

## 1.1 To whom do these guidelines apply?

These guidelines are applicable to all types of providers providing research degrees at levels 9 and 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). They are produced for the attention of, and use by, providers establishing quality assurance procedures under the 2012 Act. The legal context varies between providers as follows:

- Previously established universities and the National University of Ireland (NUI) are recognised as autonomous and must have regard to QA guidelines in the development of their internal QA procedures.
- Other awarding bodies, namely the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and institutes of technology, must have regard to the QA guidelines prior to the approval of their QA procedures by QQI.
- Independent or private providers providing research degrees that come voluntarily to QQI to seek approval of their QA procedures and access to QQI research awards. Such providers must have regard to the QA guidelines prior to the approval of their QA procedures by QQI.
- Linked providers must have regard to these QA guidelines prior to the approval of their QA procedures by a designated awarding body.

Providers concerned with the administration and delivery of other research-intensive degree programmes with significant taught elements are advised to consider these guidelines and apply them insofar as relevant.