



QQI

POLICY.

**Policy on Authorisation to Use
the International Education Mark**



**Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann**
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

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1 FOREWORD

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established in November 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The 2012 Act was amended subsequently by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019, and references to the legislation hereafter will be to the 2012 Act as amended.

The 2012 Act as amended sets out the functions of QQI. These include the requirements to establish a code or codes of practice for the provision of programmes of education and training to international learners, and to authorise the use of the international education mark by providers that comply with a code of practice. This document establishes policy and criteria for providers of higher education (HE) and English language education (ELE) programmes seeking authorisation to use the international education mark. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners¹
- Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of English Language Education to International Learners²
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers.³

1 [Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners.](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/code-of-practice-for-provision-of-programmes-of-higher-education-to-international-learners.pdf)
<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/code-of-practice-for-provision-of-programmes-of-higher-education-to-international-learners.pdf>

2 [Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of English Language Education to International Learners.](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/code-of-practice-for-provision-of-programmes-of-english-language-education-to-international-learners.pdf)
<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/code-of-practice-for-provision-of-programmes-of-english-language-education-to-international-learners.pdf>

3 [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers.](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines-for-english-language-education-providers.pdf)
<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines-for-english-language-education-providers.pdf>

2 EXPLANATORY BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK (IEM): PURPOSE, USES AND BENEFITS

The International Education Mark (IEM) is a new quality mark that is intended to represent and promote public confidence in the quality of Irish providers delivering education and training programmes to international learners. The IEM will be awarded to providers who have demonstrated that they meet national standards to ensure a quality experience for international learners from enrolment through to the completion of their programmes of education and training.

For international learners, the IEM

- will provide a reliable guide to trustworthy and quality assured providers of HE and ELE programmes in Ireland;
- will ensure that they are recruited by providers in an ethical manner;
- will affirm that the qualifications learners present to HE providers for the purpose of admission will be assessed fairly in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- will contribute to ensuring the quality and consistency of their learning experiences through the provision of good quality academic and other service supports by their providers;
- will guarantee the protection of their interests in circumstances where their chosen provider ceases to trade or ceases to deliver their chosen programme.

For providers of education and training the IEM

- will provide state attestation to the quality of providers and their programmes;
- will support their marketing and promotional activities;
- will establish clear, nationally agreed threshold standards for the care of international students.

To achieve these objectives, the IEM will be grounded in existing national quality assurance infrastructure and enhanced through new statutory codes of practice for providers, all of which are provided for in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as amended.⁴

⁴ Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (irishstatutebook.ie); Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (irishstatutebook.ie)

2.2 EM AUTHORISATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO DIFFERENT PROVIDER GROUPS

The legislation underpinning the IEM enables QQI to authorise its use by different groups of providers (see section 3 below). QQI has determined that it will specify and authorise the use of the IEM for HE and ELE providers. These provider groups will demonstrate their compliance with distinct codes of practice developed for each group: one for higher education, the HE Code; and one for English language education, the ELE Code (see section 5 below).

This policy decision is informed, in part, by the distinction made in Section 60(1)(a)(i) of the 2012 Act as amended between programmes leading to awards included within the NFQ and English language programmes. The Act distinguishes, in effect, different classes of programmes – ELE programmes and programmes that lead to awards included within the NFQ – which, in general, are offered by different provider types. It clearly points the way to establishing distinct codes of practice to be complied with by providers of HE and ELE programmes for the purpose of obtaining authorisation to use the IEM.

The other category of programmes referenced in Section 60(1)(a)(i) of the 2012 Act as amended – programmes leading to awards included within the NFQ – is less fine-grained. In determining that this category will be confined to HE providers, QQI has taken its lead from successive national strategies on international education, which have identified higher education and English language education as the key areas for strategic development in establishing the Irish education system as a fully internationalised system that attracts international student talent.⁵ The same strategic focus on higher education and English language education is otherwise reflected in the established immigration criteria on the eligibility of certain programmes and providers for non-EU/EEA students wishing to study on a full-time basis in Ireland (see also section 2.6 below).

While QQI has decided to authorise use of the IEM by HE and ELE providers initially, the legislation also gives QQI discretionary authority to revoke or amend an existing code of practice, or to issue different codes of practice. Through the mechanisms of amending an existing code of practice, or issuing different codes of practice, QQI could extend the authorisation to use the IEM to other categories of providers at a future date, if there was sufficient policy imperative to proceed in this direction. The introduction of different codes of practice by QQI could also be applied to different types of programme provision associated with international education, such as international foundation year programmes or transnational education programmes, which again, if policy dictated, would enable QQI to authorise the use of the IEM specifically in relation to these areas of provision.

2.3 THE IEM AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Initially, QQI will authorise the IEM in relation to international education provision within the HE and ELE sectors. It is noteworthy that the HE and ELE sectors have evolved in distinct ways historically, one consequence of which is that there has been significant variation between the two sectors

⁵ See especially *Irish Educated. Globally Connected. An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020* (Department of Education and Skills), pp.7-9; *Global Citizens 2030. Ireland's International Talent and Innovation Strategy* (Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, 2024), pp. 4, 16-17, 33, 44. See also section 2.5 of this document.

in the way they have engaged with the state's quality assurance and qualifications systems. As a result, the codes of practice for the respective sectors, while sharing some common features, will also have distinct characteristics. These relate to the way quality assurance features in the two codes of practice, and how it will underpin the authorisation by QQI to use the IEM.

In higher education, statutory quality assurance arrangements have been in place since the late 1990s and are encapsulated in Part 3 of the 2012 Act as amended. These statutory quality assurance arrangements are set out in a comprehensive set of policy documents developed by QQI since its establishment in 2012, including the *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all providers*.⁶ Any HE institution seeking authorisation to use the IEM must comply with these arrangements. Specifically, the 2012 Act as amended requires applicant HE institutions to have established procedures for quality assurance under Section 28 of the Act, and the IEM will be an attestation, in large measure, of the strength and effectiveness of existing procedures. The 2012 Act as amended also provides for the enhancement of existing procedures through the establishment of a statutory code of practice for providers offering HE programmes to international learners. The HE Code establishes clear expectations in relation to the quality of service and supports available to international learners in Ireland, and to learners outside the state enrolled on HE programmes leading to major and non-major awards included within the NFQ.

In general, ELE providers do not offer programmes that lead to awards that are included within the NFQ. Consequently, the sector has not had cause hitherto to formally engage with the statutory quality assurance arrangements that underpin the provision and resultant qualifications in the tertiary education system. Section 61(6) of the 2012 Act as amended, however, makes provision for an additional class of providers that may be treated as relevant providers for the sole purpose of authorisation to use the IEM. This class of providers encompasses ELE providers. Any ELE provider wishing to obtain authorisation to use the IEM will be required to become a relevant provider and to establish procedures for quality assurance under section 28 of the 2012 Act as amended.

The establishment of quality assurance procedures by ELE providers will be a key component of IEM implementation in the ELE sector. The IEM implementation process will embed compliance with a formal quality assurance system for ELE providers that is grounded in new statutory quality assurance guidelines for ELE providers. The new guidelines, which are compatible with QQI's core statutory quality assurance guidelines, will also support the alignment of ELE programmes to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).⁷ In effect, the IEM authorisation process will extend the national quality assurance infrastructure to the ELE sector in a formal manner.

2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE IEM WITH OTHER MEASURES IN THE 2012 ACT AS AMENDED

The 2012 Act as amended also supports the objectives of the IEM in providing for an additional suite of measures that are designed to protect the broader interests of learners enrolled on

6 [gg-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#). The full suite of QQI's QA guidelines are available at: [Quality assurance guidelines | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#), <http://ehea.info/page-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance>

7 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (coe.int)

programmes with Irish providers. These learner interests range widely, spanning the quality and consistency of their learning experiences, the recognition of their learning achievements and their general welfare. They thus involve a mix of quality assurance, qualifications, and regulatory matters, and encompass, besides the IEM, provisions concerning the academic integrity of the Irish education and training system, specifically in relation to combatting the facilitation of learner cheating. They also include provisions relating to the inclusion of awards within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) made by universities and other designated awarding bodies (DABs), and by listed awarding bodies (international, professional, and sectoral bodies). They are completed by legislative arrangements that will oblige independent/private providers to undergo due diligence assessments when they engage statutorily with QQI and to subscribe to a new scheme for the protection of enrolled learners (PEL), which will be underpinned by a statutory learner protection fund.⁸

2.4.1 DUE DILIGENCE ASSESSMENT

QQI is responsible for undertaking due diligence assessments of specified providers that engage with QQI on a statutory basis. It also bears responsibility for managing the learner protection fund (PEL). Both the due diligence assessments and the learner protection fund are integral parts of the IEM. All independent/private HE and ELE providers that engage on a statutory basis with QQI are expected to satisfy the due diligence criteria set out under section 29(B) of the 2012 Act as amended. Each ELE provider, who in seeking authorisation to use the IEM will be engaging with QQI on a statutory basis for the first time, will be required to undergo a due diligence assessment as part of its IEM application. Specifically, ELE providers will be required to satisfy certain criteria concerning governance, finance, compliance with the law, and the maintenance of an appropriately qualified and stable complement of staff,⁹ in order to give QQI reasonable assurance that they have the capacity and capability to implement robust quality assurance procedures and to provide coherent programmes of education and training. These requirements are set out in regulations determined by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Specified independent/private HE providers that have had their quality assurance procedures approved by QQI under the 2012 Act as amended, and who have had HE programmes validated by QQI under the same act, will not be required to undergo a due diligence assessment as part of their application for authorisation to use the IEM, although they are expected to satisfy the due diligence criteria under section 29(B) of the 2012 Act as amended. Similarly, non-exempt linked providers who, prior to their application for authorisation to use the IEM, have had their quality assurance procedures approved by a designated awarding body, and have satisfied all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body, will not be required to undergo this statutory due diligence assessment as part of their application for authorisation to use the IEM, although they are expected to satisfy the due diligence criteria. All such HE providers will be expected to undergo due diligence assessment at a later date.¹⁰ The overall intent is that only

8 2012 Act as amended [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](#): s. 43A (learner cheating services); ss. 55A-55I (inclusion of awards in the NFQ); ss. 60-63 (IEM); sections 29A-29C (due diligence); ss. 64-67 (PEL and learner protection fund). The formal inclusion of the awards of designated awarding bodies in the NFQ is now provided for in a joint-sectoral protocol between the DABS and QQI: [Joint-sectoral protocol DABS and QQI: Joint-sectoral protocol DABS.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#).

9 On the staffing criterion see also QQI's *Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis*: [qq-2-sector-specific-qa-guidelines-for-private-and-independent-providers.pdf](#) (qqi.ie), pp. 2-3, 5, 8.

10 It is also the case that in assessing a specified HE provider's compliance with the HE Code, QQI may, in its discretion, request a specified HE provider to demonstrate to QQI that it meets the criteria specified under the Ministerial regulations (section 29A(1) 2012 Act as amended).

providers with sufficient financial resources, sound business practices, and a genuine commitment and capacity to meet learners' needs will secure state recognition for the education and training provision they offer.¹¹

The following institutions are exempt from the statutory due diligence requirements under section 65(6) of the 2012 Act as amended:

- previously established universities;
- technological universities;
- institutes of technology;
- the Institute of Public Administration, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Mary Immaculate College, Marino Institute of Education, and the National College of Art and Design.

2.4.2 PROTECTION OF ENROLLED LEARNERS (PEL) AND THE LEARNER PROTECTION FUND

Part 6 of the 2012 Act as amended provides for the new statutory PEL scheme and the underpinning Learner Protection Fund (LPF). The new scheme applies to programmes of education and training of three months' duration or longer, and English language programmes. It will encompass:

- independent/private HE providers with programmes leading to QQI awards;
- independent/private providers who offer programmes that lead to QQI's pre-HE foundation awards for international students, and QQI's teaching English as a second or other language (TESOL) awards;
- linked providers in respect of provision that is made through designated awarding bodies, unless named as exempt in the 2012 Act as amended;
- listed awarding bodies and their associated providers;
- ELE providers who receive authorisation to use the IEM.

The following institutions are exempt from the statutory PEL scheme:

- previously established universities;
- technological universities;
- institutes of technology;
- the Institute of Public Administration, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Mary Immaculate College, Marino Institute of Education, and the National College of Art and Design.

¹¹ It is of note that parallel arrangements are in place for publicly funded providers, who are subject to a range of corporate governance requirements as independent autonomous institutions, including requirements under their own legislation, and the Higher Education Authority's Governance Oversight Framework: [Higher Education Authority Governance Oversight Framework - Higher Education Institutions \(hea.ie\)](https://www.heai.ie/governance-oversight-framework).

Participation in the statutory protection of enrolled learners (PEL) scheme, including contributing to the Learner Protection Fund, will be a requirement for all independent/private providers who are authorised to use the IEM. The scheme will ensure that all learners who commence a programme, or enrol on a programme, that leads to a QQI award, or that is delivered by a provider authorised to use the IEM, will be able to complete their programme where their chosen provider ceases to trade or ceases to provide the programme. In circumstances where it is not possible to facilitate programme completion for affected learners, they will receive a refund of the most recently paid fees in respect of that programme.

It is of note that certain independent/private providers have existing statutory PEL arrangements in place. The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science has the discretion to provide for the continuity of existing statutory PEL arrangements for a maximum of three years from the commencement of section 29 of the 2012 Act as amended.

2.4.3 OTHER STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

Outside of the new suite of learner protection measures legislated for in 2019, there are existing obligations on providers that will have a bearing on QQI's decisions on the authorisation of the use of the IEM. These include, for example, the obligation on providers to furnish information on their programmes and awards to enrolled learners.¹² In addition, the designated awarding bodies (DABs) are obliged to provide for the statutory inclusion of their awards within the NFQ, in accordance with a joint sectoral protocol agreed with QQI.¹³ It is also the case that QQI is obliged to maintain a database of programmes that lead to awards that are included within the NFQ, of the awards themselves, and of any other programmes QQI thinks appropriate, such as ELE programmes.¹⁴ The database will also contain information on whether a particular provider is authorised to use the IEM, and the cooperation of providers and awarding bodies in populating it will be a key part of the IEM implementation process. It is intended that the database, the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ),¹⁵ will become the authoritative information source on programmes leading to awards included within the NFQ, those awards and other programmes offered by IEM authorised providers. As such, the IRQ will support national policy and strategy on international education, and immigration (see sections 2.5 and 2.6 below).

2.5 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

The IEM, as provided for in the 2012 Act as amended, assumes the policy objectives of the 'Quality Mark' that have been referenced in public policy on international education prior and subsequent to QQI's establishment in 2012.¹⁶ Successive national strategies on international education have identified two distinct strands in these policy objectives. The first, which is reflected in section 2.3 above, relates to quality. Specifically, the objectives have been, and continue to be, to place educational quality at the heart of the internationalisation of Ireland's education and training system, and to ensure that the quality of the learning experience is maintained and enhanced for all learners through a holistic approach to internationalisation.¹⁷

¹² 2012 Act as amended [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](#): s. 67.

¹³ 2012 Act as amended [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](#): s. 55B; Joint Sectoral Protocol, July 2022 [Joint-sectoral protocol DABs.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)

¹⁴ 2012 Act as amended [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](#): s. 79.

¹⁵ [Irish Register of Qualification \(irq.ie\)](#)

¹⁶ *Investing in Global Relationships. Ireland's International education Strategy 2010-15* (Department of Education and Skills 2010), pp. 14-16, 18, 35-36, 40, 44-46, 49, 53-54, 57, 59-60, 69, 79; *Irish Educated. Globally Connected*, pp. 29, 42, 47; *Global Citizens 2030*, pp. 16-17, 44.

¹⁷ *Investing in Global Relationships*, pp 44-48; *Irish Educated. Globally Connected*, pp 23-25; *Global Citizens 2030*, pp. 32-33, 44.

The second, and related strand, relates to regulation, and the recognition of an ‘imperative’ to maintain a ‘robust regulatory environment’ to protect and enhance the overall quality of the international student experience. This regulatory imperative extends both to student immigration procedures (see section 2.6 below), and the regulatory requirements for providers recruiting international students. The policy objectives here are to protect the interests of learners, to ensure the sustainability of Ireland’s international education offering and to safeguard Ireland’s reputation internationally.¹⁸

These policy objectives underpin the statutory provisions for the new due diligence and PEL arrangements and their relationship to the IEM. In implementing them, QQI is determined to work in partnership with all stakeholders, based on their shared commitment to the interests of learners, and to enhancing Ireland’s reputation as a preferred destination for international learners. QQI can only serve the interests of learners in collaboration with learners themselves, providers of education and training, government departments and their agencies, and all those of goodwill who want to help learners realise their potential, and contribute to Irish society and its economy, by providing them with safe learning opportunities, positive learning experiences and trustworthy programmes and qualifications. The introduction of the IEM has the potential to transform perceptions about international education in Ireland and to contribute to achieving a vision where the country is ‘internationally recognised for the development of global citizens through our internationalised education system and a market leader in attracting international student talent.’¹⁹

2.6 IMMIGRATION POLICY

In 2015, the Irish Government introduced a series of reforms to the student immigration system for international education to support the state’s international education strategy and to address abuses of the immigration regime and labour market identified at that time.²⁰ These reforms included the establishment of an Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP). The list is a reference point primarily for the Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) of the Department of Justice in considering study visas and/or immigration permissions for non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners wishing to study on a full-time basis. It is restricted to programmes and providers that meet certain specified criteria.²¹ The programmes are divided into five categories:

- grammes leading to non-major awards included within the NFQ
- Professional awards
- English language education programmes
- Foundation programmes.

18 *Investing in Global Relationships*, pp 48-49; *Irish Educated. Globally Connected*, pp 28-29; *Global Citizens 2030*, pp. 32-33, 44. See also the Government Policy Statement (May 2015) on the ‘Reform of the International education Sector and Student Immigration System’, available at: [6794897b14064e08bae9a9068a849075.pdf \(assets.gov.ie\)](https://assets.gov.ie/6794897b14064e08bae9a9068a849075.pdf)

19 *Irish Educated. Globally Connected. An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020* (Department of Education and Skills), p. 7.

20 Government Policy Statement (May 2015) on the ‘Reform of the International Education Sector and Student Immigration System’, available at: [6794897b14064e08bae9a9068a849075.pdf \(assets.gov.ie\)](https://assets.gov.ie/6794897b14064e08bae9a9068a849075.pdf)

21 The criteria are available at: [Interim List of Eligible Programmes \(ILEP\) - Immigration Service Delivery \(irishimmigration.ie\)](https://www.irishimmigration.ie/interim-list-of-eligible-programmes-ilep)

The ILEP is an interim measure pending the introduction of the IEM. Once the IEM is fully implemented, institutions will be required to gain authorisation to use the IEM in order to be eligible to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners. Transitional arrangements will be put in place to support providers in managing this change. All providers seeking authorisation to use the IEM are expected to cooperate with the Department of Justice in monitoring learner compliance with immigration law (see also section 3.3 below).

3 THE LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR THE IEM

3.1 STATUTORY PROVISIONS

The 2012 Act as amended (Part 5 sections 60-63) establishes a statutory basis for the IEM. Specifically, the Act requires QQI to:

- **publish and establish a code of practice** to be complied with by providers²² of programmes of education and training to:
 - international learners in the state enrolled on programmes leading to awards that are included within the NFQ²³;
 - international learners in the state enrolled on English language programmes;
 - learners outside the state enrolled on programmes leading to awards included within the NFQ.²⁴
- **specify an international education mark** to indicate that a provider is in compliance with the code of practice;
- **authorise** the use of the international education mark by a provider who complies with the code of practice;
- **review** compliance by a provider with the code of practice and the use of the international education mark;
- **withdraw authorisation** where there is a failure of compliance by a provider with the code of practice or with the condition(s) attached to authorisation.

3.2 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR IEM AUTHORISATION

All providers applying for authorisation to use the IEM must have:

- established procedures for quality assurance (QA) under Section 28 of the 2012 Act as amended;
- and
- have established procedures for access, transfer, and progression under Section 56 of the 2012 Act as amended.

In the case of a linked provider invoking the HE Code for the purpose of applying for authorisation to use the IEM, its QA procedures must have been approved by the relevant designated awarding body and published and implemented by the linked provider under section 33 of the 2012 Act as amended. It is not a requirement of HE Code compliance or IEM authorisation that a review of effectiveness of the linked provider's QA procedures shall have been completed by the relevant

²² On the eligible categories of providers that may seek authorisation to use the IEM see section 4 below.

²³ Awards included within the NFQ are made by QQI, HE providers with delegated authority to make awards; other statutory awarding bodies referred to as designated awarding bodies (universities, technological universities, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and institutes of technology); or a listed awarding body providing one or more programmes leading to its own awards.

²⁴ Listed awarding bodies are excluded from seeking authorisation to use the IEM for the purposes of offering programmes to learners outside the state that lead to awards included within the NFQ.

designated awarding body prior to a linked provider applying for authorisation to use the IEM.

A provider may apply to QQI for authorisation to use the IEM:

- if all programmes offered by the provider to international learners lead to one or more awards included within the NFQ
- in respect of each programme offered by the provider which leads to an award included within the NFQ
- in respect of English language programmes.

Figure 2: Overview of statutory requirements for providers seeking authorisation to use the IEM

Statutory awarding bodies and other HE providers exempt from due diligence and PEL requirements	HE Providers (Independent/Private)	ELE Providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established QA procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established QA procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with new QA guidelines for ELE providers, and access, transfer and progression arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established access, transfer and progression (ATP) arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established access, transfer and progression (ATP) arrangements 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes/awards included within the NFQ under the Joint Sectoral Protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes/awards included within the NFQ under arrangements for QQI-validated programmes, providers with delegated authority to make awards, and LABs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with HE Code of Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with HE Code of Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with ELE Code of Practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due diligence requirements satisfied²⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due diligence requirements satisfied
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in national protection of enrolled learners (PEL) scheme at the appointed time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in national protection of enrolled learners (PEL) scheme at the appointed time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual upload of programmes/awards to IRQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual upload of programmes/awards to IRQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual upload of programmes to IRQ

25 In assessing a specified HE provider's compliance with the HE Code, QQI may, in its discretion, request a specified provider to demonstrate to QQI that it meets the criteria specified under the ministerial regulations (section 29A(1) 2012 Act as amended).

3.3 GENERAL CONDITIONS RELATING TO IEM AUTHORISATION

The authorisation of providers to use the IEM is subject to

- their having a place of business in the state;
- their cooperating with and assisting QQI in the performance of its functions in relation to the operation of the code of practice and the IEM;
- their providing QQI with such information as QQI may require for the performance of these functions;
- their cooperating with the Department of Justice in monitoring learner compliance with immigration law.

QQI may also impose any other conditions it thinks appropriate in relation to any authorisation of a provider to use the IEM, including specific conditions for an individual provider or classes of providers.²⁶

3.4 DEFINITION OF AN INTERNATIONAL LEARNER

Section 2(1) of the 2012 Act as amended defines an international learner ‘as a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the state primarily to receive education and training’. In relation to the establishment of codes of practice for the purpose of QQI authorising providers to use the international education mark, section 60(1) of the same act further defines an international learner as one who:

- is in the state enrolled on a programme leading to an award included within the NFQ;

or

- is in the state enrolled on an English language programme;

or

- is a learner outside the state enrolled on a programme leading to an award included within the NFQ.

3.4.1 INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

For the purposes of establishing the HE Code and QQI’s role in authorising HE providers to use the IEM, these definitions include the following categories of learners:

- EU/EEA/Swiss learners in the state undertaking programmes that lead to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;
- Non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners in the state undertaking programmes leading to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;

26 2012 Act as amended [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](#): ss.61(8) and 61(9).

- learners outside the state enrolled on programmes that lead to major or non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

For the purposes of establishing the HE Code and QQI's role in authorising HE providers to use the IEM, these definitions do not include the following categories of learners:

- Erasmus exchange learners;²⁷
- learners enrolled on study abroad programmes that do not lead to awards included within the NFQ;²⁸
- learners enrolled on continuous professional development programmes, and other professional training programmes, that do not lead to awards included within the NFQ.

In addition to the above categories, the definition of an international learner does not include citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland undertaking programmes that lead to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ. Under the Common Travel Area agreement between the governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom, Irish and British citizens are afforded the right to access all levels of education and training, and associated student support, in each other's state, on terms no less favourable than those for the citizens of that state.²⁹

3.4.2 INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

For the purposes of establishing the ELE Code and QQI's role in authorising ELE providers to use the IEM, these definitions include all categories of international learners enrolled on ELE programmes, including:

- non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners enrolled on ELE, foundation year and teacher training programmes of 12+ weeks' duration;
- non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners enrolled on ELE, foundation and teacher training programmes of fewer than 12 weeks' duration;
- EU/EEA/Swiss learners enrolled on ELE, foundation and teacher training programmes of any duration.

The definitions of international learners above do not include citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, under the Common Travel Area agreement between the governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom, as above in 3.4.1.

27 Irish HE providers participating in the major European exchange programme, Erasmus +, are required to achieve accreditation under the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), which is monitored by the Higher Education Authority. The ECHE encourages excellence in European universities' internationalisation policies and the concrete execution of their mobility activities. On the ECHE generally, see [Erasmus Charter for Higher Education | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education/).

28 For the purposes of establishing the HE Code and QQI's role in authorising HE providers to use the IEM, these definitions do not include learners on any form of study abroad, visiting student or exchange programme that does not lead to awards included within the NFQ.

29 *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the Common Travel Area and associated reciprocal rights and privileges: [Memorandum-of-Understanding-Ire-version.pdf \(dfa.ie\)](https://www.dfa.ie/~/media/DFAT/Files/International/2019/MOU-CTA-2019-2025.pdf).*

4 PROVIDERS SEEKING AUTHORISATION TO USE THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK

4.1 RELEVANT AND LINKED PROVIDERS

Providers who are relevant or linked providers, under the 2012 Act as amended, are eligible to apply for the IEM. Relevant providers are defined in section 2(1) of the 2012 Act as amended and include:

- previously established universities
- technological universities
- institutes of technology
- the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
- providers whose programmes are validated by QQI
- providers with delegated authority from QQI to make awards
- listed awarding bodies³⁰ providing one or more programmes leading to their own awards that are awards included within the NFQ.

Linked providers are defined under section 2(3) of the 2012 Act as amended. A linked provider is a provider who has a place of business in the state and is not a designated awarding body but enters an arrangement with a designated awarding body, under which it provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

4.2 PROVIDERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION (ELE) PROGRAMMES

Section 61(6) of the 2012 Act as amended makes provision for an additional class of providers that treats those providers as relevant providers for the sole purpose of authorisation to use the IEM. This class includes providers of English language education programmes who do not generally offer programmes that lead to awards that are awards included within the NFQ.

ELE providers will be required to become relevant providers for the purpose of accessing the IEM and must establish procedures for QA (under section 28 of the 2012 Act as amended), and procedures for access, transfer, and progression (under section 56 of the 2012 Act as amended).

ELE providers who establish a QA relationship with QQI for the sole purpose of authorisation to use the IEM will be expected to satisfy requirements relating to application, monitoring and review comparable to those that apply to any other relevant or linked provider authorised to use the IEM, as set out in sections 30-31 and 34-36 of the 2012 Act as amended.

³⁰ The 2012 Act as amended enables QQI to establish a new category of awarding body, called 'listed awarding bodies', who, on a voluntary basis, may obtain regulated access to the NFQ for their awards. The formal inclusion of such awards within the NFQ will benefit those learners who hold these awards, and further develop the NFQ as a mechanism for relating learning achievements and enhancing qualifications recognition. Listed awarding bodies may include professional bodies in areas such as law and accountancy, UK awarding bodies that issue vocational and technical qualifications, and international organisations or sectoral bodies that award qualifications linked to specific industries, technologies, or occupations.

5 THE CODES OF PRACTICE FOR THE PROVISION OF PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS

5.1 STATUTORY BASIS OF THE CODES OF PRACTICE

Section 60 of the 2012 Act as amended requires QQI to establish and publish a code of practice to be complied with – for the purposes of obtaining authorisation from QQI to use the IEM – by providers of programmes of education and training to certain categories of international learners (see sections 3.1 and 3.4 above).

Section 60 also provides that QQI

- may establish and publish different codes of practice for different relevant or linked providers, or groups of relevant or linked providers;³¹
- may publish different codes of practice for different classes of programmes or different types of provision;
- shall publish the code of practice in such manner and form as it thinks appropriate;
- may amend or revoke a code established under this section, specifying the date on which the code of practice shall come into operation.

QQI will establish and publish two codes of practice in respect of providers of different types of programmes: one for providers of HE programmes (the HE Code) and one for providers of ELE programmes (the ELE Code). This approach is informed by the distinction made in Section 60 of the 2012 Act as amended between programmes leading to awards included within the NFQ and English language programmes. It is also informed by established immigration criteria on the eligibility of certain programmes and providers to accept non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners wishing to study on a full-time basis in Ireland.³²

5.2 SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS IN THE CODES OF PRACTICE

Section 60(6) of the 2012 Act as amended also provides that the code(s) of practice shall specify requirements relating to:

- arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners;
- the collection of fees from enrolled learners;
- tax compliance of providers;
- providers' policies and procedures for the management of human resources.

QQI's policy approach is to address these requirements:

- through certain criteria included in the HE and ELE Codes;

³¹ See Section 4 above for the providers eligible to seek authorisation to use the IEM.

³² See Section 2.2 and 2.6 above.

- in specific regulations under section 29B(1) of the 2012 Act as amended – the latter are determined by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and will be evaluated by QQI in a due diligence assessment that will form part of the IEM application process or, as appropriate, in the context of other statutory engagements with independent/private providers;
- in the statutory scheme for the protection of enrolled learners – participation in the latter will be a requirement for all independent/private providers, both in relation to HE and ELE provision, who obtain authorisation to use the IEM.

5.3 HE AND ELE CODES OF PRACTICE

5.3.1 POLICY OBJECTIVES: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS

As set out in section 2 above, the IEM and the associated codes of practice will be informed by key national policy objectives relating to QA and the regulatory environment. These objectives are:

- to place quality at the heart of the internationalisation of Ireland’s education and training system;
- to ensure that the quality of the learning experience is maintained and enhanced for all learners through a holistic approach to internationalisation;
- to protect the interests of learners;
- to ensure the sustainability of Ireland’s international education offering;
- to safeguard Ireland’s reputation internationally.

These will be addressed through a combination of statutory QA arrangements (section 2.3 above); the due diligence assessment for independent/private providers (section 2.4.1 above); the statutory scheme for the protection of enrolled learners and the learner protection fund (section 2.4.2 above); the statutory requirements and general conditions for IEM authorisation (sections 3.2 and 3.3 above); and through the principles and criteria set out in the HE and ELE Codes. QQI has drawn upon international effective practice, as well as effective practice nationally, in preparing the principles and criteria of the respective HE and ELE Codes.³³

33 These include inter alia the Australian Government’s National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018: [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 \(internationaleducation.gov.au\)](https://www.internationaleducation.gov.au/national-code-of-practice-for-providers-of-education-and-training-to-overseas-students-2018); the New Zealand Qualification Authority’s *The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021*: [NZQA Pastoral-Care-Code-of-Practice_English.pdf](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Pastoral-Care-Code-of-Practice-English.pdf); the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education’s *Supporting and Enhancing the Experience of International Students in the UK: A Guide for UK Higher Education Providers* ([qaa.ac.uk](https://www.qaa.ac.uk)); the UK Council of for International Student Affairs’ (UKCISA) *Code of practice for members 2021*: [Code of practice.pdf \(ukcisa.org.uk\)](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Code-of-practice.pdf); *The National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents 2021*: [National-Code-of-Ethical-Practice-for-UK-Education-Agents-FINAL-Flag-version-2.pdf \(buila.ac.uk\)](https://www.buila.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/National-Code-of-Ethical-Practice-for-UK-Education-Agents-FINAL-Flag-version-2.pdf); Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services (Eaquals) *Excellence in Language Education - Eaquals*; Accreditation UK (British Council in partnership with English UK): Accreditation UK handbook

5.3.2 THE HE CODE OF PRACTICE

The HE Code is intended to supplement the *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all providers*.³⁴ Specifically, it establishes a set of principles and criteria requiring compliance from HE providers in the areas of:

- ethical and transparent marketing and recruitment processes (including the role of agents);
- fair and transparent admission processes, including procedures for the fair recognition of qualifications, that support the successful participation of international learners in their chosen programmes;
- the provision of accurate and clear information on study and subsistence costs;
- academic supports and other services for international learners;
- the provision of coherent English language supports to international learners whose first language is not English;
- provision of programmes to learners outside the state, offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

5.3.3 THE ELE CODE OF PRACTICE

The ELE Code, in tandem with new statutory QA guidelines for ELE providers, establishes a formal QA process for the ELE sector in Ireland that is compatible with QQI's core statutory QA guidelines, and which supports the alignment of ELE programmes to the Common European Reference Framework for Languages (CEFR). The ELE Code establishes a set of principles and criteria requiring compliance from ELE providers in the areas of:

- requirements for premises;
- operational, risk and human resources management;
- programme design;
- supports and services for international learners;
- ethical and transparent marketing and recruitment processes (including the role of agents);
- enrolment, fees, refunds, and subsistence.

5.4 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODES OF PRACTICE

QQI will determine an application from an eligible provider seeking authorisation to use the IEM by assessing the compliance of the provider with the HE Code or ELE Code of Practice for the provision of programmes to international learners. Compliance with one or other of the codes of practice is required of all providers applying for authorisation to use the IEM.

In relation to ELE providers applying for authorisation to use the IEM, QQI will also assess, in tandem with the assessment of code compliance, the suitability of their QA procedures with reference to the *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers*.

³⁴ [qq-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#). The full suite of QQI's QA guidelines is available at: [Quality assurance guidelines | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#).

Where applicable, as part of their application for IEM authorisation, QQI will also assess the compliance of certain providers under the ministerial regulations established under section 29(B)(1) of the 2012 Act as amended (see sections 2.4.1 and 5.2 above).

5.5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVISION COVERED BY THE CODES OF PRACTICE

HE and ELE providers authorised to use the IEM will be expected to apply their respective code of practice to the relevant categories of international learners and programme categories defined in section 3.4 above. For some HE providers, this may include learners outside the state who are enrolled on programmes that lead to major and non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether these programmes are offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

It is of note that some providers offer both ELE programmes and HE programmes. In such cases, the provider normally identifies itself as primarily an ELE provider or a HE provider based on such factors as numbers of learners enrolled on its ELE and HE programmes and/or the number of programmes categorised as ELE or HE programmes.

For the purposes of initial IEM authorisation, independent/private providers will be required to confirm whether they are primarily an ELE provider or a HE provider, taking into account the following factors: the total learner numbers enrolled on their ELE and HE programmes, the number of international learners enrolled on their ELE and HE programmes, turnover related to each category of education provision (where applicable) and other relevant factors.³⁵

A provider whose business is primarily English language education will apply for the IEM through the ELE pathway, while a provider whose business is primarily higher education should apply for the IEM through the HE pathway. QQI reserves the right to examine the rationale for selecting the specified IEM pathway.

Where an independent/private provider is authorised to use the IEM through the ELE pathway, but also provides some HE programmes to international learners, QQI expects that the provider will subscribe to the HE Code of Practice in relation to those learners. Following initial authorisation under the ELE pathway, QQI will arrange a supplementary review of compliance with the HE Code on an agreed basis and timeline with the provider.

Where an independent/private provider is authorised to use the IEM through the HE pathway, but also provides some ELE programmes to international learners, QQI expects that the provider will subscribe to the ELE Code of Practice and the *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers* in relation to those learners. Following initial authorisation under the HE pathway, QQI will arrange a supplementary review of compliance with the ELE Code and *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers* on an agreed basis and timeline with the provider.

In addition, in circumstances where the balance of an independent/private provider's business between its ELE and HE provision changes significantly after the initial authorisation of that provider to use the IEM, the provider concerned may be required to undergo a further review of compliance with one or other of the codes of practice to retain its IEM authorisation.

35 Relevant figures/detail for the three preceding years should normally be considered for the above.

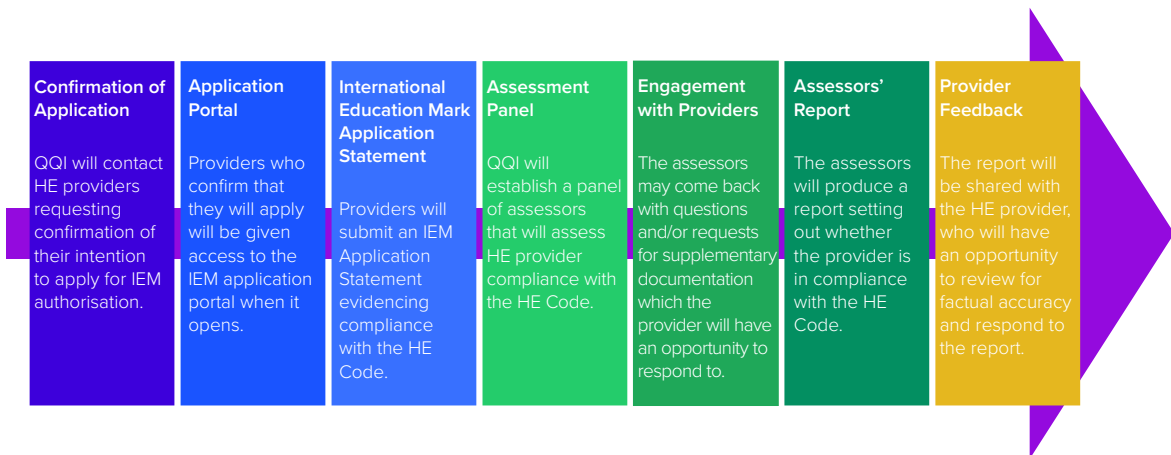
6 OVERVIEW OF AUTHORISATION PROCESS

6.1 IEM AUTHORISATION PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

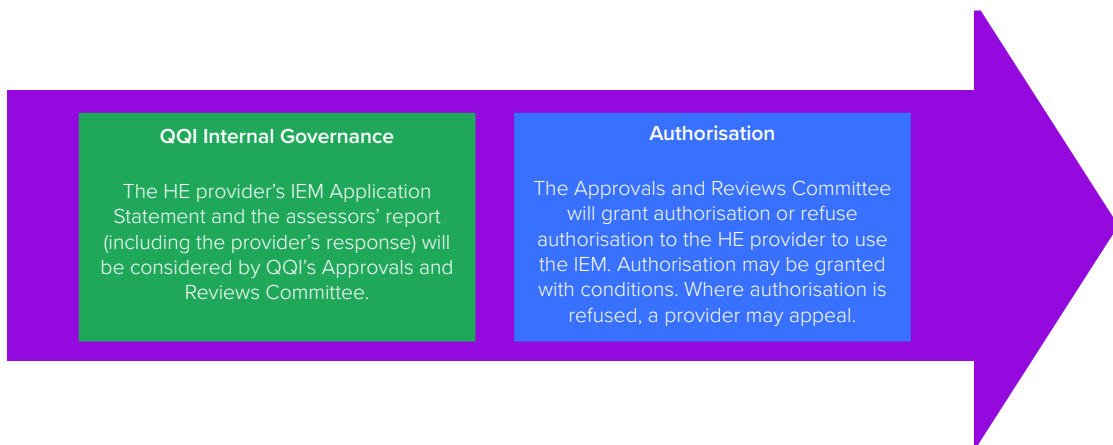
QQI will publish separate and detailed documentation, including guidelines for providers, on the process to be followed by providers applying for authorisation to use the IEM. An overview of the main elements of the initial authorisation process for the different provider types is set out below.

6.2 HE PROVIDERS

Application and Assessment



Internal Governance and Authorisation

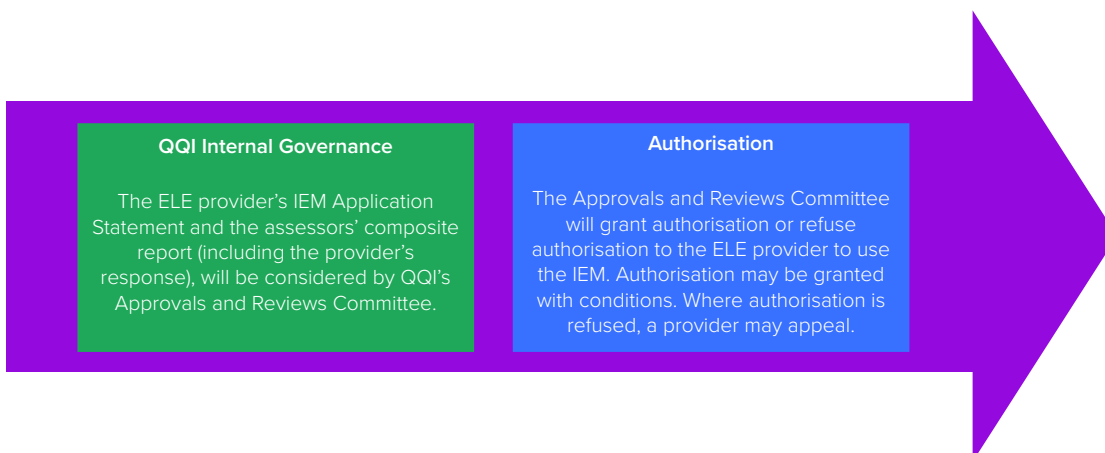


6.3 ELE PROVIDERS

Application and Assessment



Internal Governance and Authorisation



7 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF A PROVIDER'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK

7.1 MONITORING

- ELE providers authorised to use the IEM will be subject to a review of such authorisation at least once every three years. In addition, ELE providers will be required to produce a monitoring report every 18 months.³⁶
- HE providers authorised to use the IEM will be monitored through the regular cycle of QA engagements with QQI, including, as appropriate, cyclical institutional reviews, annual quality reports (AQRs), and quality dialogue meetings (QDMs).
- Linked providers of designated awarding bodies (DABs) who, under the 2012 Act as amended, do not engage directly with QQI on statutory QA processes, will engage directly with QQI on the authorisation process for the IEM. In this context, QQI will undertake the monitoring of the linked providers' compliance with the HE Code. QQI will establish a policy and process for IEM monitoring of linked providers ahead of the initial IEM authorisations.

7.2 REVIEW

QQI may at any time review compliance by a provider authorised to use the IEM with:

- the applicable code of practice
- the conditions imposed by QQI in relation to IEM authorisation.

In carrying out such a review, QQI will have regard to any other review of the provider carried out under the 2012 Act as amended, where that review is relevant to the IEM.

There are no current plans for separate reviews of IEM compliance in higher education as international education will feature in future statutory institutional reviews. A full review of IEM authorisation across the sector would necessarily follow a substantial revision of the HE Code, or the establishment of a new code of practice related to a discrete area of international education provision.

8 WITHDRAWAL OF AUTHORISATION TO USE THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK

Providers and statutory awarding bodies have an interest in contributing to confidence in and the integrity of the IEM. The IEM and the associated codes of practice will enable providers, individually and collectively, to play their part in upholding the reputation of Ireland's education and training system internationally. It is also recognised that many providers have implemented programme provision and academic and student service supports for international students that may exceed the requirements proposed in association with the IEM.

The 2012 Act as amended requires that QQI shall withdraw a provider's authorisation to use the IEM in cases where:

- QQI considers that the provider no longer complies with the code;
- QQI considers that a condition imposed in relation to the operation of the IEM is not being complied with by the provider, including persistent or serious failure on the part of the provider to cooperate with the Department of Justice in monitoring student compliance with immigration law;
- QQI has withdrawn the approval of QA procedures established by a relevant provider;
- a designated awarding body has withdrawn the approval of QA procedures established by a linked provider;
- QQI has withdrawn the approval of access, transfer and progression procedures established by a relevant provider.

Where, following a review by QQI of the compliance of a provider authorised to use the IEM, QQI considers that a provider no longer complies with the code of practice, the statutory requirements for applying for IEM authorisation, or any conditions imposed by QQI in relation to that provider's authorisation to use the IEM, QQI shall inform the provider, by notice in writing, that it proposes to withdraw the provider's authorisation to use the IEM.

A provider informed by notice in writing that QQI proposes to withdraw its authorisation to use the IEM may submit written observations to QQI in relation to the reasons for the proposed withdrawal, not later than one month after service of the notice on the provider. Where QQI – having considered the provider's observations – considers that the provider is not in compliance with the code of practice, the statutory requirements for applying for IEM authorisation, or any conditions imposed by QQI in relation to that provider's authorisation to use the IEM, it shall withdraw the provider's authorisation to use the IEM by notice in writing to the provider from such date as it considers appropriate.

A provider may appeal a decision of QQI to withdraw the authorisation to use the IEM from that provider (see section 13 below).

9 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EXISTING QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME FOR ELE: ACCREDITATION AND COORDINATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES (ACELS)

QQI is establishing, in tandem with the IEM and the associated ELE Code of Practice, a new statutory QA scheme for ELE providers. QQI will issue accompanying statutory QA guidelines to support the new scheme (see section 2.3 above).³⁷ Existing providers accredited by ACELS and interested in applying for authorisation to use the IEM will be required to establish procedures for QA under the new scheme as part of their application for IEM authorisation (see section 3.2 above).

The existing non-statutory ACELS scheme, which is currently overseen by QQI on an administrative basis, will be discontinued in due course once ELE providers with ACELS accreditation, and who wish to apply for authorisation to use the IEM, have been afforded a reasonable opportunity to undertake the application and assessment process for IEM authorisation. ACELS providers who do not wish to apply for authorisation to use the IEM will no longer hold ACELS accreditation once the ACELS scheme is discontinued.

There will be no automatic transition from the existing ACELS scheme to the IEM, although there will be a transition period while ELE providers with ACELS accreditation complete an IEM application and assessment process. QQI will consult with ACELS accredited providers in relation to establishing a fair and orderly process for transition from the ACELS scheme to the IEM scheme.

37 Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers.
<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-01/statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines-for-english-language-education-providers.pdf>

10 FEES AND ANNUAL CHARGE ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK

The 2012 Act as amended makes provision for fees and an annual charge associated with authorisation to use the IEM.³⁸ Providers seeking authorisation to use the IEM may be subject to the following fees and charge:

- an initial application fee payable with application;
- a fee in relation to a review of provider compliance with the HE or ELE Code;
- an annual charge prescribed by the Minister payable on or before the anniversary date of a provider's authorisation to use the IEM.

The fees and charges related to the IEM will be set on the basis of recovering the full cost to QQI of operating the scheme, and otherwise in accordance with QQI's fees policy.

38 2012 Act as amended [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](#): ss. 62; 80(1)(m); 80(1)(n).

11 PUBLIC INFORMATION ON PROVIDERS AUTHORISED TO USE THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK

Under section 79 of the 2012 Act as amended, QQI maintains a database, the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ),³⁹ to provide authoritative information on the awards included within the NFQ, and on the programmes of education and training that lead to awards included within the NFQ. This database will indicate whether a provider of a programme is authorised to use the IEM. It will also include information on ELE programmes aligned to the CEFR, including programmes leading to proficiency examinations, where the providers of these programmes have been authorised to use the IEM.

³⁹ [Irish Register of Qualification \(irq.ie\)](http://irq.ie)

12 THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARK: BRANDING AND PROMOTION

12.1 BRANDING

QQI will develop and monitor the IEM brand with core stakeholders. Though there are distinctive routes to IEM authorisation for different groups of providers (public and independent/private HE providers, and ELE providers), there will be a single brand and logo for the IEM. The IEM as a statutory mark may include such words as QQI decides, subject to the agreement of the Minister. The wording and visual emblem or logo will communicate the purpose of the IEM, essentially signalling confidence in Irish providers of education and training programmes to international students.

QQI will be the proprietor of the IEM and authorise its use by a provider under the seal of QQI. QQI will issue branding guidelines and communications protocols for providers in relation to the use of the IEM. It will be an offence for a provider to use the IEM without the authorisation of QQI, or to falsely claim or represent that QQI has authorised the use of the IEM by the provider.

12.2 PROMOTION

QQI will develop and implement a branding and promotion strategy for the IEM. The initial objective of this strategy will be to establish awareness and understanding of the IEM among stakeholders.

Authorisation to use the IEM will also be a condition for providers wishing to access national marketing and promotional supports. The existing Education in Ireland brand, overseen by Enterprise Ireland, will continue to play a central role in promoting awareness of Ireland as a destination for international learners to the benefit of providers authorised to use the IEM.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ [Enterprise Ireland is responsible for the international marketing and promotion of Irish Higher Education Institutions - Education in Ireland](#)

13 DECISION, REVIEW AND APPEALS PROCESS

Parts 5 and 7 of the 2012 Act as amended provide for appeals procedures. Providers may appeal to the Appeals Panel if QQI:

- refuses to authorise the use of the IEM
- following a review, proposes withdrawal of a provider's authorisation to use the IEM.

Information on the appeals process is available at: [Appealing a decision made by QQI | Quality and Qualifications Ireland](#).

