

1 INTRODUCTION

These statutory, sector-specific, quality assurance (QA) guidelines for designated awarding bodies supplement the Core Quality Assurance Guidelines which are applicable to **all** providers. While the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines provide the majority of the quality assurance guidance required, these sector-specific guidelines add to the core by addressing the specific responsibilities of the designated awarding bodies as set out in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (the 2012 Act). Designated awarding bodies should also refer to QQI's other topic-specific quality assurance guidelines as appropriate.

The designated awarding bodies are those bodies with the authority in law to make awards and to whom the 2012 Act applies. At present, these are the previously established universities, the National University of Ireland, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Designated awarding bodies have responsibilities towards linked providers in the 2012 Act which are referenced in this set of guidelines.

1.1 What is the purpose of these guidelines?

These guidelines set out additional, statutory, quality assurance guidelines specific to designated awarding bodies. These additional QA guidelines address the responsibilities of designated awarding bodies in their capacity as:

- Autonomous, independent, awarding bodies, setting standards and making their own state awards and awards for linked providers¹;
- Designated awarding bodies operating in cooperation with QQI and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), as defined within the 2012 Act;
- Designated awarding bodies with responsibilities for linked providers;
- “Relevant providers” as set out in the 2012 Act; and
- Experienced higher education institutions seeking to continuously improve and enhance their internal quality assurance system.

1.2 To whom do they apply?

These guidelines are applicable to designated awarding bodies i.e. bodies with the authority in law to make awards and to whom the 2012 Act applies.

¹ A linked provider is a provider that is not a designated awarding body, but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.