

4.1 Quality Assurance in Education and Training

In an education and training context, quality assurance has to do with matters such as:

- whether the education, training, research and related services provided by a provider are fit for their professed purpose
- the trustworthiness of the qualifications awarded or recognised
- the net contribution of the education and training provision to the common good
- accountability, openness and transparency
- the standards of awards

The term “quality assurance” is used to describe the processes that seek to ensure that the learning environment (including teaching and research) reaches an acceptable threshold of quality. QA is also used to describe the enhancement of education provision and the standards attained by learners. UNESCO defines quality assurance (QA) as “...an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of ... [an] education system, institution or program.”

In all cases, quality assurance is the responsibility of the provider.

QQI has an external quality assurance role in ensuring and communicating to the public that providers have appropriate quality assurance procedures in place and that these are implemented and effective. This is achieved by:

1. Issuing guidelines for the establishment of providers’ QA procedures (following consultation with stakeholders in the education and training and qualifications system)
2. Subsequently reviewing the effectiveness of those procedures

QQI also has a responsibility as an international agency to ensure that European policies and international effective practice are implemented nationally, as appropriate to the Irish context.