

1 INTRODUCTION

These statutory, sector-specific, quality assurance (QA) guidelines for independent, private providers 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 more specific requirements of independent private providers.

Independent, private providers should also refer to QQI's other topic-specific, quality assurance guidelines as appropriate.

1.1 What is the purpose of these guidelines?

These statutory, sector-specific QA guidelines address the responsibilities of independent, private providers of higher, further and English language education and training (hereafter referred to as voluntary providers)¹ in the context of accessing the statutory and regulatory functions of QQI. These guidelines set out additional, statutory, quality assurance (QA) guidelines specific to voluntary providers that come to QQI on a voluntary basis for the purpose of:

- Gaining access to programme validation; and
- Authorisation to use the International Education Mark (IEM)

The approval of quality assurance procedures only has relevance in the context of a validated programme(s) leading to QQI awards and/or authorisation to use the IEM. The approval of quality assurance procedures has no standing in its own right; it does not confer any status upon a provider.

1.2 To whom do they apply?

These guidelines are applicable to independent, private providers of higher, further and English language education and training that seek approval of their quality assurance procedures from QQI on a voluntary basis.

¹ This is in cognisance of the fact that under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (the 2012 Act) such providers seek to have their QA procedures approved by QQI on a voluntary, rather than compulsory basis.