

REQUEST FOR QUOTES:  
HIGH LEVEL REPORT TO MARK 20<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL  
FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS  
FOR QQI

FEBRUARY 2023



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Adding Value to Qualifications



## Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Context and Service Requirements .....	3
Range of Services required: .....	4
3. Contract management .....	5
Personnel.....	5
4. Cost Model/Price Schedule.....	5
Pricing Schedule.....	5
5. Qualification Criteria.....	8
Freedom of Information .....	8
Tax Clearance .....	8
Withholding Tax .....	9
Conflict of Interest.....	9
Award Criteria .....	10



## 1. Introduction

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training in Ireland.

The functions of QQI are set out in law and include the provision of advice and information to the Minister for Education and Skills on matters concerning policy and practice with respect to quality assurance and improvement in education and training, as well as statutory functions in the areas of:

- External quality assurance of further and higher education and training.
- Validation of programmes and making of awards for certain providers in the further and higher education and training sectors.
- Maintaining, developing, and reviewing the National Framework of Qualifications.
- Maintaining the Irish Register of Qualifications, a database of quality assured education and training programmes and qualifications in Ireland.
- Providing advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) Ireland.
- Protecting academic integrity and addressing academic fraud and cheating within the further and higher education and training sectors.

The information leaflet - *Who we are and what we do*<sup>1</sup> provides an overview of the services and the organisations we work with and is available on our website, [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

---

<sup>1</sup> (<http://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Who%20We%20Are-Booklet-August%2017.pdf>).



## 2. Context and Service Requirements

2023 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)<sup>2</sup>. To mark this occasion, QQI wishes to commission a high-level report which will serve as a comprehensive overview of the past, present, and future of the NFQ. The report will include a wide range of stakeholder perspectives, including the learner voice. This report will not evaluate the success of the NFQ or make recommendations for future developments.

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a 10-level system used to describe qualifications in the Irish education and training system. The NFQ shows how General Education Awards, Further Education and Training and Higher Education Awards are mapped against the 10 levels of the framework.

It describes [what learners need to know, understand and be able to do to achieve a qualification at a given level](#). It lists the main qualifications awarded at each level and pathways from one NFQ level to the next.

The NFQ allows you to compare qualifications to help with your choice of programme or course, knowing that it will be recognised at home and abroad. All qualifications included on the NFQ are listed in the [Irish Register of Qualifications](#).

The NFQ is aligned with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). Alignment with these two frameworks makes it easier for you to compare qualifications across Europe. A single [updating report](#) re-referencing the NFQ to the EQF and re-confirming compatibility of the NFQ with QF-EHEA was completed in 2020.

QQI is now seeking a suitable provider to lead the development of this high-level report which will include documenting the history of the NFQ and submissions from stakeholders outlining their experience of the NFQ. As such, the successful provider will be required to manage and coordinate the delivery of the full report, including authoring of parts of the report, editing submissions from stakeholders for inclusion in the report and commissioning additional sections of the report. The successful provider will be required to develop a repository of relevant documentation and information which will enable a curated archive in due course. Ideally the successful provider will be familiar with the NFQ, and the Irish education and training sector and have a wide network from which to invite submissions and perspectives.

---

<sup>2</sup> [National Framework of Qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#)



The final report will be launched at an event to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NFQ scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The successful provider will be expected to attend this event, present the report and may be requested to participate in a panel discussion.

### **In this Regard, the Range of Services required:**

Specific services that may be required include but are not limited to.

- Conduct background research and information gathering to plan the structure and content of the report and identify key perspectives requiring specific commissioned pieces (to be presented and agreed with QQI) including schedule for delivery
- Deliver a high-level report to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NFQ to include at least the following:
  - A comprehensive history of the NFQ from development and establishment until now including the influence of EU policy and influence on EU Policy, the current situation including establishment of IQQF and IRQ and future plans for NFQ and related European developments.
  - The report to reference all significant aspects of the NFQ including impact studies, referencing/re-referencing reports to European qualifications frameworks, recognition of prior learning; access, transfer and progression; international recognition of qualifications, credit systems;
  - Review of submissions from a wide range of stakeholders outlining experience of using/benefitting from the NFQ in and across FET and HET, by private and public providers and to include employers, recruiters and relevant public sector agencies including HEA, SOLAS and CSO. (Please note: the call for submissions will be circulated by QQI but may require input from the successful tenderer on wording/content of the call etc)
  - Required to propose specific articles to be included to QQI and commission those that are a
  - Required to ensure the stakeholder submissions include the learner perspective.
  - A review and refresh of the components of the NFQ – a ‘back to basics’ for the new generation of learners, staff and wider stakeholders in education and training. This will involve the identification of the main building blocks of the NFQ. This ‘back to basics’ approach will also be relevant to new Listed Awarding Bodies.
- Work closely with QQI to ensure that new/updated policies in relation to Listed Awarding Bodies, Review of ATP, RPL policy and IRQ and any other relevant national and international developments are highlighted as future development of the NFQ.
- Work closely with QQI, and the IQQF to ensure that the review and refresh of the NFQ components is accurate, appropriate and useful to the relevant audiences



- To act as author, editor, and commissioner in the delivery of said report to ensure wide representation of perspectives and with consideration for equality, diversity and inclusion. (Please note that commissioning of submissions may include a variety of mediums including interviews, written, video etc)
- To gather oral history resources of the origins and genesis of the NFQ
- To develop a repository of all relevant NFQ material to facilitate the curation of an archive in due course. Any advice regarding such an archive is welcome as part of this project.
- Develop 1-2 thought leadership articles related to the National Framework of Qualifications
- Participate in the dissemination of the report which will require, at a minimum, attendance at the event on 17<sup>th</sup> November and delivery of at least 2 online webinars.

The final deadline will be agreed with QQI on award of contract but to be no later than 30 September 2023. Please note a draft report must be provided to QQI at least two months before the final deadline. QQI will review the draft and provide feedback in advance of finalisation.

## 3. Contract management

### Personnel

Interested providers are asked to indicate how they would engage with QQI and should provide information on the following:

- i. Day-to-day Account Manager
- ii. Qualifications and experience of the team assigned to QQI.

Any changes to the proposed team during the term of the contract should be communicated in advance with QQI. In turn, where a requirement arises to change a member of the team, their replacement must be at the same level of seniority and have appropriate experience and knowledge.

## 4. Cost Model/Price Schedule

### Pricing Schedule

Interested providers are requested to provide pricing for the contract.

Interested providers are also requested to confirm that the same rates will apply for any extensions, if applicable.



<b>Item</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Price excluding VAT</b>
1	Estimated cost of background research and information gathering to plan structure of report & identify key stakeholders	
2	Estimated cost of reviewing and editing submissions received by QQI for inclusion in report	
3	Estimated cost of commissioning specific pieces (ie) inviting specific submissions and editing same (Please note that this should take account of the variety of mediums that may be used)	
4	Estimated cost of producing a comprehensive report on all inputs outlined above (Please note: proofing, formatting and final printing and publication will be managed by QQI)	
5	Estimated cost of developing a resource to emphasise the component parts of the NFQ (ie) back to basics; including working with IQQF to ensure relevant and appropriate	
6	Estimated cost of gathering the oral history of the origins of the NFQ	
7	Estimated cost of developing a comprehensive repository of NFQ material	
8	Estimated cost of developing 1-2 thought leadership articles	
9	Estimated cost of attendance at the event on 17 <sup>th</sup> November and delivery of 2 online webinars.	
10	Daily rates that would apply to an extension of contract.	



10	Optional: Estimated cost for development of a curated archive of NFQ material <sup>3</sup>	
----	--	--

---

<sup>3</sup> Please note that this section is entirely optional. If a proposed tenderer has the requisite skills for the development of an archive, this will be considered as part of the overall project but will not contribute to the scoring.





## 5. Qualification Criteria

Candidates will be initially evaluated by reference to the following qualification criteria:

- a. Addressing in full the requirements set out in this RFQ.
- b. Stated ability to meet all requirements.
- c. Inclusion of all information requested.
- d. Inclusion of **2-3** relevant client references, including business name, detailed description of work, and comparability to services required.

Only those proposals that satisfy all the above qualifying criteria will be eligible for further evaluation.

All queries or requests for clarification relating to any aspect of this procurement competition or of this RFQ can be submitted to Órla Barry by emailing [obarry@qqi.ie](mailto:obarry@qqi.ie). Queries or requests for clarifications will be accepted no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 at noon.

### Freedom of Information

Interested providers should be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, information provided by them during this public procurement competition may be liable to be disclosed.

Candidates are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their RFQ response should not be disclosed because of its commercial sensitivity. If candidates consider that certain information is not to be disclosed because of its commercial sensitivity, candidates should, when providing such information, clearly identify same and specify the reasons for its commercial sensitivity. If candidates do not identify it as commercially sensitive, it is potentially liable to be released in response to a Freedom of Information request without further consultation with you. QQI will, where possible, consult with candidates about commercially sensitive information so identified before deciding on a request received under the Freedom of Information Act.

### Tax Clearance

It will be a condition of the award of any contract under this RFT that the successful candidate shall for the term of any such contract, comply with all EU and domestic taxation law and requirements, including but not being limited to Circular 43/2006 issued by the Department of Finance. This Circular and further information is available at [www.finance.gov.ie](http://www.finance.gov.ie) and [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).



Prior to the award of any contract pursuant to this RFQ, the successful candidate shall be required to supply its Tax Clearance Access Number and Tax Reference Number to facilitate online verification of their tax status by QQI. By supplying these numbers, the successful candidate acknowledges and agrees that QQI has the permission of the successful candidate to verify its tax cleared position online.

Further information can be obtained by contacting:

*Revenue Commissioners  
Collector Generals Office  
Francis Street  
County Limerick  
Ireland*

*Telephone No: +353 (0) 61310 310 or 1890 203 070 or [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).*

You may also contact your local tax office if you are an Irish Company.

### **Withholding Tax**

Where applicable, payments shall be subject to Irish 'Professional Services Withholding Tax' at the prevailing rate (currently at 20%) as laid down by the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland. Non-residents may be able to reclaim such deducted Tax from the *Office of the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland, International Claims Section* located currently at *Government Buildings, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.* (Tel: 353-1-6733533).

### **Conflict of Interest**

Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest on the part of a contractor, individual employees, agents, or subcontractors of a contractor must be fully disclosed to QQI as soon as the conflict or potential conflict is or becomes apparent. In the event of any conflict or potential conflict of interest, QQI may invite candidates to propose means by which the conflict might be removed. QQI will, at its absolute discretion, decide on the appropriate course of action, which may in appropriate circumstances include eliminating a contractor from the competition or terminating any contract entered into by a contractor.



## Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded based on the most economically advantageous submission in accordance with the following award criteria and the weightings below:

	Criteria	Weighting	Maximum Score	Minimum Score Required
A	<b>Experience of effectively delivering a similar project, taking into account the nature and scope of the project.</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>180</b>
<i>Bidders should detail their experience in the provision of reporting and review in the education and training policy sectors and how they will meet the requirements set out above. Evidence of previous relevant research and review will be essential.</i>				
B	<b>Technical Merit of Personnel Assigned</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>120</b>
<i>Bidders should provide career profile information on the team member(s) contributing to the report indicating each members' role and responsibilities and their professional experience and credentials for the role proposed must be provided.</i>				
C	<b>Service Delivery and Quality Assurance</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>Bidders should provide evidence of their project management expertise, project plan, and methodology to collate and review/assess key inputs</i>				
D	<b>Overall cost of the contract and hourly rate for additional work where required</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>240</b>
<i>Candidates are required to outline their hourly rate proposal exclusive of VAT.</i>				



**Qualitative criteria will be scored using the following baseline scoring system:(see \* below).**

<b>80% to 100%</b>	A response with very few or no weaknesses that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the requirements and assurance that the candidate will deliver to a high standard.
<b>60% to 79%</b>	A response which demonstrates a good understanding of requirements and gives reasonable assurance of delivery to a good standard.
<b>40% to 59%</b>	A response where reservations exist. Lacks full credibility/convincing detail, and there is a significant risk that the response will not deliver a successful outcome for QQI.
<b>20% to 39%</b>	A response where serious reservations exist. This may be because, for example, insufficient detail is provided, and the response has fundamental flaws, or is seriously inadequate or seriously lacks credibility with a high risk of non-delivery.
<b>0% to 19%</b>	Response completely fails to address the criterion under consideration.

**\* A candidate may be awarded any baseline score between 0 and 100% under criterion (A) to (C).**

**NOTE 2:** The lowest cost quote that also meets all the minimum requirements of the **qualitative** award criteria (A) to (C) above will receive the maximum score achievable under this criterion. The scores of the other valid quotes will be calculated using the following formula:

<b>Lowest Cost Quote meeting minimum requirements</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Cost for the Quote being evaluated</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Maximum Points available for Cost</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Formula employed</b>	<b><math>\frac{200 \times A}{B}</math></b>

**NOTE 3:** Candidates should ensure in their quote that they provide detailed information in respect of all aspects of the contract award criteria as stated above. This will enable QQI to assess fully the extent of their offers.



### Closing Date for Submission

All responses to this RFQ must be submitted to [obarry@qqi.ie](mailto:obarry@qqi.ie) . The closing date for submissions is **noon on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023** unless otherwise advised by QQI.