



GRETB's Quality Assurance Policy Statement

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1. Introduction

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) was established through the implementation of the Education and Training Boards Act of 1 July 2013. As a result of implementation of the Act VECs in Galway and Roscommon and, since July 2014, the services previously provided by FÁS/SOLAS in the region were amalgamated into the single established entity GRETB.

GRETB is committed to the provision of an effective QA system for all stakeholders. This commitment is reflected in GRETB's overall FET Strategy and particularly in Strategic Goal 3 - Quality Provision⁷. GRETB recognises the importance of providing quality assured further education and training services to prospective and current learners, staff, and other stakeholders. GRETB also recognises the importance of obtaining and acting upon feedback from all learners, staff, and key stakeholders to continuously improve programme quality.

2. Purpose/Legal Basis

This policy statement provides overarching principles and guidelines that facilitate the implementation of a QA framework that meets GRETB's strategic aspirations and the needs of our Learner, Staff and stakeholders including awarding bodies.

Building on GRETB's existing good practice, the organisation will operate a Quality Assurance (QA) policy framework that complies with and has 'regard to' published Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI) QA Guidelines as determined by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Acts 2012 & 2019.

The Core Statutory QA Guidelines, published by QQI, provide the common areas of quality assurance to be covered by all providers under the remit of QQI. The additional statutory sector-specific guidelines for Education and Training Boards add to the core by addressing specific responsibilities of the ETBs as set out in the 2012 Act. GRETB is responsible for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of all programmes including programmes leading to QQI Awards.

GRETB QA Procedures cover all further education and training services regardless of whether these lead to QQI Awards.

Relevant Acts

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019

Education and Training Boards Act 2013

Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI 2016)

Statutory Quality assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Education and Training Boards

Related Policies and Strategies

GRETB Strategy Statement 2022-2026

GRETB FET Governance Chart

3. Scope

The Quality Assurance Policy extends to all further education and training services provided by GRETB, including, but not limited to members of GRETB's FET Governance, staff members, learners and external stakeholders including sub-contracted trainers.

The QA Policy in GRETB is informed by overarching principles that underpin the organisation's approach to QA for the delivery of its education and training services.

- a) GRETB is responsible for the quality of all its education and training provision and the assurance of that quality.
- b) QA in GRETB operates across a broad spectrum of education and training provision including Youth Service, Adult Education, Apprenticeships and Traineeships. GRETB will demonstrate its quality publicly across all of FET activities
- c) A quality culture will be integrated throughout GRETB's FET landscape. The culture will foster individual and organisational commitment a quality assured service and provision, and recognition that QA is a tool that drives continuous improvement.
- d) Education and training exist principally for the purpose of enabling people to learn and, accordingly, GRETB programmes of education and training are, and will continue to be, designed, implemented, and evaluated with learning outcomes in mind.
- e) Approved QA procedures and those procedures which must have regard to QQI guidelines will be implemented by GRETB and will be monitored for effectiveness.
- f) GRETB QA system will make appropriate use of external persons who are independent of the organisation and its agents and who are expertly qualified to make relevant national and international comparisons.
- g) Continuous improvement is the goal of GRETB's quality assurance processes.
- h) GRETB's quality assurance systems will enhance transparency. Processes will be developed through which GRETB can demonstrate its accountability, including accountability for the investment of public and private money.
- i) GRETB's QA system will support public confidence in our capacity to provide programmes to agreed standards. GRETB will actively promote its QA system and proactively develop it as a tangible resource and an explicit part of its education and training infrastructure. GRETB views public confidence is a key objective of its QA system and will publish its QA outputs where appropriate.

4. Definitions/Acronyms

Governance: A system which oversees the education and training, and related activity of the provider to ensure its quality. This governance structure enforces separation of responsibilities between those who produce/develop material and those who approve it. Included in the governance structure are groups or units which (i) make decisions and (ii) approve them.

Management of quality assurance: The quality assurance procedures which form part of a coherent system central to the promotion of a quality assurance culture within the provider.

Quality Assurance: The processes utilised to ensure that the learning environment reaches an acceptable threshold of quality. Quality Assurance also describes the enhancement of education and training provision and the standards attained by learners.

AQC: Apprenticeship Quality Council

FET: Further Education and Training

GRETB: Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board

QA: Quality Assurance

QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland

GRETB: Galway Roscommon education Training Board

VEC: Vocational Educational Colleges

5. Policy Statement / Controls, Terms and Conditions

The Core Quality Assurance Guidelines published by QQI are statutory guidelines. The 2012 Act further requires providers to 'have regard to' QQI's quality assurance guidelines when establishing their own quality assurance procedures.

Governance and management of quality

GRETB is committed "**to lead(ing) in the provision of high quality, innovative, inclusive, and responsive education, and training programmes for the people in Galway and Roscommon**" as envisioned in the GRETB Strategy Statement 2022-2026. Strategic goals include an efficient and effective organisational structure and the provision of high-quality education and training programmes. GRETB will develop a system to oversee education, training, and related activity to ensure its quality. This governance structure will separate responsibilities between those who produce/develop material and those who approve it. Population of boards and sub-groups will take cognisance of this separation of functions.

a) Documented Approach to Quality Assurance.

The QA system is fully documented. The documented quality assurance system sets out GRETB's commitment to quality in terms of programme provision and related activities as appropriate. It also refers to arrangements for the internal evaluation or review and continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are effective and fit for purpose. GRETB quality assurance procedures are regularly self-monitored to ensure ongoing effectiveness and procedures found to be ineffective are amended or replaced.

b) Programmes of Education and Training.

The development of new programmes is conducted systematically. Sufficient time is allowed for the necessary internal and external consultations with stakeholders to be undertaken. This includes an evaluation of new programmes by the appropriate internal decision-making structures, allowing for consideration of new programmes by both management and governance

c) Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

GRETB takes responsibility for the quality of its staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. There is a systematic approach to the fair and transparent recruitment and further professional development of people engaged in programme and service delivery.

Mechanisms are provided for staff communications and feedback and opportunities for continuous professional development are promoted to all staff.

d) Teaching and Learning

GRETB is committed to self-monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning on its education and training programmes and maintains an ethos that promotes learning.

e) Assessment of Learners.

GRETB provides an assessment framework that establishes its philosophy on, and approach to, the assessment of learners in both formal assessments (where programmes lead to certification) and in-house assessment. It also addresses the administration of assessment by GRETB. Guidelines to GRETB assessments are issued to all learners.

f) Supports for Learners.

The adequacy of the resources available to learners is monitored on an ongoing basis. Learning resources are updated and expanded as necessary to reflect up-to-date approaches and learner needs as identified through feedback on teaching and learning.

g) Information and Data Management.

Reliable information and data are available for informed decision-making and to ensure that GRETB FET Department and the Board know the areas that are effective and working well and areas needing attention. Controls and structures are in place to generate named data/reports which are communicated to staff and management for self-monitoring and planning purposes. The information gathered reflects the context and mission of GRETB.

h) Public Information and Communication.

GRETB will publish information about its education & training and related services including the organisation's quality assurance policies and procedures, and learner information.

i) Other Parties Involved in Education and Training.

GRETB QA Procedures cover all further education and training services regardless of whether these lead to QQI Awards. GRETB QA procedures include provision for engagement with external partnerships and second providers such as contracted trainers and collaborating providers, including for apprenticeship programmes.

The QA system will include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external, independent, national, and international experts.

j) Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Review and self-evaluation of quality, including review of programmes of education, training, and related services, is a fundamental part of the GRETB quality assurance system. The purpose of such self-evaluation is to review, evaluate and report on GRETB education and training services quality assurance system and procedures which underpin these. In doing so, existing effective practices are identified and maintained, while areas needing improvement are addressed. The findings from self-evaluations are recorded in GRETB's Quality Improvement Plan.

Continuous Development

Guidelines will be continuously redeveloped and updated in order to keep up with changes in the education and training landscape. The guidelines will change as public policy changes, as providers innovate and as QQI's priorities change. Part of QQI's role as an external QA agency in this sense is to assess the effectiveness of the guidelines and to organise their on-going development in collaboration and consultation with the sectors. To comply with Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) and to encourage a more comprehensive quality system, all new FET policies created and approved by the FET Quality Council and the Chief Executive will be submitted on the approved Policy Template. In compliance with changing legislative requirements at the national level, evolving best practice at the international level and changing circumstances within GRETB, policies and associated documents are continually self-monitored by the relevant owner of the policy as named under 'Monitoring and Review' for each policy. The Quality Assurance Office tracks the overall management of FET policies and procedures within GRETB. FET policies and procedures are added to GRETB's Master List of Policies and Procedures managed by the Corporate Services Department.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

GRETB established a FET Quality Assurance Governance system responsible for the governance of all further education and training services within the organisation.

The FET Quality Council, which is the highest level on the FET governance structure, is responsible for the governance and management of planning, co-ordination, quality, development, and improvement of all aspects of GRETB's further education and training provision. It protects, maintains, and develops the standards of education and training programmes and related activities. In doing so, the FET Quality Council is ensuring, as far as possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience. The Quality Assurance (QA) Steering Group, the FET Programme Board, and the Apprenticeship Quality Council all report to the FET Quality Council.

The QA Steering Group fulfils the role and responsibilities delegated to it by GRETB's FET Quality Council, for the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination, and improvement of GRETB's quality assurance policies, procedures, and processes. In doing so, it assists the FET Quality Council in protecting, maintaining, and developing GRETB's standards of education and training programmes and related activities.

The FET Programme Board fulfils the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the FET Quality Council, for the oversight, planning, co-ordination, development, and quality of the programmes of the ETB. In doing so, it assists the FET Quality Council in protecting, maintaining, and developing GRETB's standards of education and training programmes, and learner achievement, and related activities.

The Apprenticeship Quality Council (AQC) oversees the planning, co-ordination, quality, development, and improvement of all aspects of the new apprenticeship programme as part of GRETB's further education and training provision. It protects, maintains, and develops the standards of education and training programmes

and related activities. In doing so, the AQC is ensuring, as far as possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience. The QA Steering Group and the FET Programme Board are responsible for the governance and management of working groups which are established on a need's basis. The AQC is responsible for the governance and management of the Consortium Steering Group, which in turn is responsible for the management of the National Programme Board and the National Examination Board.

7. Policy Review

To comply with Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) and to encourage a more comprehensive quality system, all new FET policies created and approved by the FET Quality Council and the Chief Executive will be submitted on the approved Policy Template. In compliance with changing legislative requirements at the national level, evolving best practice at the international level and changing circumstances within GRETB, policies and associated documents are continually self-monitored by the relevant owner of the policy as named under 'Monitoring and Review' for each policy. The Quality Assurance Office tracks the overall management of FET policies and procedures within GRETB. FET policies and procedures are added to GRETB's Master List of Policies and Procedures managed by the Corporate Services Department.

This policy statement will be reviewed two years following the publication of this policy, or earlier if necessary.

End.