

APPROVALS AND REVIEWS COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The purpose of the **Approvals and Reviews Committee** is to perform such of the Board's functions as to ensure that providers, to which it grants access to external quality assurance, the International Education Mark, and delegated authority, have met and continue to meet, the associated criteria.

FUNCTIONS

(a) Based on recommendations from the QQI Executive, the Approvals and Reviews Committee will:

- Advise the executive on procedures relevant to the committee's functions;
- Make decisions on the progression of applications from providers on to stage 2 of the process for initial access to validation of programmes leading to QQI awards;
- Make decisions regarding the approval of a provider's quality assurance procedures including the attachment of conditions;
- Make decisions on the publication of the findings of a cyclical review of a relevant provider, or of the NUI, or of a listed awarding body;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** on directions to be issued to a relevant provider or the NUI, following a cyclical review;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** on the withdrawal of approval of quality assurance procedures and of any related withdrawal from the provider;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** on the deletion in whole or part of an awarding body from the list of awarding bodies;
- Approve for publication the outcomes of reviews of the implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression by providers;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** for the withdrawal of approval of access, transfer and progression procedures;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** on the initial delegation of authority to a provider to make awards;
- Make decisions on the outcomes of reviews of providers with delegated authority to make awards;
- Make decisions on the outcomes of focused reviews of a provider, and issue directions where relevant, where such outcomes do not include the withdrawal of relationship with the provider, under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** on the outcomes of focused reviews of a provider where such outcomes include the withdrawal of a relationship with the provider, under the 2012 Act;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** for the withdrawal of delegated authority to make awards;
- Make decisions on the establishment of listed awarding bodies;
- Make decisions on applications for the award of the International Education Mark;

- Make decisions on the outcomes of reviews of providers awarded the International Education Mark;
- Make recommendations to the **Board** for the withdrawal of a provider's authorisation to use the International Education Mark;
- Consider observations submitted by providers in relation to specific functions, as appropriate (e.g. recommendations to refuse approval of a provider's QA procedures, recommendations to refuse authorisation to use the International Education Mark etc.);
- Approve for publication the findings of a quality review conducted under section 42 of the Act and make recommendations to the Board as appropriate;
- Take note of and discuss reports of institutional quality assurance reviews and thematic analyses not requiring statutory approval by QQI, and make recommendations to the **Board** where appropriate.
- Approval of reports arising from QQI conducting an evaluation of a programme using the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

(b) The Approvals and Reviews Committee will also:

- Provide effective and consistent oversight of the governance process applied to applications for initial access (stage 1) to QQI validation;
- Make recommendations to the executive for improvements in the governance process applied to applications for initial access (stage 1) to QQI validation;
- Consider and make recommendations and decisions regarding other issues relevant to the work of the Committee referred to it by the executive or by the **Board** as appropriate.

DECISION-MAKING AND REPORTING

Decision-Making:

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

Reporting:

- The Approvals and Reviews Committee will submit reports outlining details of its recommendations and determinations at agreed intervals to the **Board**.
- The outcomes of consultation processes of relevance will be submitted to the Approvals and Reviews Committee by the executive. In addition, the outcomes of any technical or other ad hoc groups established to review a given matter of relevance to the Committee will be submitted to it.

COMPOSITION

The **Approvals and Reviews Committee** will consist of approximately eight members including a Chairperson and representation from the QQI Board and executive. Members of this committee will collectively require clear understanding and experience of the administration of process and of related decision-making.

Members of the Approvals and Reviews Committee, other than Board Members, will serve a term of office of a minimum of two years to a maximum of five years to ensure staggered turnover of expertise and experience.

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

TENURE

The continued requirement for the Approvals and Reviews Committee will be reviewed from time to time at the request of the Board.

CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

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

COMMITTEE QUORUM

The quorum shall be 4 members.

Members may attend by teleconference and this will meet quorum requirements.

COMMITTEE REVIEW

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

Appendix 1

HOW THE APPROVALS AND REVIEWS COMMITTEE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE FULFILMENT OF QQI'S LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS

Based on recommendations from the QQI Executive, the Approval and Reviews Committee will:

- Advise the executive on procedures relevant to the committee's functions;
- Make decisions:
 - On progression of applications from providers on to stage 2 of the policy for initial access to validation of programmes leading to QQI awards (Section 28, *Obligation of providers to prepare quality assurance procedures*);
 - On approval of a provider's QA procedures and on the effectiveness of same following consideration of the outcomes of reviews (Section 28, *Obligation of providers to prepare quality assurance procedures*, Section 30, *Quality assurance procedures and relevant providers* (Revised Act) Section 34, *Review by Authority of quality assurance procedures of relevant providers*, Section 56, *Procedures for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners*, Section 57, *Review by Authority of implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression*);
 - On publication of the findings of a review of a relevant provider under Section 34 (1) (a) (Section 34 (8) *the Authority shall publish the report (including the observations of the provider concerned)*);
 - On publication of the findings of a review of the NUI under Section 40 (1) (a) (Section 40 (7) *the Authority shall publish the report (including the observations of the provider concerned)*);
 - On the listing of awarding bodies (Section 55C, *Listing of an awarding body – decision as to whether it is appropriate that such a body make a particular award and related matters* (Revised Act),);
 - On the outcomes of reviews of providers with delegated authority to make awards (Section 54, *Review by Authority of delegated authority to make award*);
 - On the outcomes of 'focused' reviews of providers (Section 34.(1) (b) *Review from time to time by Authority of quality assurance procedures of relevant providers*);
 - On issuing directions to relevant providers following a cyclical review under Section 34 where these do not lead to withdrawal of relationship with providers (Section 35 (1) (a) *Authority may issue such directions as it considers appropriate in relation to the effectiveness of the procedures and their implementation*);

- on the findings of quality reviews and on the approval of reports arising from QQI conducting an evaluation of a programme using the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (Section 42, *Quality reviews by Authority* and Section 42, *Quality reviews by Authority (Revised Act)*);
 - On applications for the award of the International Education Mark (IEM) and on the outcomes of reviews of providers awarded the IEM (Section 61, *International Education Mark*, Section 63, *Review by Authority of provider's compliance with code of practice and provider's use of international education mark*).
- Make recommendations:
 - On directions to be issued to a relevant provider following a cyclical review under Section 34 (Section 35 (1) *Authority may issue such directions as it considers appropriate in relation to the effectiveness of the procedures and their implementation*)
 - On directions to be issued to the NUI (following a cyclical review under Section 40 (Section 41 (1) *Authority may issue such directions as it considers appropriate in relation to the effectiveness of the procedures and their implementation*))
 - On the outcomes of focused reviews of a relevant provider where such outcomes include the withdrawal of a relationship with the provider (Section 36 (b) *where there are serious deficiencies in the implementation of quality assurance procedures of a provider, the Authority notifies the provider of its proposal to withdraw approval of its quality assurance procedures*)
 - On the withdrawal of approval of quality assurance procedures and of any related withdrawal from the provider (Section 36, *Withdrawal by Authority of approval of quality assurance procedures*);
 - On the deletion in whole or part of an awarding body from the list of awarding bodies (Section 55H, *Withdrawal or variation of listing of awarding bodies (Revised Act)*);
 - For the withdrawal of approval of access, transfer and progression procedures (Section 59, *Withdrawal by Authority of approval of access, transfer and progression procedures*);
 - On the initial delegation of authority to a provider to make awards (Section 53, *Determination of request for delegation of authority to make award*);
 - On the withdrawal of delegated authority to make awards (Section 55, *Withdrawal or variation by Authority of delegated authority to make award*);
 - On the withdrawal of a provider's authorisation to use the IEM (Section 63, *Review by Authority of provider's compliance with code of practice and provider's use of international education mark*);

- For improvements in the governance process applied to applications for initial access (stage 1) to QOI validation (Section 27, *Quality Assurance*).

Appendix 2

QQI COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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