entry requirements/RPL arrangements
- Feedback from learners, tutors and stakeholders
- The QQI infographic site
- Appeals and complaints
- Assessment results
- Certification reports
- Comparison of award outcomes with that of other providers
- The information contained on the QQI register of providers and the database of awards and programmes.

The Education and Training Coordinator and Operations and Development manager then complete a *course improvement plan* which establishes if;

- The information about us contained on the Irish Register of Qualifications is correct
- Feedback indicates that the course remains relevant and fit for our intended learners
- The learning outcomes continue to be delivered and met
- The course objectives continue to be achieved
- The methods of assessment continue to be appropriate
- The quality of feedback to learners is effective
- The course documentation (e.g. *marking schemes, summary marking sheets and individual marking sheets*) continue to be fit for purpose.

The Education and Training Coordinator and Operations and Development manager also note any suggestions for improvement or corrective action and present the course improvement plan to the Education and Training Committee for consideration and comment. The Education and Training Committee presents the agreed *course improvement plan* to all members of the programme team and agrees a timeline for implementation of the agreed improvements. The Education and Training Committee monitors and reports on implementation.

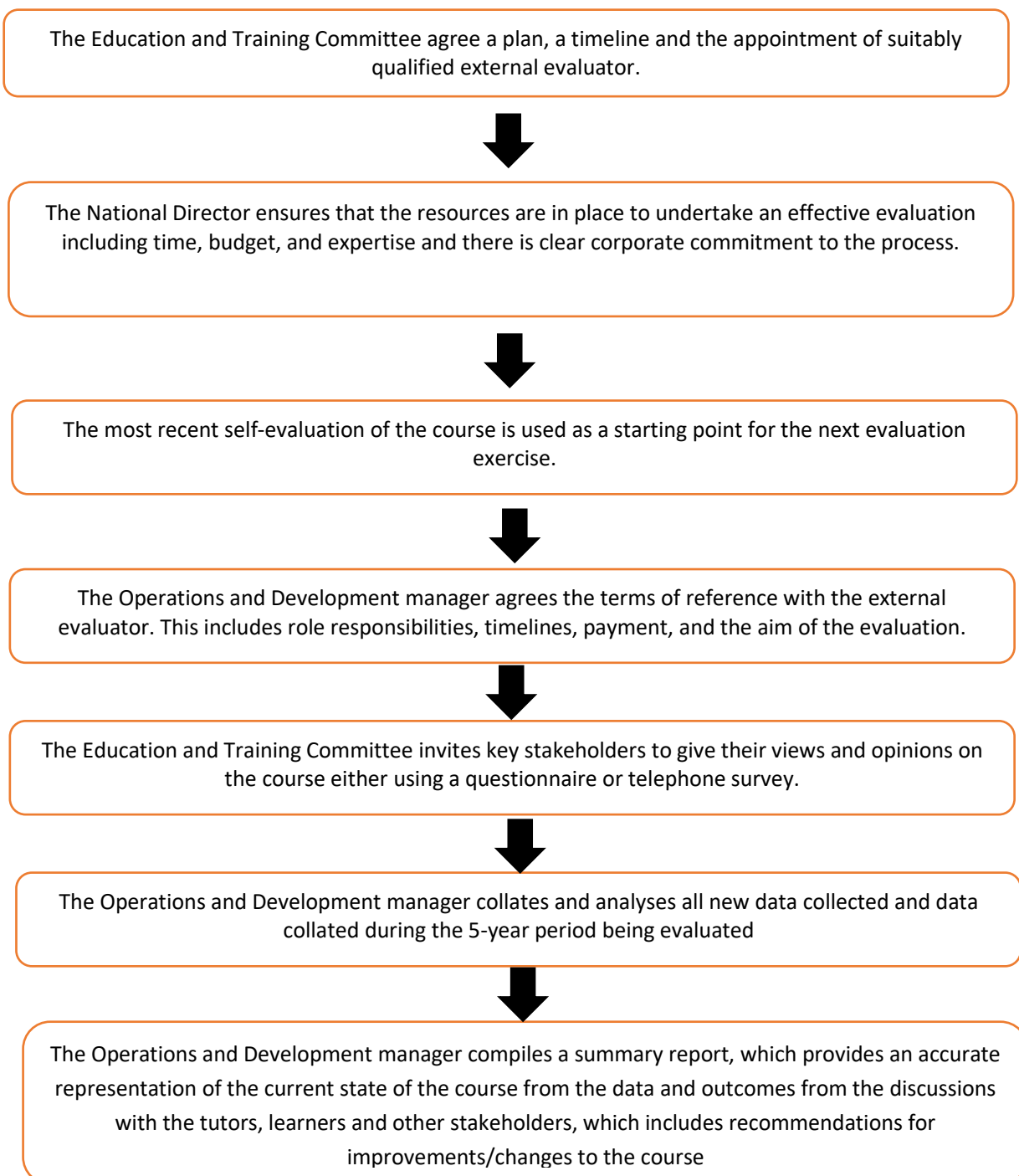
Self-Evaluation

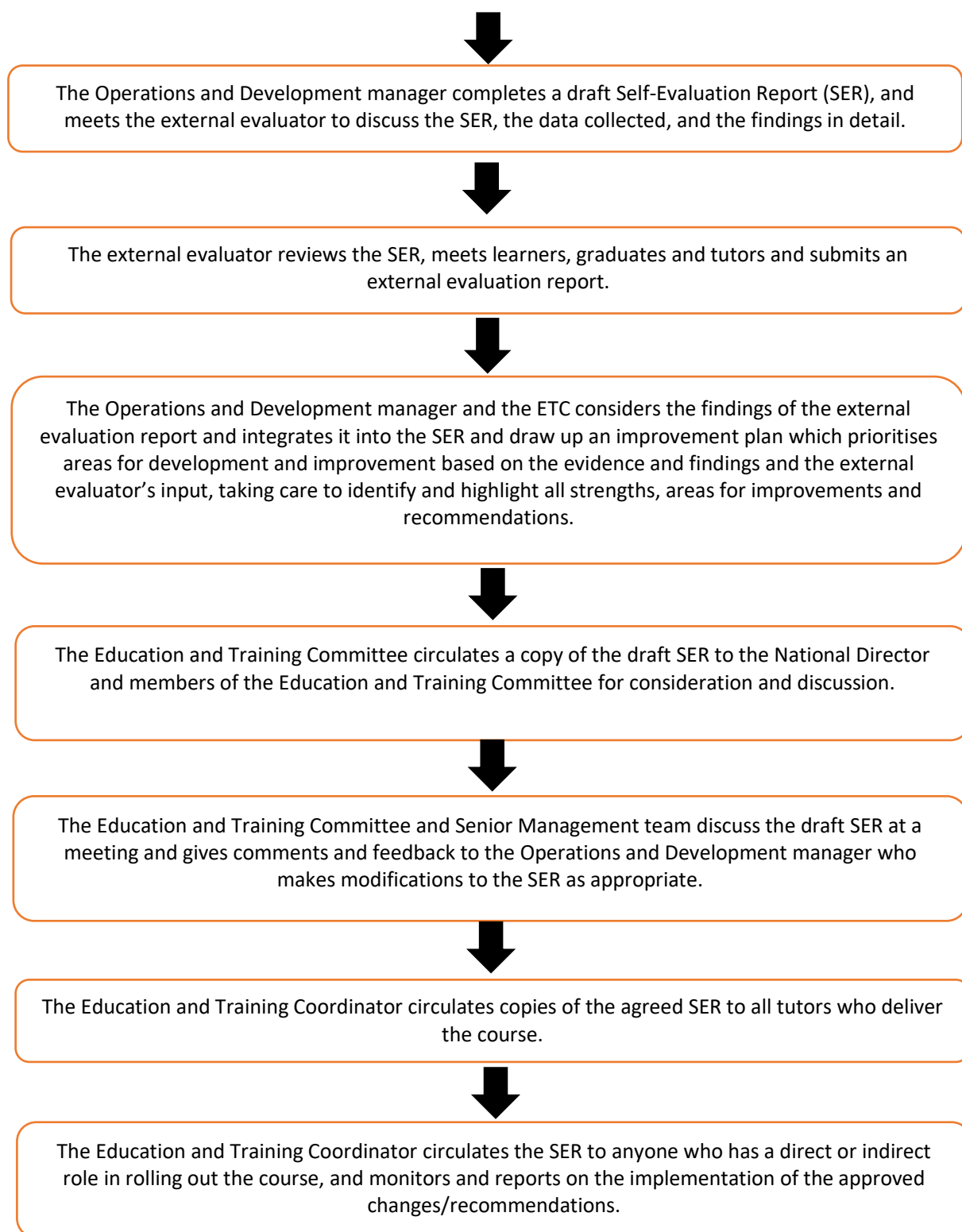
Self-Evaluation “*The self-evaluation by a provider of its programmes and services is a fundamental part of its quality assurance system. It is a way of developing the programme through constructive questioning leading to positive recommendations and improvement planning. It should be viewed as a process primarily for the benefit of the programme, its current and future learners and the staff working on it*”. QQI

Every five years, in line with revalidation of our courses, we undertake a self-evaluation of our courses with the input of an external evaluator. This is a comprehensive review of all aspects of the course and the quality assurance processes that underpin it. It is forward-looking and we use the outputs to inform the development and future planning of the course. The evaluation takes into consideration the views of learners, graduates, members of the programme team, and an independent evaluator. The process focuses on identifying improvements to the course content, policies, structures, and processes.

- **Self-Evaluation Procedure**

The Operations and Development manager manages self-evaluation process and is supported by the Education and Training Coordinator who coordinates the process and provides administrative support.





As part of this process the following are considered:

- ✓ If the course is viable/is there a continuing need for the course (there may be a recommendation that the course be retired or replaced).
- ✓ Relevance of outcomes to the sector.
- ✓ The degree to which the course is meeting its stated aims.
- ✓ Course reports and implementation of recommendations.
- ✓ Findings of QQI monitoring reports.
- ✓ Changes to QQI award specifications.
- ✓ Results approval panel reports.
- ✓ Relevant legislative and regulatory changes.
- ✓ Feedback from all stakeholders.
- ✓ Competitor analysis/ numbers certified by competitors, format of course offering.
- ✓ QQI analytics /benchmarking data.
- ✓ Accident and Incident reports.
- ✓ Insurance/PEL (if applicable).
- ✓ Recruitment activity report.
- ✓ Financial reports.
- ✓ Suitability and appropriateness of the physical facilities and anticipate changing needs in the future.
- ✓ Current entry requirements and appropriateness for the current context.
- ✓ Training infrastructure.
- ✓ Staffing.

The self-evaluation process establishes if;

- ✓ The information about us contained on the Irish Register of Qualifications is correct
- ✓ Feedback indicates that the course remains relevant for the intended learners
- ✓ The learning outcomes of the course are being delivered and met
- ✓ The course objectives are being achieved
- ✓ The methods of assessment are appropriate
- ✓ The quality of feedback to learners is effective
- ✓ The course documentation (e.g. marking schemes, summary marking sheets and individual marking sheets) is fit for purpose
- ✓ Appropriate resources are in place to ensure that high quality courses are being delivered
- ✓ Suitably qualified personnel are delivering the course
- ✓ Learner achievement is in line with expectations
- ✓ The experience and feedback of stakeholders is positive

We use the Further Education Support Service (FESS) Self-Evaluation Resource as a guide when evaluating courses.

- **Involvement of an External Evaluator in Self-Evaluation**

The QQI QA guidelines state that the role of the external evaluator is to “offer objective comparisons with similar courses available elsewhere. This role of this person should be that of a ‘critical friend’, i.e. someone who can bring support, recognition and positive suggestions for improvement” We select an external evaluator who is objective and has the ability to bring a fresh perspective to what we do and externality to our process of self-evaluation. The ETC sources suitable candidates and maintains evidence of their suitability and makes a recommendation to the ETC which approves the appointment.

External Evaluators must;

- ✓ Understand evaluation procedures and methodologies.
- ✓ Be competent to compare the quality of the course with that of similar courses and give an informed view on the success of the course.
- ✓ Have general subject matter expertise.
- ✓ Understand and appreciate our context, approach and learner profile.
- ✓ Be independent of ECO-UNESCO, our courses and tutors.

- **Learner Involvement in Self-Evaluation**

Data from learner evaluations feed into our self-evaluation. The external evaluator observes a number of training sessions and consults with both learners and graduates as part of the process. The learner representative on the ETC has an opportunity to comment and give feedback when the draft Self Evaluation Report (SER) is presented to the ETC.

Outputs of Self-Evaluation

1. Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
2. Updates to the QA system/documents.
3. Revised course content and documentation.

Copies of Self-valuation Reports are submitted to QQI via the QBS in the format prescribed by QQI and published on our website.

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

Board of Directors Terms of Reference (V30423)

Role:

The Board of Directors (BoD) is responsible for overseeing the proper management and strategic direction of the organisation, which is a company limited by guarantee.

The BoD provide leadership to ECO-UNESCO by setting strategic direction and ensuring policies are in place which supports this strategic direction. They approve, monitor and review the work programme to ensure it is effectively meeting the agreed objectives and performance indicators. They ensure a framework of prudent and effective controls are in place for the work of ECO-UNESCO.

Membership

The Board of Directors is made up entirely of volunteers. No member may have a position of profit within the company (i.e. may be a member of staff). The affairs of the Company shall be administered by a Board of Directors consisting of not less than three members of the Company.

The quorum for decision-making of the Board of Directors is 50% plus 1. The Board of Directors shall meet for the despatch of business, adjourn and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit. Questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes. In case of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote. A Director may, and the Secretary on the requisition of a Director shall, at any time summon a meeting of the Directors. Provided. A member of the Board of Directors shall not vote in respect of any contract in which he or she is interested, or, any matter arising thereout, and if he or she does so vote his or her vote shall not be counted.

The membership of the Board of Directors should reflect diversity in terms of gender, skills and areas of competency.

Frequency of Meetings

It normally meets about six times a year and may set up sub-committees and take reports on activities.

Duties & Responsibilities:

Members of the board of Directors should act on an informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interests of ECO-UNESCO to ensure that public monies are applied for the purpose they have been provided.

The Board should:

- Enhance and protect the reputation of ECO-UNESCO through their effective governance of the organisation.
- Ensure that the financial resources of the organisation meet its present and future needs.
- Recommend the appropriate strategic direction for ECO-UNESCO in conjunction with Director and oversee the implementation of the agreed strategy approved by the AGM. Long term planning of the organization with the Director.
- Conduct productive meetings where key organisational issues are dealt with in an efficient way.
- Protect ECO-UNESCO against liability by ensuring the provision of adequate insurance and creating policies designed to minimise the amount of risk for the organisation.
- Approve comprehensive, fair personnel policies that meet legal requirements and protect both the organisation and those who work for it.

- Approve an annual financial cashflow, monitor spending, create policies to manage and protect the organisation's assets and property and see to it that finances are handled according to all legal requirements and in the best interests of ECO-UNESCO.
- Provide support to and facilitate the development of the National Director.
- Recognise and respect areas of staff responsibility and allow and support the staff to exercise this responsibility effectively.
- Create policy to safeguard the interests of the organisation.
- Monitoring the activities, performance and effectiveness of the National Director and Senior Management team;

Individual Board Member

Role

Contribute to the Board operating effectively. This will involve participating in discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other area of expertise. Skills, knowledge and experience individual members have pertaining to a special expertise of interest to the Board should be made available to help the Board reach sound decisions.

Responsibilities

Each Board member by active participation in discussion and decision-making shall play their part to:

- Understand and support the role and responsibilities of the Board as a whole and support the induction of new members.
- Long term planning of the organization with the Director.
- To manage the organization in accordance with the constitution and company law.
- Approve the Directors reports.
- Ensure ECO-UNESCO complies with its governing documents (i.e. Constitution, Rules of Procedure, Trust Deed, Memorandum and Articles of Association), company law and any other relevant legislation and regulations.
- Ensure that ECO-UNESCO pursues its objects as defined in its governing documents and that ECO-UNESCO applies its resources in pursuance of its objects.
- Contribute actively to the Board's role in strategic direction of the organization.
- Protect and manage the property of ECO-UNESCO, ensure the proper investment of ECO-UNESCO funds and ensure the financial stability of ECO-UNESCO.
- Safeguard the good name, public image and values of ECO-UNESCO.
- Ensure ECO-UNESCO acts as a responsible employer and respects the relationship between the Board and the staff.

Chairperson of ECO-UNESCO

Role

The Chairperson must ensure the organisation is governed effectively. The Chairperson co-ordinates the Board to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the effective management of the organisation. The chairperson provides support and supervision to the National Director. The chair may be required to vote on the major issues and may even have to exercise a casting vote.

Responsibilities

- Ensure the Board develops and recommends a long-term strategy for ECO-UNESCO with objectives that can be monitored.
- Chair and facilitate board meetings, staff committee and AGM.
- Lead the Board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of ECO-UNESCO.
- Ensure Board meetings are run democratically and in an inclusive and participative manner and within agreed timeframes.
- Ensure the Board is true to the code of conduct and to the guiding principles and values of ECO-UNESCO both in its internal and external operations.
- Plan the annual cycle of board meetings with agreement of the Board,
- Promote ECO-UNESCO to a wide audience of potential donors and beneficiaries.
- With the Director set appropriate and relevant agendas for Board meetings.
- Ensure that decisions are made and arrived at in a fair and orderly fashion and Summarise decisions made after each agenda item.
- Remain as impartial as possible.

Treasurer of ECO-UNESCO

Role

As well as participating as an active member of the Board, the overall role of the treasurer is to maintain an overview of the organisation's affairs, ensuring its financial viability and ensuring that proper financial records and procedures are maintained. This is supported through work with the Director and with the agreement of the Director supported by the finance officer.

Responsibilities

- Ensure that the group's financial resources meet its needs.
- Oversee, present and approve budgets, accounts and financial statements.
- Prepare and present financial reports to the board in an understandable way.
- Ensure that the organisation has an appropriate reserves policy
- Ensure that appropriate accounting procedures and controls are in place
- Advise on the financial implications of the organisation's strategic plan
- Ensure that the organisation has an appropriate investment policy
- Ensure that there is no conflict between any investment held and the aims and objectives of ECO-UNESCO.
- Monitor the organisation's investment activity and ensure its consistency with the organisation's policies and legal responsibilities
- Ensure the organisation's compliance with fiscal legislation
- Ensure the equipment and assets are adequately maintained and insured
- Ensure that the accounts are prepared and disclosed in the form required by funders and the relevant statutory bodies.
- Ensure that the accounts are scrutinised in the manner required (independent examination or audit) and any recommendations are implemented.
- Keep the Board informed about its financial duties and responsibilities.
- Contribute to the fundraising strategy of the ECO-UNESCO.
- Make a formal presentation of the accounts at the Annual General Meeting and draw attention to important points in the coherent and easily understandable way.

- Participate in appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as required.

Secretary of ECO-UNESCO

Role

As well as participating as an active member of the Board, the overall role of the secretary is to ensure that meetings are properly called and organised, and that minutes are accurately recorded and kept on file. This is supported through work with the Director.

Responsibilities

- Calling National Council meetings according to the constitution.
- Keeping minutes
- Ensuring AGM takes place on time with adequate notice
- Maintains communication with BoD and Director.
- Keeps informed of ECO-UNESCO activities.
- Attends meetings of BoD.
- Act as company secretary if this role is not delegated.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Board of Directors

The filling of vacancies and succession planning for the BoD are key responsibilities of the BoD and they are assisted by the Nominations Committee. The Nomination Committee will identify gaps in the Board composition, evaluate the pool of candidates or process to recruit suitable candidates and present a nominee(s) to the Board for consideration. Full details of Board Succession Planning are outlined in the *Board Succession Planning Document* which is available on SharePoint.

Establishing Committees

Board members get involved in subcommittees and short-term working groups that the organisation chooses to set up. In subcommittees or working groups they are acting in an advisory capacity and only have the authority of the Board when they are taking decisions together as a Board.

The Terms of Reference for each committee should be specified in writing, approved by the Board of Directors.

Code of Conduct:

The Board of Directors / Governing Body is required to produce a Code of Conduct for Members and for its staff. It should identify the relevant provisions regarding conduct/conflicts of interest in the governing legislation of the body. The Codes should also set out procedures for addressing conflicts of interest.

Education and Training Committee Terms of Reference (v20123)

The Education and Training Committee maintains oversight of academic and quality standards in relation to learners and courses. It makes recommendations to the Board of Directors to ensure high standards of education and training and ensure that decisions on education and training matters are made independently of commercial considerations. The Education and Training Committee acts as a subcommittee of and reports to the Board of Directors, who must respect the role of the Committee.

Responsibilities

- Maintain oversight of academic standards and adequacy of learner supports.
- Advise the Board of Directors on academic planning.
- Advise on and make recommendations on academic policies and significant changes to the QA system.
- Approve the appointment of external authenticators and external evaluators.
- Maintain oversight of the quality of public information related to programmes and quality assurance.
- Maintain oversight of compliance with conditions of validation.
- Make recommendations for staff development in relation to quality standards.
- Consider and approve teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
- Review proposals for programme development.
- Consider programme validation/revalidation applications prior to submission.
- Consider and approve programme reviews and self-evaluation reports and monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations.
- Consider results approval panel reports and agree recommendations.
- Reports to Board of Directors on any substantive concerns about quality or standards.
- Update the National Director on academic risks and recommend mitigations to manage those risks.

Membership

Members are appointed by the Board of Directors serving a term of two years, with the possibility of a second term. The Chair is appointed by the Board of Directors on the basis of recommendations brought to the Board by the National Director. Subject to approval by the Board of Directors, the Education and Training Committee may appoint additional members if needed.

Members

- The Chair (external to ECO-UNESCO)
- The Education and Training Coordinator
- A tutor
- A member of the Board of Directors
- A learner – [period of tenure to include the time registered as a learner plus two years thereafter]

Selection Criteria for Chair

- An appropriately experienced individual with knowledge and experience in the FET sector
- Have an understanding and appreciation of ECO-UNESCO philosophy, context and learner profile.
- Have an academic qualification minimum Level 8 on the NFQ or equivalent in a relevant area.
- Be independent of ECO-UNESCO, funders, tutors and staff.
- Have experience of governance and chairing governance groups.

Role of the Chair

- To provide leadership for the Education and Training Committee.
- To ensure that the committee functions properly.
- To ensure full participation during meetings, that all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and implemented.
- To ensure that meetings are planned effectively, conducted according to the terms of reference and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.
- Oversee an annual review of the committee's performance.
- Represent ECO-UNESCO from time to time e.g. at QQI re-engagement panel meeting.

Meetings

- The Committee meets quarterly with dates for meetings agreed in advance on an annual basis.
- Where a conflict of interest is declared or perceived, the committee member(s) acts as agreed by the Committee e.g. abstain from discussing and voting on this point/issue.
- A quorum is at least 75% of members (to include the Chair/nominee) and the external members.
- Issues for discussion are usually determined by consensus. If consensus is not possible, the issue is decided by a majority of the members present voting and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.
- Members of the Senior Management Team may be invited to join the meeting to discuss specific items.
- The Education and Training Coordinator provides administrative support for the Committee and issues an agenda and supporting documents agreed with the Chair in advance, to members at least ten working days in advance of a meeting and minutes of meetings not more than ten days following the meeting.

Report Schedule

Report/Document Title	By/from	To	Frequency
Quarterly progress report/update	By the Education and Training Coordinator	Education and Training Committee	Each meeting
Results Approval Panel Reports	From the Results Approval Panel	Education and Training Committee	As they are available
Education and Training Committee Report	From the Education and Training Committee	National Director/Board of Directors	Following each meeting

Results Approval Panel Terms of Reference (V30423)

The role is to confirm that results are fully quality assured and signed off before they are submitted to QQI for certification. The Panel ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of assessment and authentication processes. The Panel report to the Education and Training Committee

Responsibilities

- ✓ Consider the internal verification and external authentication reports.
- ✓ Confirm that appropriate assessment evidence and records are available.
- ✓ Comprehensively and thoroughly review assessment results.
- ✓ Confirm that the processes and results are fully quality assured and signed off by the Chair of the Panel before they are submitted to QQI.
- ✓ Retain oversight of the systems in place to ensure security in assessment.
- ✓ Retain oversight of assessment-related risk
- ✓ Take appropriate decisions regarding the outcome of the assessment, verification and authentication processes and make recommendations for corrective action if needed.
- ✓ Arrange for the notification of any suspected irregularities to the appropriate person/s and/or bodies.

Members

The Education and Training Committee appoints members of the Panel. Members must carry out their roles without bias and make their determinations based on the information provided to the Panel.

The Results Approval Panel is composed of a minimum of three people

- ✓ An appropriately qualified independent chair
- ✓ The Education and Training Coordinator
- ✓ The Operations and Development manager

Occasional Members

The Chair may invite others to attend for all or a particular section of the meeting e.g. external authenticator or marking tutor. Occasional members do not vote or participate in decision-making.

Selection Criteria for Chair

- An appropriately experienced individual with knowledge and experience in the FET sector and QQI assessment policies and regulations.
- Have an understanding and appreciation of ECO-UNESCO philosophy, context and learner profile
- Have an academic qualification minimum Level 8 on the NFQ or equivalent in a relevant area
- Be independent of ECO-UNESCO, funders, tutors and staff.
- Have experience of governance and chairing governance groups.

Role of the Chair

- To provide leadership for the Results Approval Panel

- To ensure that the Panel functions properly
- To ensure full participation during meetings, that all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made.
- To ensure that meetings are planned effectively, conducted according to the terms of reference and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.
- Oversee an annual review of the Panel's performance.

Meetings

- The Panel meet as required for each certification period.
- The Panel discuss each set of results including any concerns and suggests appropriate corrective or improvement actions.
- The results are approved and signed off by the Chair on behalf of the fixed panel members who approved the results. This sign-off is the authorisation to submit the approved results to QQI and request certification and to issue them to learners.
- Where a conflict of interest is declared or perceived, the panel member(s) acts as agreed by the Committee e.g. abstain from discussing and voting on this point/issue.
- A quorum is 100% of the members, however, in the event that the Education and Training Coordinator has acted as the Internal Verifier, they will have a conflict of interest and no right to vote.
- Issues for discussion are usually determined by consensus. If consensus is not possible, the issue is decided by a majority of the members voting, and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.
- The Education and Training Coordinator records Panel decisions and provides administrative support for the Panel. She issues an agenda and supporting documents agreed with the Chair, to members at least ten working days in advance of a meeting and minutes of meetings not more than ten days following the meeting.
- The Education and Training Coordinator prepares the Results Approval Panel Report ensuring that any non-conformances identified are recorded. The report is signed by the Chair and is securely maintained.
- Any documentation provided to members during meetings must be returned to the Education and Training Coordinator at the end of the meeting.

Supporting Documents

- ✓ RAP Report Template
- ✓ RAP Meeting Agenda

Report Schedule

Report/Document Title	To/From	Frequency	Presented by
RAP report	To: The Education and Training Committee and the Board of Directors	Following each meeting	The Education and Training Coordinator

External Authentication Report	To: RAP	Each meeting	External Authenticator if present or the Education and Training Coordinator if not
Internal Verification Report	To: RAP	Each meeting	Education and Training Coordinator

Course Design Team Terms of Reference (v1)

Role:

To design a course to meet the needs of our learner profile, our stakeholders and QQI requirements (if applicable). The team meets as required and meetings are convened by the Education and Training Coordinator. The National Director oversees the work of the Course Design Team, and the Course Design Team reports to the National Director.

Responsibilities:

- Design the course according to the steps set out in our documented Procedure for Course Design and Development
- Produce the programme descriptor.
- Work within the agreed budget and the timeframe.
- consult with internal and external stakeholders as needed.
- develop and design the course in line with the obligations arising from QQI's Policies and Criteria for Validation if the course is being designed to lead to an award on the NFQ.
- devise assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria.
- research transfer and progression options and consult with other providers who offer similar courses at the same or higher levels.
- Document details of suitable pathways in the course descriptor
- Detail the specifics of course resources, premises and equipment in the course descriptor
- Present the course for review by the Education and Training Committee

Members

The National Director has delegated authority from the Education and Training Committee to appoint a Course Design Team. Members consist of;

- Course Leader (must be a subject matter expert)
- Tutors
- Education and Training Coordinator

The course design team ceases to function when the programme is signed off. Members of the team may be invited to serve on the programme team

Administrative Support

The Education and Training Coordinator provides administrative support;

- organises meetings.
- produces agendas.
- provides papers and relevant data.
- records outcomes, decisions and actions plans.
- Maintains documents and records.

Supporting Documents

- Programme Descriptor template

Reference Documents

Procedure for Course Design and Development

Appendix 2: Role Descriptions

The National Director (v1)

The National Director, reporting to the Board of directors, is responsible for resourcing and leading the organisation and overseeing implementation of strategy. She is responsible for compliance, financial and ensuring the organisation adheres to its policies including Health and Safety, Child Safeguarding and to all HR policies. The National Director is responsible for compliance works on ensuring the organisation is compliant to all its legal and governance commitments; she collates and monitors risks including academic risks and mitigation measures identified. She, alongside other senior management, is also responsible for recruitment.

The National Director is responsible for;

- ✓ The overall management, control and operation of ECO-UNESCO in accordance with the policies and objectives set out by the Board.
- ✓ Executing the Strategic Plan, ensuring quality of services, economic viability and maintenance of the core values of ECO-UNESCO.
- ✓ Developing and implementing the policies and procedures approved by the Board, meeting all governance and financial goals.
- ✓ Ensuring the organisation is run in accordance with statutory regulations and relevant codes of practice and that potential risks are mitigated.
- ✓ Further developing and gaining agreement for strategic actions to ensure growth in the organisation to the scale necessary to meet the challenges posed by both the market environment and the Climate Emergency.
- ✓ Evaluating the impact of the programmes on youth in relation to their objectives and quality targets and ensure accurate reporting of this information to the Board
- ✓ Supporting the Operations and Development manager and Education and Training Coordinator in maintaining the Quality Assurance system
- ✓ Maintaining and developing the Ethos & Values of the organisation
- ✓ Ensuring best practice management skills are in place across ECO-UNESCO
- ✓ Attracting and retaining key quality staff in support of the organisation's deliverables
- ✓ Overseeing the recruitment process including development of job descriptions
- ✓ Driving a culture of employee engagement & satisfaction across the organisation, driving learning and innovation
- ✓ Fostering constructive relationships with all internal departments, committees and groups to enhance delivery and cohesiveness of services. This includes the Board of Directors, various sub-committees of the Board, complimentary external organisations, Corporate & Government funders
- ✓ Developing and enhancing relationships with all external stakeholders of the organisation to further the objectives of ECO-UNESCO
- ✓ Reviewing Course Proposals, presenting Course proposals to the Education and Training Committee, and ensuring that adequate resources and a budget are available for an approved course proposal

- ✓ Recommending a timeframe for the development of a new course and appointing a Course Design Team
- ✓ appointing an external member of the Education and Training Committee to review a final review of a formal complaint and conveying the outcome of this review in writing to the complainant
- ✓ approving programme-related information before it is published
- ✓ ensuring that monitoring, reviewing and evaluation processes are properly resourced

Operations and Development manager (v1)

The Operations and Development manager is the line manager for tutors and the Education and Training Coordinator. S/he ensures the efficient and effective management of the organisation and the delivery of high-quality services and support the National Director and the Education and Training Coordinator in implementing changes recommended by the Education and Training Committee.

The Operations and Development manager is responsible for;

- ✓ Leading all aspects of the operations to ensure the effective organisation including systems, financial and facilities.
- ✓ Provide ongoing motivation, support and coaching to members of Operations and Programmes Team, implementing HR policies, setting work plans and reviewing progress to drive great performance and development of the team. Line-manage staff and provide ongoing support to all programmes and services including holding regular support and supervision meeting
- ✓ Supporting the National Director and the Board of Directors in achieving ECO-UNESCO strategic objectives
- ✓ Overseeing and managing the use of Salesforce CRM and ensure its use for all programmes and services and provide ongoing reports on programme and participant information through Salesforce
- ✓ Managing and overseeing ECO-UNESCO's Quality Assurance Systems including Monitoring and Evaluation, QQI QA, National Quality Standards Framework, IDEA Code of Good Practice in DE
- ✓ Monitoring the reach of ECO-UNESCO's programmes and services providing accurate information on participant analysis on an ongoing basis
- ✓ Monitoring the quality of the learning environments (with input from the Education and Training Coordinator and tutors)
- ✓ Managing the formal complaints procedure
- ✓ Supporting the Education and Training Coordinator in reviewing QA system procedures and supporting documents annually and working with the document owners to update them to ensure they continue to be effective and fit for purpose.

The Education and Training Coordinator (v1)

The Education and Training Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the quality assurance of all accredited courses delivered by ECO-UNESCO. With the Operations and Development manager, she is responsible for maintaining and managing the QA system and documents and is also a member of the Results Awards Panel and the Education and Training Committee.

The Education and Training Coordinator is responsible for:

- ✓ Developing all learner and tutor course handbooks
- ✓ Delivering the ECO-UNESCO Tutor Induction to new tutors
- ✓ Carrying out pre and post course briefings with tutors
- ✓ Internal verification
- ✓ Scheduling external authenticator visits and result approval panel meetings
- ✓ Planning and delivering CPD sessions which meet staff needs.
- ✓ Collating relevant documentation [learner and tutor feedback, statistics, IV report, EA report and RAP report] and using these to write Course Reviews and Quality Improvement Plans
- ✓ Scheduling and setting agendas for the Education and Training Committee (in conjunction with the chair).
- ✓ Carrying out administrative duties for the Education and Training Committee (e.g., Consolidating and circulating relevant documentation prior to meetings, taking minutes, recording actions and recommendations)
- ✓ Contributing to Course Design Teams when requested
- ✓ Updating course content to ensure the information delivered to learners is accurate and up to date

Tutors (v1)

Tutors are responsible for:

- ✓ Delivering, assessing, managing and administering the course
- ✓ Delivery of courses to a high standard
- ✓ Collection of learner data, including personal details necessary for administration; feedback and evaluations; QQI assessments; etc. and summarising this information in the relevant format in the relevant folder
- ✓ Ensuring all learners have completed our online Academic Integrity Training
- ✓ Ensuring all learners complete their Mid-Course and End of Course feedback.
- ✓ Collecting and storing assessments
- ✓ Assessing learners and marking the assessment evidence using the assessment criteria and marking schemes provided.
- ✓ Compiling all necessary documentation and complete the Assessment Portfolio Checklist for internal verification
- ✓ Completing the Tutor feedback form upon completion of the course

Appendix 3: Glossary

Glossary of Terms

Programme	At ECO-UNESCO, a <i>programme</i> refers to a set of activities focusing on environmental protection and youth empowerment. Examples of our programmes include “Youth for Sustainable Development” and “ECO-Choices”.
Course	At ECO-UNESCO, a <i>course</i> refers to QQI accredited programme which are often delivered as part of an ECO-UNESCO programme.

Glossary of Abbreviations

APC	Assessment Portfolio Checklist
BOD	Board of Directors
CDT	Course Design Team
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EA	External Authentication or External Authenticator
ETC	Education and Training Committee
IV	Internal Verification or Internal Verifier
LMS	Learning Management System
QA	Quality Assurance
RAP	Results Awards Panel

Appendix 4: ECO-UNESCO Courses

Community Participation

Award Type: Minor

QQI Code: 3N2908

NFQ Level: 3

Credit Value: 10

Duration: 100 Hours

- Directed hours: 30 (Classroom based, work-based direction)
- Self-Directed hours: 70 (Practise time, work experience, preparation, study time and reflection time)

Purpose: To equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to become involved in community activities and gain other related skills for work and social situations.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Define the term community.
2. Describe a range of community and voluntary activities.
3. Describe the characteristics of a local community.
4. Compile a list of community and voluntary organisations in a named locality.
5. Describe the activities of local community and voluntary organisations.
6. Prepare an action plan for participation in a community project including contact information about the organization, location at which the work is to be carried out, estimation of the time required and scheduling details and any special requirements for the project.
7. Participate consistently in a short community project.
8. Apply appropriate health, safety and personal hygiene procedures during participation in the project.
9. Maintain a daily record while participating in the community project including tasks undertaken, resources, facilities and equipment used, adaptations to the planned schedule and achievements of the project.
10. Compile a report on participation in the project including key aspects of the organization, duration, location, nature and extent of the project, and achievements of the project.
11. Reflect critically on participation in the community project including personal learning, successes and areas for improvement.
12. Reflect on the impact of the project on the community or organization for which it was carried out and other projects that would benefit the organization or local community.

Assessment:

- Portfolio/collection of work- 100%

This Minor Award can lead to:

- 900603 | Level 3 | Community Health Advocacy

Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production

Award Type: Minor

QQI Code: 3N0890

NFQ Level: 3

Credit Value: 10

Duration: 100 hours

- Directed hours: 30 (Centre based, practical based and work-based direction)
- Self- directed hours: 70 (research time, self-directed learning, practice time, portfolio preparation and arrangement, study time and reflection time)

Purpose: To equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to produce a crop of outdoor vegetables under supervision.

Learning Outcomes:

1. List the tools, materials and equipment required to grow outdoor vegetables
2. List the stages of ground preparation for vegetable sowing
3. Explain pH levels in the soil
4. Explain the purpose of and techniques for thinning, transplanting and weeding
5. Describe a range of preventative methods for controlling vegetable diseases and pests organically or with chemicals
6. Carry out a soil test
7. Prepare the ground for growing vegetables including clearing the ground organically or with chemicals, single digging, improving soil fertility, cross digging the area, forking over, raking and levelling, marking out and preparing drills
8. Sow a vegetable crop from seeds or transplant a crop to outdoors
9. Use a range of techniques to maintain the vegetable crops including thinning, transplanting, watering, feeding, weed-control, mulching, disease and pest control
10. Harvest the crop at the correct stage of maturity
11. Demonstrate the application of communications, team working and quality awareness in a horticulture environment
12. Apply appropriate health, safety and personal hygiene procedures when producing a crop of vegetables

Assessment:

- Portfolio/collection of work- 20%
- Skills Demonstration- 80%

This Minor Award can lead to:

- 3M0874 | Level 3 | General Learning
- 3M0935 | Level 3 | Employability Skills

Growing Vegetables

Award Type: Minor

QQI Code: 4N0671

NFQ Level: 4

Credit Value: 10

Duration: 100 Hours

Directed hours: 40 (Classroom based, work-based direction and blended learning)

Self-directed hours: 60 (research time, self directed learning, practice time, preparation, study time and reflection time)

Purpose: To equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to plant, grow and maintain a range of vegetables under supervision.

Learning Outcomes:

1. State the principles of crop rotation including a rationale and examples
2. State the major factors affecting soil suitability for vegetable production to include soil composition, nutrient availability, water holding capacity, drainage, organic matter content and compaction
3. Prepare ground for vegetable growing to include digging, breaking up of soil, removal of debris, weeds and large stones to form suitable surface
4. Apply compost, manure and fertiliser to a stated rate at planting and throughout the growing season
5. Grow a range of vegetables to include brassicas, legumes, root crops and salad crops from seeds, including both station and drill sown, tubers, sets, plugs and transplants
6. Maintain growing vegetable crops to include watering, weather and pest protection, training and supporting
7. Deal with common pests and diseases of vegetable crops to include identification and control by a range of methods
8. Deal with weeds to include identification and control by a range of methods
9. Harvest a range of vegetables to include selection, grading and packing
10. Operate within appropriate safety procedures to create and maintain a safe working environment including safety standards regarding lifting, carrying and handling plants, tools and equipment.

Assessment:

- Skills Demonstration: 80%
- Examination (Theory): 20%

This Minor Award can lead to:

- 4M0857 | Level 4 | Employment Skills
- 4M1994 | Level 4 | Horticulture

Work Experience

Award Type: Minor

QQI Code: 5N1356

NFQ Level: 5

Credit Value: 15

Duration: 160 hours

- Directed hours: 25 (Classroom based, work-based direction, career clinics, one-to-one mentoring)
- Self- directed hours: 25 (Practise time, preparation, study time and reflection time)
- Work Experience: 110

Purpose: To equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to participate in the workplace for a limited time, carrying out work-related tasks independently while under general direction.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Examine work organisations and personal career opportunities in a particular vocational area, to include consideration of work-related issues and needs
2. Analyse key challenges and opportunities facing a particular vocational area
3. Summarise the basic rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in a particular work, organisational or institutional context, to include health, safety and welfare at work, equality legislation, union representation and regulations relating to pay
4. Compile a personal and vocational skills audit and career plan for a specific vocational area, to include goals and action points for the period of work experience
5. Present relevant work experience material, to include a CV or personal statement, letter of application, evidence of job-finding skills, skills checklist, statement of learning goals, contractual arrangements
6. Participate effectively in work experience, to include observation of good timekeeping, working independently while under general direction, meeting deadlines, personal presentation, communication, adherence to health, safety and other relevant regulations
7. Demonstrate effective communication skills in the workplace, to include personal, interpersonal and technological communication skills
8. Reflect on workplace experiences, to include feedback by supervisor(s) or mentor(s) on personal performance and challenges such as conflict, criticism, meeting new people and learning in relation to quality management
9. Explore options for future education, training and employment in light of work experience

Assessment:

- Portfolio/collection of work: 60 %
- Skills Demonstration: 40%

This Minor Award can lead to:

- 5M4732 | Level 5 | Youthwork

Sustainable Development

Award Type: Minor

QQI Code: 5N5905

NFQ Level: 5

Credit Value: 15

Duration: 150 Hours

- Directed hours: 50 (Classroom based, work-based direction)
- Self- directed hours: 100 (Practice time, preparation, study time and reflection time)

Purpose: To equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to understand the concept of sustainable development as it relates to the environment, agriculture, society and economics and to develop the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, environmental auditing, community assessment and education for sustainable development.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Discuss sustainable development to include the origin of the term, the three pillars of sustainable development, the values and risks associated with sustainable development, the quality of life in current and sustainable communities and the goals of a sustainable community
2. Examine the wealth focused and people focused models of development and different definitions of sustainable development
3. Explain a range of terms to include sustain, develop, environment, society, economics, quality of life, carrying capacity, resource, renewable and non-resources, social development, sustainable community, citizenship, human rights and indicator trade, consumerism, globalisation, fair-trade, developed and developing world
4. Examine sustainable resource use within the carrying capacity of the environment, the difference between renewable and non-renewable resources, the causes and effects of environmental issues
5. Summarise the characteristics of a good indicator, the different frameworks of sustainable community indicators, the differences between traditional and sustainable community indicators, and the data sources for indicators at a local, national and international level
6. Examine the damage conventional farming practices have on the environment to include problems such as soil erosion and how to combat these problems by using sustainable methods
7. Outline the threat of the introduction of patents on plants to agricultural production, the implications of the widespread use of genetically engineered organisms in the food chain, the importance of biodiversity globally and aspects of biotechnology to control pests and diseases
8. Explore the performance and impact of established Fair Trade Co-operatives on the local community and environment, the importance of indigenous cultures, respect for cultural diversity and the effect of the loss of traditions with the transition of populations from rural to urban areas
9. Discuss the different crops natural to different regions and the role of traditional rural skills such as hedge laying, building or cultivation and harvesting traditional crops
10. Execute an environmental investigation for one environmental issue to include an implementation of the audit, a recording and analysis of results and the making of recommendations based on the analysis of the environmental audit

11. Identify links between lifestyles in the developed and developing world to include travel, health, work, consumption, education, rights and environment
12. Analyse the impact of trade and consumerism on the environment and society through the global supply chain of one consumer good
13. Identify practices that contribute to climate change, methods of reducing emissions, organic alternatives to artificial pesticides and fertilisers and the role of local practices in sustainable development
14. Investigate agricultural production within Europe, the effect of globalisation of agriculture on developing countries and the impact of national and international agricultural policies
15. Plan a workshop on an environmental issue incorporating different education for sustainable development methodologies
16. Design a plan for sustainable agricultural holding that incorporates knowledge of features such as sustainable forestry and permaculture and promotes community self-sufficiency
17. Use resources to empower a community to improve the local environment while preserving cultural heritage.

Assessment:

- Project: 60%
- Assignment: 40%

This Minor Award can lead to:

- 5M2373 | Level 5 | Agriculture
- 5M3114 | Level 5 | General studies

Ecology and the Environment

Award Type: Minor

QQI Code: 6N3645

NFQ Level: 6

Credit Value: 15

Duration: 160 hours

- Directed hours: 60 (Classroom based, work-based direction and blended learning)
- Self-Directed hours: 100 (research time, self-directed learning, practice time, preparation, study time and reflection time)

Purpose: The purpose of this award is to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to assist in management of the natural environment.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Review policy framework for environmental and biodiversity protection in Ireland including International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) designations for species, site designations, codes of good practice for fertiliser use, pesticides, tree establishment and felling, landscape and heritage protection, European Union (EU) and national legislation including water protection legislation, water framework directive, nitrate directive, wildlife act and habitats directive
2. Appraise the role of statutory and voluntary organisations in environmental protection
3. Examine techniques available for the management of sites to promote biodiversity
4. Evaluate factors influencing population dynamics and community composition including relevant tools and techniques for monitoring populations and communities
5. Examine habitat restoration techniques including consideration of impact of everyday work practices on the natural environment
6. Report on a range of environmental features such as: vegetation survey, Braun-Blanquet scale, quadrats and linear survey elements, hedgerow assessment including structure, species composition, connectivity, diversity and associated features, water quality assessment to include invertebrate biodiversity, Q values and chemical indicators such as pH or P, epiflora of walls, colonisation of waste ground, succession on disturbed ground
7. Apply practical techniques for the recognition of semi natural habitats and habitat features in the field to include blanket bogs, woodland types, coastal habitats to include fixed dunes, dune slack, salt march and semi natural grassland
8. Identify invasive species of plant and pest
9. Devise a management plan to control an invasive species
10. Ensure implementation of procedures to create and maintain a safe working environment including safety standards regarding lifting, carrying and handling plants, tools and equipment.

Assessment:

- Project: 40%
- Assignment: 30%
- Examination (Theory): 30%

This Minor Award can lead to:

- 5M5028 | Level 5 | Applied Ecology
- 6M4334 | Level 6 | Horticulture