

## 5.1 Quality assurance of linked providers

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Where a designated awarding body makes an award in respect of a programme in a linked provider, it must include in its own QA procedures, procedures to **approve, monitor** and **review** the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures by each of its linked providers.

Such procedures will cover:

- Approval of the quality assurance procedures of linked providers whose programme(s) leads to an award of the designated awarding body, having regard to QQI QA guidelines as set out below.
- Monitoring of programmes leading to awards of the designated awarding body.
- Arrangements to ensure that enrolled learners can complete programmes leading to similar awards in the event that the initial provider cease to offer the programme(s) for whatever reason, including cessation of the awarding function by the awarding body. These requirements are for the protection of enrolled learners on linked provider programmes leading to awards of the designated awarding body. Those linked providers wishing to seek the International Education Mark in future will be required to have arrangements in place for the protection of enrolled learners that accord with the conditions set out in Section 65 of the 2012 Act.
- Review by the designated awarding body of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures established and implemented by the linked provider under Section 37 of the 2012 Act. The review of a linked provider shall be carried out by the designated awarding body in accordance with the procedures for cyclical review established by QQI. Procedures should include the provision to send QQI a copy of the report of the review.
- The withdrawal by the designated awarding body of approval of a linked provider's quality assurance procedures under Section 39 of the 2012 Act. This will include procedures to forward notice of any such withdrawal to QQI.

## Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines

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- The appointment of an independent appeals person for the purposes of hearing an appeal under Section 39 of the 2012 Act.
- The hearing of an appeal under Section 39 of the 2012 Act.

Designated awarding bodies may choose to adopt the following guidelines for their linked providers, *QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines, Statutory QA Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis, April 2016.*