



3.2.3 Coordinating Providers of Apprenticeships

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Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to detail how KWETB ensure that the processes for establishment, provision and maintenance of Co-ordinating Providers contribute to the need of employers and also to the apprentice's personal education and continued professional development.

Scope

This procedure applies to all FET Provision and FET Provision-Second Providers. There is an integrated single policy, with integrated procedures for FET Provision and FET Provision-Second Providers.

Preamble

Apprenticeship programmes are national programmes designed to enable apprentices to achieve a national standards and requirements for vocational fields with specific agreed occupational profiles.

Currently, KWETB can be described as an apprenticeship stakeholder, with working relationships with co-ordinating providers, employers and apprentices.

Primary stakeholders in apprenticeships:

- Employers of apprentices
- The Coordinating Provider (can be fulfilled by a relevant or linked provider as defined in Section 2 of the Qualifications and Quality Act, 2012).
- Collaborating providers including off-the-job providers
- Apprentices



A relevant provider is a provider whose programme of education and training is validated under section 45 of the Act (2012); or a provider that has entered into an arrangement with an awarding body under Section 48. A linked provider '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' (Q&Q Act, 2012).

QQI has published topic specific guidelines for QA of apprenticeship, and this document, together with specific Apprenticeship documents, and Core Statutory QA Guidelines (QQI, 2016) provides a guide to the quality assurance of apprenticeship programmes. The relationship between the co-ordinating provider and key stakeholders is essential to ensure that the apprenticeship programme meets the requirements of the occupation. Co-ordinating Providers are necessary because there are single apprenticeship programmes per occupational profile and multiple stakeholders.

The Co-ordinating Provider

A Co-ordinating Provider is a relevant or linked provider who is ultimately responsible for providing (as defined by the 2012 Act) an apprenticeship programme. Coordinating providers are responsible for the development and maintenance of the curriculum, delivery and evaluation of apprenticeship programmes and have quality assurance accountability to QQI in respect of employer-led apprenticeships. The Co-ordinating Provider may be a part of a wider consortium, including, for example, employers, employer representative bodies and ETBs.

The Co-ordinating Provider liaises with employers and other providers involved as partners in the apprenticeship. An Initial Consortium Steering Group (ICSG) identifies the entity which is to be the Co-ordinating Provider (an existing relevant or linked provider), or may establish a new entity to become the Co-ordinating Provider.

The Co-ordinating Provider:

- a. Takes responsibility for the development of a programme proposal to go forward for validation.
- b. Establishes a Programme Board, that is representative of employers and education and training providers, to advise on the programme proposal and operation.
- c. Ensures that the apprenticeship programme conforms to, and evolves with, the requirements of the occupation; is enterprise-led; and meets labour market needs.
- d. Develops assessment instruments that adequately support certification of achievement of learning outcomes, employ appropriate grading systems, and all necessary appeal mechanisms. The assessment systems should embrace both on-the-job and off-the-job phases.
- e. Applies to the awarding body for validations (or validate the programme if it has the required awarding authority).
- f. Develops such administrative systems as are necessary to ensure efficient and effective management of programme provision, including tracking and managing apprentices' progress

- g. Manages the programme during operational delivery.
- h. Develops and maintains systems for access (in collaboration with employers of apprentices), transfer, progression and expulsion of participants, including all necessary appeal processes.
- i. Co-ordinates the actions of other providers of education and training, which are involved in curriculum development and in programme provisions.
- j. Co-ordinates with employers to ensure (i) that recruitment of apprentices considers the knowledge, skill and competence required for apprentices to have a reasonable chance of completing the programme and (ii) the effective and efficient training of apprentices within the workplace to reach programme learning outcomes.
- k. Where the relevant occupation is regulated (whether by law or in fact) the Co-ordinating Provider consults with regulators to ensure that the criteria for access to the apprenticeship and the apprenticeship programme remain consistent with applicable regulation.
- l. Agree and implement a system with employers for evaluation and review of employer training capacity and for addressing any gaps in that capacity. This might, for example, be accomplished through the formal involvement of a Consortium Steering Group.
- m. Ensure that any expansion of the consortium, through additional providers or employers, has due regard to any relevant quality assurance matters.
- n. Develop a quality system to manage curriculum and assessment updates and improvements where multiple providers are involved, so as to ensure that the national character of the curriculum is maintained and that the approved curriculum is implemented by all collaborating providers, in accordance with the unique validated programme for the apprenticeship.

The Local Collaborative Provider (LCP)

Local Collaborative Providers are responsible for the delivery of the apprenticeship programme in their own institution. Each LCP appoints a team to manage the local delivery of the programme.

LCPs are required to have and apply QA policies and procedures that are commensurate with those of QQI and the Co-ordinating Provider. These are considered during the due diligence and risk assessment process in advance of LCP approval, and are monitored through annual reports to the national programme board.

SOLAS Statutory Responsibility

SOLAS has statutory responsibility to approve and register employers and apprentices; to establish training orders and to make statutory rules for the operation of apprenticeships. SOLAS has responsibility for managing the national apprenticeship programme. Authorised Officers (AOs) located within each ETB carry out activities on behalf of SOLAS and implement its statutory brief. The authorised officers:

- Brief employers on their role and responsibilities in the on-the-job elements of the programme including the Apprenticeship Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- Visit employer sites
- Approve employers' sites as suitable locations to deliver the relevant apprenticeship programmes
- Maintain employer and apprentice registers
- Work collaboratively with the programme team delivering the apprenticeship

Stages of Apprenticeship in relation to QA

Specific stages of apprenticeships relevant to quality assurance and validation of programmes of education and training are:

Stage 1: Approval of an occupational profile (Apprenticeship Council).

Stage 2: Development of a detailed apprenticeship programme for the purpose of seeking validation of the programme leading to an award at a specified level in the NFQ.

Stage 3: Validation of the apprenticeship programme for an award in the NFQ. The awarding body satisfies itself as to the fitness of the proposed programme in light of the award sought.

Stage 4: Provision of the apprenticeship programme and assessment of learners' achievements.

Stage 5: Continual reviews and periodic revalidation of the programme.

Approval of the occupational profile is the preserve of the Apprenticeship Council. All of the other stages are relevant to quality assurance.

Procedure – 3.2.3 Co-ordinating Providers of Apprenticeship – Local Collaborative Provider (LCP)

1	<p>KWETB should provide the Co-ordinating Provider with all documentation required for due diligence and risk assessment to take place.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An agreement (MOA for Collaborating Providers) should be signed with the Co-ordinating Provider setting out each organisation's responsibilities for the delivery and management of the apprenticeship programme. 2. KWETB should appoint the following team to manage the local delivery of the programme: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A local programme board (LPB) b. A local programme director (LPD) (who is a member of the national programme board - NPB) c. A local administrator for the programme (LAP) d. Local module leaders (LM) to deliver off-the-job education and training elements
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	e. Local academic success coaches (LASC) to monitor the institution's own apprentices' progress through the programme.
2	Local collaborative provider staff should participate in induction and ongoing training provided by the national programme director (NPD)
3	KWETB should appoint local module leaders (LMLs) who are responsible for delivery of the off-the-job elements of the apprenticeship programme. LMLs report to the local programme director (LPD).
4	KWETB should appoint academic success coaches (ASCs) who should act as advocates for the apprentices and enable their successful completion of the apprenticeship and provide support to workplace mentors. KWETB ASCs should report to the LPD.
5	The LPD and employment liaison managers should liaise with employers and apprentices to ensure that all programme learning outcomes can be achieved.
6	Local programme directors should review self-evaluations; evaluations and semester evaluations by apprentices.
7	Local module leaders should engage in consultation led by national module leaders about assessment and the developments of assessment materials which are submitted to the national programme board for approval prior to use.
8	The authorised officer should maintain a relationship with the national programme director and to attend briefings arranged by them.



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