

Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education Overarching Education Policy

Policy Procedure Protocol Guideline

Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD): Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)

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1.0 Introduction

The CCNME policies, principles, procedures and practices are developed to meet the statutory requirements of the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act, 2012](#) and are underpinned by the standards and requirements of:

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI),
- The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and
- The European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Higher Education Institutions (ESG, 2015).

2.0 Legal and Regulatory Context

2.1 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

QQI was established under the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. QQI, has the responsibility as a national agency for awarding qualifications across the further (FET) and higher (HET) education sector as well as external quality assurance. QQI awards qualifications to successful Learners of FET and HET validated programmes. The provides programmes from level 5 to level 8 that are validated by the statutory body Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

2.2 QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines

The CCNMEs Quality Assurance system is a documented approach, developed with regard to the requirements of QQIs core statutory and sector specific QA guidelines tailored for independent providers.

2.3 Professional, Regulatory, Statutory Bodies

The CCNME provides programmes leading to QQI awards and is required to comply with relevant professional requirements. The CCNME shall have regard to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) requirements and standards.

2.4 European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Higher Education Institutions (ESG, 2015).

The CCNME are guided by and will fulfil the standards required for Quality Assurance of Higher Education as per the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015)

3.0 Glossary of Terms

Access	Refers to a learner's ability to avail of appropriate opportunities to enter and succeed in programmes leading to awards, with recognition of learning already achieved
Academic Council	A senior deliberative committee within the CCNME with overall responsibility for academic affairs.
Academic Integrity	Refers to the maintenance of professional standards in academic work. This includes maintaining ethical, honest and trustworthy behaviours in the submission of academic work (EU, 2019)

Academic Misconduct	Cheating, falsifying or tampering with any assessment related document(s) in order to gain unfair academic advantage
Acceptable arrangements for Protection of the Enrolled Learner (PEL)	Arrangements with at least two Centres within the Consortium to facilitate the transfer of learners to similar programmes (QQI Education and Training Act 2012).
Accreditation	Accreditation sets the standard for high quality training of an institution as a whole. It looks at the general standard of training across the whole organisation rather than specific courses.
Andragogy	This is the agreed preferred approach of the where learners are adults, with previous learning experience and the tutors role is seen as a facilitator of new learning and enabling self-directed learning
Approved Programme Schedule	The approved programme schedule provides an overview of the validated programme. The details provided include: the name of the programme, the name of award, the NQF level of programme and the total number of credits.
Appeal	Appeal of assessment result by a learner. A request to a higher authority for the alteration of the decision or judgement of lower one (QQI, 2013)
Assessment (Learner Assessment)	The Process by which evidence of performance is collected and compared with the standards of knowledge skill or competence and a judgement made on learner achievement of the standards. Learner assessment (specifically assessment of learning) means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a learner's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this.
Assessment Criteria	Assessment criteria are the standards or tests by which a learner's performance in an assessment task is judged. See also grading scheme.
Assessment Grade	A label which quantifies the learner's level of performance of an assessment task.
Assessment Instrument	The specific activity/task or question(s) devised by the assessor based on the specified assessment technique.
Assessment materials	Documentation associated with the planning of an assessment, e.g. assignment briefs, examination papers, skill demonstration instructions (list is not exhaustive)
Assessment Procedures	All assessment-related activity and the ways in which it is conducted and undertaken.
Assessment Process	The process of judging learner achievement in relation to the standards of knowledge, skill and competence so that the successful learner may achieve an award (QQI, 2013a).
Assessment Records	Documentation which demonstrates evidence that the assessment has taken place, e.g. attendance sheets, signed assessment submission records, internal verification reports (list not exhaustive)

Assessment Task	An assessment task could be a written or oral examination, coursework, project work, the writing of a thesis, dissertation or similar work, or other such forms of performance as may have been approved in relation to a validated programme of higher education and training.
Assessment Technique	An assessment technique is a valid and reliable way of assessing learner evidence for a particular range of learning outcomes, e.g. practical skills should be assessment in a practical manner e.g. by a skills demonstration.
Assessor	A person who assesses a learner. The assessor devises assessment instruments/marking schemes and assessment criteria, provides opportunity for learners to generate evidence, judge's learner evidence and makes an assessment decision.
- External Assessor	An external assessor is an assessor who is external to the provider.
- Internal Assessor	An internal assessor is a member of the provider's staff who is an assessor.
Assignment	An assignment is an exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines as to what should be included. An assignment is usually of short duration and may be carried out over a specified period of time.
Authenticity	Authenticity is related to validity. Authentic assessment involves using assessment tasks that resemble the kinds of professional tasks that arise in the relevant community of practice. Examples include the assessment of the learner's clinical skills in a relevant topic within their workplace environment.
Award	An award which is conferred, granted or given by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.
Award Standard	The awards standards describe the learning, in terms of knowledge, skill and/or competence, that is to be acquired by learners before education and training awards may be made.
Award Type	Refers to a class of named awards sharing common features and NFQ levels. At each level in the Framework there is at least one award-type. Each award-type has its own award-type descriptor. These include Major, Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose award types. Different award types reflect different purposes of award and allow for the recognition of all learning achievement
Board of Examiners	The Board of Examiners (BOE) confirms that the assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results for level 7/8 programmes has been carried out in line with the CCNMEs quality assurance process.
Broadsheet of results	This is a higher education term for a device for reporting results to QQI for certification purposes.
Centre	Individual Centre of Education that is a member of the Consortium.
CCNME Programme Teams	Includes Directors, Specialist Coordinators, Tutors, Subject Matter Experts and Administrative staff whose primary role is in the delivery, management and administration of QQI validated programmes of education at Centre level. The tutorial members of staff are either registered nurse/midwifery tutors and/or educated to Masters Level.

Cheating	Another person provides answer or any part of academic course work to a learner without permission from the Centre
Classroom Learning Environment	An identified space (virtual or face to face) where Learners, educationalists and experts engage in teaching and learning activities.
Clinical Assessor	A registered nurse or registered midwife who has undertaken preparation for the role and who supports the learner in their learning in the practice setting and assumes the role of supervisor and assessor of the learners' achievement of clinical learning outcomes and competence
Clinical Governance	The system of authority through which health care teams are accountable for the safety, quality and satisfaction of persons in the care they deliver. Clinical governance systems incorporate continuous improvements in the quality of clinical practice, maintaining high standards of care, and creating environments where excellence in care can flourish (NMBI, 2019)
Clinical Practice Placement	"Provides experience and supervision commensurate with enabling students to meet the learning outcomes of the programme" (NMBI, 2015, pg. 4)
Collusion	Collusion is unauthorised cooperation by a learner and at least one other person in the production of submitted work.
Communities of practice	Communities of practice are collectives of people with shared interests in achieving the same goal; and can be experienced in support or discussion groups or on social media platforms. The best examples for these are twitter chats, where educators discuss specific topic areas and share best practice, providing good quality feedback and consistent, efficient communication (Lave, J., & Wenger, E., 1991. Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge University Press).
Competence	The attainment and application of knowledge, intellectual capacities, practice skills, integrity and professional and ethical values required for safe, accountable, compassionate and effective practice as a Registered nurse or Registered midwife (NMBI 2015)
Complaint	In the context of the assessment of learners, a complaint is an expression of a concern that a particular assessment procedure is unfair or inconsistent or not fit-for-purpose. The QAA code of practice 'defines a "complaint" as the expression of a specific concern about the provision of a course/module, or a programme of study, or a related academic service'.
Completion Rate	The number of learners who achieve an National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award on a programme of education and training expressed as a percentage of the number of learners who commenced the programme concerned
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) encompasses experiences, activities and processes that contribute towards the development of a nurse or midwife as a health care professional. CPD is, therefore, a lifelong process of both structured and informal learning (NMBI 2015)
Consistent	Agreeing in subject or form, marked by uniformity or regularity (Oxford Dictionary). Assessment conduct should be consistent. Consistency should

	apply within a programme, an institution, and between institutions (QQI, 2013a).
Credit	A measure by which diverse learning achievements can be recognised; credit systems complement the NFQ and the achievement of awards. Opportunities for credit accumulation enhance recognition of learning.
Criterion-referenced assessment	Performance is measured objectively against a pre-determined set of criteria.
Curriculum	A collection of lessons, assessments, and other academic content that's taught in a school, program, or class by a teacher.
Data Controller	A person, body or company who, either alone or jointly with others, determines when and how personal data should be processed. Examples of a Data Controller would be the HSE, Voluntary Hospital, GP or a private Hospital
Data Processor	Are those that processes personal data on behalf of and under the direct instruction of the Data Controller. Employees of the HSE (Data Controller) who process data on behalf of the HSE are not considered to be Data Processors
Data Protection Commission (DPC)	The DPC is the Irish Supervisory authority for the enforcement of GDPR
Data Protection Officer (DPO)	Oversees and monitors data protection compliance, and reports independently to the senior management level of an organisation. They act as the primary point of contact for data subjects (learner) who have data protection related queries or concerns
Deputy Data Protection Officer (DDPO)	Assists the DPO
Disability	The term 'disability' is broadly defined. It covers a wide range of impairments and illnesses. It covers all physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. (Equal Status Act, 2000-2015).
Discrimination	Includes a refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such special treatment or facilities it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail himself or herself of the service (Equal Status Act 2000-2015).
Distress	Distress can be described as an emotional response to stressful encounters, which if left avoided can result in an individual's mental health being compromised which may impact on day to day wellbeing. (Deasy et al 2014)
Diversity	The existence of differences among members of a social unit. Diversity refers to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.
Education programme	A curriculum outlining theoretical content, learning objectives and expected learning outcomes
Enrolled learner	A learner who has enrolled in a programme of education and training. All learners in the Consortium are adult learners.

Equality	Ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics
Error (Assessment)	Assessment errors arise, for example, when a learner who has actually achieved the minimum intended learning outcomes is failed or vice versa.
External Authentication	The means by which learners, providers, assessors and QQI will be independently assured that the application of the provider's assessment procedures is carried out effectively.
External Authenticator	Appointed by providers to provide independent authentication of fair and consistent assessment in line with QQI requirements.
Experiential Learning	Is learning by doing and thinking.
External Examiner	An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.
External examining	A process whereby an independent expert(s) provides feedback on the achievement of national standards as demonstrated through provider's assessment of learners.
External facilitator	A person expert in a specific area of clinical practice and relevant to the curriculum
Evidence	Material generated by the application of a procedure which demonstrates its effectiveness
Evidence-based practice	The conscious consideration and application of the best available evidence together with the nurse or midwife's expertise and a person's values and preferences in making health care decisions (NMBI) https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Glossary
Fair	'Just, unbiased, equitable, impartial, legitimate, in accordance with the rules or standards' (Oxford Dictionary). A fair assessment in addition to being valid and reliable provides equity of opportunity for learners (QQI, 2013).
Feedback	Feedback provides information about a learner's performance which is intended as a support for improvement.
Flipped Learning	Flipped Learning is "a pedagogical approach in which first contact with new concepts moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space in the form of structured activity, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter." (Talbert, 2017, p.20).
Formative assessment	Supports the learner in attaining specified learning outcomes. It does not normally penalise error.
Formative feedback	Feedback that is relevant to learning needs and which furthers the progress towards attainment of the intended programme learning outcomes. This feedback does not contribute to the final grade.
Grade	This means the same as to mark — may be a number in the percentage scheme or an alphabetic grade in the alphabetic system for work completed such as a written assignment or for clinical skills performed.

Grading rubric	The same as a grading scheme.
Grading scheme	A written specification of how to grade a response to an attempted assessment task. For an essay, this might take the form of a matrix describing different performance thresholds for each of the criteria being used to assess the essay.
Grading system	A grading system is an a priori set of rules for reporting and combining grades for assessed modules. Because the grading system provides rules for how module results may be combined, it may impact on how a programme may be partitioned into modules.
Indicators	Measures used to rate the relative success or failure of a strategy or process
Instructional Design	'The translation of pedagogical research into the design and testing of curriculum for Flexible and Distributed Learning (FDL) that is specifically centred on supporting the achievement of learning outcomes. Developing and implementing content (provided by academics) teaching and learning strategies and assessments for effective FDL delivery' (QQI, 2016, p. 28).
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>The intended learning outcomes represent the educational goals. They describe the learning outcomes that the teacher intends that learners will attain as a result of teaching and learning activities (see minimum intended programme learning outcomes). Intended learning outcomes must always include the minimum intended learning outcomes. Actual learning outcomes achieved by a learner should include at least the minimum intended learning outcomes; they will typically include additional outcomes.</p> <p>Programme designers will find it useful to keep the intended learning outcomes under review, not only to keep the programme up-to-date but also to obtain greater clarity.</p>
Internal Verification	A process or series of processes designed to check the presence and completeness of learner assessment work and the accuracy and completeness of assessment records.
Internal Verifier	Checks that assessment policies and procedures are implemented across all programmes. The role is to systematically check that assessment procedures have been applied consistently and to verify the accuracy of provisional assessment results.
Know-how and Skill (NFQ):	'The exercise of a skill is the performance of a task that in some way responds to or manipulates the physical, informational or social environment of the person. Know-how underpins the skill but is not identical to skill. Know-how, or savoir faire, is the procedural knowledge required to carry out a task.'
Knowledge	'Knowledge is the cognitive representation of ideas, events or happenings. It can be derived from practical or professional experience, as well as from formal instruction or study. It can comprise description, memory, understanding, thinking, analysis, synthesis, debate and research' (NFQ).
Learner	A person who is acquiring or who has acquired knowledge, skill or competence. all students enrolled in programmes of learning level 5-8 NFQ will be referred to as "learners"

Learning	Learning is the lifelong process of transforming information, ideas and experience through imitation, practice and reflection into relatively permanent new knowledge, skills, know-how, behaviour, and attitudes (NMBI 2014). Learning refers to the processes by which a sustainable change in someone’s knowledge, skill or competence occurs as a result of experience. Experience includes everything that affects the learner.
Learning activities	Learning activities are diverse. Examples include study, writing, practise, discussion, enquiry, experience, group work, problem solving, performing, game-playing, designing, composing etc. Both learners and teachers can set learning activities. Effective learning activities are purposefully directed towards attainment of the programme’s educational goals (minimum intended programme learning outcomes) and build on (connect with) prior learning.
Learner assessment evidence	Created by the learner which forms part of a component or programme assessment, e.g. examination scripts, hard/soft copy of assessment evidence (list not exhaustive)
Learning environment	Learning environments are diverse. Teachers and other learners are part of a learner’s learning environment. Learning environments have both physical and social structures. Learners interact with the learning environment; the environment responds to the learner, and the learner to the environment.
Learning outcome	A learner’s knowledge, skill and competence change as a result of learning. In principle, learning outcomes may describe the change in knowledge, skill or competence in an individual (differential form). They may also mean the cumulative result of all learning, including prior learning at the time of entry to the programme (integral form).
Learner Representative	An enrolled learner who facilitates communication between education staff and learners regarding programme matters and academic support and provides a point of contact for learners
Learning theory	Every teacher and learner uses a learning theory — it may be tacit, informal or eclectic. Formal learning theories (and learning models) can contribute to the understanding of learning and the design of effective learning environments. Epistemologies (theories of knowledge) may vary with the field of learning.
Life Cycle of Provider of Engagement	Identifies, organises and communicates the range of engagements between QQI and a given provider.
Learning Management System (LMS)	A software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, or learning and development programmes.
Mark	Means the same as grade — i.e. to award marks to or to grade (an assessment response, a learner etc.).
Major award	This award types are the principal class of awards made at each level of the NFQ. At most levels, such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the level
Mental Health	A ‘state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able

	to make a contribution to his or her community' (World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018)
Mental Health Difficulty/ Mental Health Issue	'Broad terms that describe mental distress that may or may not be temporary and/or be related to a diagnosable mental health condition' (Fox et al 2020)
Mental Illness	'A state of mind of a person which affects the person's thinking, perceiving, emotion or judgment and which may impair the mental function of the person to the extent that he or she requires care or medical treatment in his or her own interest or in the interest of other persons' (Mental Health Act, 2001)
Mentor	Active practitioner in the occupation concerned (QQI, 2018)
MIMLOs	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes For each module, identify the red line/threshold outcomes to be achieved and evidenced by a learner achieving certification
Minor Award	This award type provides recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. This recognition will have relevance in its own right. A minor award-type will be part of the learning outcomes associated with one or more major award-types at a given level in the Framework of Qualifications. Minor awards may be combined with other learning outcomes towards a major or special purpose award.
Misrepresentation	Occurs when an idea, situation, or opinion is misrepresented, or the fact of something being misrepresented
Module	A programme of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of being integrated with other modules into larger programmes.
Monitor	A person who verifies that quality assurance procedures are being implemented as agreed. The monitor may be working on behalf of the provider (self-monitoring) or QQI (monitoring).
Named Awards	Within an award type (e.g. honours bachelor's degree), the particular awards that are named with respect to a field of learning (e.g. honours bachelor of science degree). Standards for named awards include reference to knowledge, skill and competence within a specific field of learning.
National Framework of Qualifications	The single nationally and internationally accepted entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards. The Framework has 10 levels, reflecting all learning from introductory to doctorate levels.
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, also referred to as the Authority or the NQAI, established in 2001 arising from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, with responsibility to establish and maintain the national Framework of Qualifications
Norm-referenced	A norm-referenced test is 'an instrument for which interpretation is based in the comparison of the test-takers performance to the performance of other people in a specified group' (SEPT, 1985).

Peer review	The involvement in a self-evaluation of a programme of a person from another provider, in further or higher education and training, capable of giving an informed view on the success of the programme and able to contribute to its improvement
Pedagogy	In the context of this document pedagogy is understood to be the art and science of teaching and learning
Person	A person means an individual who uses health and social care services. In some instances, the terms 'client', 'individual', 'patient', 'people', 'resident', 'service user', 'mother', or 'baby', 'child', 'young person' are used in place of the term person depending on the health or social care setting (NMBI) https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Glossary
Personal Data	Includes person's name, gender, date of birth, address, phone number, name of person to contact in an emergency, organisational and PPS numbers
Plagiarism	Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity and may be undertaken deliberately or unintentionally. The act of taking and/or utilising the work i.e. the ideas, words or data of another person and utilising that persons work to form the basis of the learners own work, without adequate or accurate acknowledgement /referencing.
Policy	A written statement that indicates clearly the position and values of the organisation on a given subject.
Practice placement	A clinical site, approved by NMBI, to provide appropriate learning experiences for undergraduate or postgraduate nursing or midwifery students. https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Glossary
Preceptor	A preceptor is a registered nurse or registered midwife who has undertaken preparation for the role and who supports undergraduate nursing or midwifery students in their learning in the practice setting and assumes the role of supervisor and assessor of the students' achievement of clinical learning outcomes and competence (NMBI 2015) https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Glossary
Prior learning	The totality of a person's learning at a particular time. It may also be referred to as prior knowledge. It is time dependent.
Procedure	The procedures are the instructions or steps that describe how to complete a task or do a job.
Programme	A programme is a learning experience designed and offered by a provider based on predetermined national standards and leading to a QQI award.
Programme Board	A dedicated committee established by the provider with overall responsibility for that programme, including the programme assessment strategy.
Programme Co-ordinator	Nominated Registered Tutor/or member of Staff who holds a MSc in Education in the Centres responsible for the overall administration of the QQI level 5 to level 8 programme

Programme of education and training	A process by which a learner acquires knowledge, skill or competence and includes a course of study, a course of instruction and/or an apprenticeship (Government of Ireland, 2012).
Programme Review	The process whereby the provider reflects on its programme(s) to ensure its continued relevance. A review will be conducted more frequently but less formally and on a smaller in scale than a programme self-evaluation. The findings of reviews will contribute to a self-evaluation.
Progression	Refers to a learner's ability to move to another programme leading to an award at a higher level of the NFQ, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired
Protection of Enrolled Learners	Protocols/arrangements put in place by providers, offering programmes of three months' duration where fees are paid by or on behalf of the learners to protect learners where a programme ceases unexpectedly.
Provider	A 'provider of a programme of education and training' is a person who, or body which, provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training.
QQI Monitoring	An external process that involves routine and once-off evaluations, analysis, observations and recording of provider activities.
Quality Assurance	The system(s) put in place by a provider to maintain and improve the quality of its programme(s)
Reasonable accommodation	Reasonable accommodation is defined by the Equal Status Act 2000-2004. A reasonable accommodation is any means of providing special treatment or facilities if, without such accommodations, it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service provided by the educational establishment.
Re-check	Re-check means the administrative operation of checking the recording and the combination of component scores for a module and/or stage.
Recognised Institution	The institutions specified in section 24 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Recognition of Prior Learning i.e. recognition of learning that has taken place but not necessarily been assessed or measured prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.
Registered Nurse	A nurse whose name is entered in the Nurses' Division of the Register of the Nurses and Midwives maintained by NMBI.
Registered Nurse Tutor	A nurse whose name is entered in the Nurse Tutors Division of the Register of the Nurses and Midwives maintained by NMBI
Registered Midwife	A midwife whose name is entered in the Midwives Division of the Register of Nurses and Midwives maintained by NMBI.
Registered Midwife Tutor	A midwife whose name is entered in the Midwife Tutors Division of the Register of Nurses and Midwives maintained by NMBI.
Relevant programme	A programme to which QQI PEL policy and related procedures applies i.e. a programme of three months or longer duration.
Reliable	Consistently good in quality or performance. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same result under similar conditions. (QQI, 2013b) An

	assessment's reliability is the confidence one can have in the result or how informative it is.
Results	A set of grades (or marks), normally for a stage of a programme. In the singular, the grade for a particular assessment task.
Results Approval Panel (RAP)	Confirms that the assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results for level 5/6 programmes has been carried out in line with the CCNMEs quality assurance process.
Review	The re-consideration of the assessment decision, either by the original assessor or by other competent persons.
Rubric	The same as a grading scheme.
Section 38 Voluntary	Section 38 agencies: include voluntary acute hospitals and non-acute health agencies funded under Section 38 of the Health Act 2004 and are classified as public servants.
Sector	In the context of Assessment and Standards, sector refers to that part of the higher education and training system where awards are made by QQI, or by recognised institutions by the authority delegated to them by QQI.
Sectoral conventions	A very small set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and by all associated providers, and where any right to unilateral deviation is waived.
Second Provider	A person or body which provides all or part of a programme part or all of which is organised or procured by another provider.
Self-Evaluation	The process whereby a provider, with the involvement of learners and an external expert(s), evaluates the quality of its programme(s) and related services. The findings of a self-evaluation will be published.
Self-plagiarism	The submission of work previously submitted in a different module/course without citing that it was previously submitted for credit
Similar programme	One that leads to the same award type in the same field of learning at the same NFQ level, and with broadly similar learning outcomes. A programme which meets these requirements may be deemed as similar regardless of differences in mode, duration or place of delivery. In all such cases, the point of reference will be the original validation requirements (QQI, 2013)
Skill	See know-how and skill. One of the framework strands (of knowledge, skill and competence outcomes). It reflects know-how and skill and involves demonstration by the learner of ability in terms of mastery of skill or application of knowledge. The level and degree of skill are reflected in the level indicators in the framework.
Special purpose award	This award type is made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes often for certification of competence in specific occupational areas. They may comprise learning outcomes that also form part of major awards. Special-purpose awards may form the basis for transfer into more broadly based major awards at the same level and thus progression on to higher awards.
Stage (in a programme)	Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. Many programmes are organised in either semester-based or year based stages. However, it should be stressed that other kinds of stages may be established. Even in cases where there is no temporal structure to the programme (i.e. a learner is only required to pass modules to progress), the stage concept may be

	used by the programme assessment strategy to group modules, taking the NFQ level and the pre- and co-requisites into account. Typically, the NFQ level of a module increases as a learner progresses through successive stages of a programme
Standard	Standards identify the knowledge, Skill and/or competence that must be attained in order to achieve an award.
Standard of Workplace Learning Environment	Standards promote practice that is up to date, evidence based, effective and consistent.
Submitted Materials	Refers to materials that are created, posted or uploaded using the Technology Enhanced Tools.
Summative assessment	Aims to determine if (or sometimes the extent to which) a set of specified learning outcomes has been attained by a person and (typically) their entitlement to academic credit.
Supplemental Award	This award type is for learning which is additional to a previous award. They could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.
Synchronous Learning	Synchronous learning occurs when learners are participating simultaneously in a shared learning activity – either online or onsite. This is learning that is usually unified by time and space, in that all learners would tend to be in the same space at the same time.
Teaching	The endeavour to provide an opportunity for learning — i.e. for acquiring knowledge, skill and competence — in a planned, arranged setting.
Technology Enhanced Tools	Refers to those on-or off-line mechanisms by which the HSE makes ‘Online Content’ available to you
Three months’ duration	Three calendar months, regardless of mode or nature of delivery or volume of learning. This refers to the period from the commencement of instruction to the point when learners have been assessed for the purposes of completing the programme and the result of assessment have been confirmed by the provider.
Threshold	Minimum intended programme learning outcomes are an example of a pass threshold. Other thresholds can be defined.
Transfer	Refers to a learner’s ability to move from one programme leading to an award to another, including at the same level of the Framework, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.
Transparent	Ensures clarity and understanding of the assessment by all relevant stakeholders. This will include clear and unambiguous definitions and requirements with regard to fairness, consistency, validity and reliability (QQI, 2013)
Validation	The process through which QQI evaluates a programme of education and training, to ensure that the proposed programme provides the learner with the opportunity to reach the standards of the award to which the programme is intended to lead.
Validation of a Programme	Validation means the process by which an awarding body shall satisfy itself that a learner may attain knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award made by the awarding body.

	Providers of validated programmes are responsible for, among other things, establishing fair, consistent and fit-for-purpose assessment procedures.
Validity	Validity essentially means fitness-for-purpose. A valid assessment: allows inference of the attainment of the learning outcomes it purports to address; assesses the person it purports to assess; and is appropriate for informing the decisions that it purports to inform. Condition is required because an assessment may be valid for informing one decision but invalid for another.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	A virtual learning environment is a web-based platform for digital resources and information which is designed to support the student's learning experience.
Wellbeing	'Well-being, in its broadest sense, can be viewed as a measure of all aspects of life. As a result, it is a complex multi-dimensional issue influenced by factors such as the state of the environment, the educational levels of the population, economic performance, public safety, and the health of the population, amongst others.' Central Statistics Office (2017)
Withdrawal	This is where a learner ceases study on a programme after the end of the 'cooling off' (change of mind) period and before completion of the programme.

PART B: POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES (PPPG) DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

National policy for education provision in the Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)

Policy Development, Approval and Maintenance

The [HSE National Framework for developing Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines \(PPPGs\)](#) (2016) has been utilised by the CCNME to provide a consistent approach to policy development. This framework sets out the standards that must be applied when developing PPPGs that are essential in enhancing organisational effectiveness assuring an efficient quality system is in place within the CCNME. An essential component of the National Framework for PPPGs is that PPPGs are evidence-based and evidence is documented.

There are 7 stages in the PPPG Development Cycle HSE National PPPG Programme (figure 1.0)



Figure 1.0: Stages in the PPPG Development Cycle HSE National PPPG Programme

Stage 1: Initiation

The ONMSD has responsibility for the implementation of the statutory quality assurance (QA) guidelines issued by Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) when designing, establishing, evaluating, maintaining, renewing and reviewing its quality assurance policies and procedures as a basis for the approval by QQI of the CCNMEs QA procedures. As part of the strategic development of the nursing and midwifery profession the ONMSD commissioned a suite of PPPGs to:

- Meet the requirements of QQI to develop a quality assurance system for provider engagement;
- Meet QQIs requirements for the validation of programmes of education;
- Develop national standards of education.

These PPPGs are underpinned by the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015). These guidelines provide the basis for assurance that the policies and procedures underpinning education can provide learners with a well-supported learning experience within the scope of the provider.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this overarching education policy document is to support a national standardised approach to education provision as a Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME) in Ireland. This document is a source of reference for developing new PPPGs and underpins the HSE National PPPG Development Framework (2016).

This policy also takes account of current policies within the HSE Organisation together with legal and regulatory requirements. It provides further guidance on the processes which are vital for successful quality learning environments in further education and training (FET) and higher education and training (HET).

1.1 Scope

- 1.1.1 This policy contains the guiding principles that apply to all staff of the CCNME who are involved in the development, administration and management of QQI validated programmes of education that will be approved by NMBI at Category 2 or at level 5 - 8 within the National framework of Qualifications that are awarded by QQI.
- 1.1.2 The PPPGs apply to all learners engaged in QQI validated programmes of education provided by the CCNME.

1.2 Objectives(s)

- 1.2.1 Guide the CCNME nationally to design, establish, and to identify the processes to evaluate, maintain, renew and review its QQI quality assurance policies and procedures, utilising one central governance structure.
- 1.2.2 Enable the development of a QQI Quality Assurance system for the Centres who form part of the consortium.
- 1.2.3 Ensure that the Centres who form the Consortium provide a fair, valid, reliable, consistent and transparent approach to education in line with QQI FET and HET Standards (QQI 2013, QQI 2018) and NMBI Requirements and Standards.
- 1.2.4 Gain QQI quality assurance agreement.

1.3 Outcome(s)

- 1.3.1 Learners will be supported in their education programme in processes that are fair, valid, reliable, consistent and transparent
- 1.3.2 Provide staff and learners in the CCNME with standardised guidance when designing, establishing, evaluating, maintaining, renewing and reviewing QQI quality assurance policies and procedures
- 1.3.3 A quality assurance system will be developed and adopted by the CCNME to achieve, provide, monitor and review quality programmes of education
- 1.3.4 The CCNMEs will avail of resources in an effective, transparent and efficient manner to improve, promote and protect the health and welfare of the public (Health Act, 2004)
- 1.3.5 The CCNMEs will contribute to enabling the ONMSD achieve its strategic goal to provide leadership, support excellence and build capacity in nursing and midwifery in order to enhance patient care and service delivery in the provision of education.

Stage 2: PPPG Development

2.0 PPPG Development

Currently Centres are delivering QQI level 5 FET programmes of education, two of which RCNME Tullamore and RCNME Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown are providing both QQI level 5 FET and level 8 HET Special Purpose Awards. In advancing the CCNME as a single provider with QQI, a quality assurance system has been developed to guide the in the provision of a standardised suite of PPPGs for the designing, delivering, maintaining, evaluating, and reviewing of QQI education programmes utilising one central governance structure.

2.1 ONMSD Project Lead

- 2.1.1 QQI requires all providers which had previously agreed quality assurance procedures with one of the former Awards Councils to re-engage with QQI to ensure that their quality assurance procedures remain fit for purpose in the context of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. To proceed as a Consortium and be recognised with QQI as a new provider of programmes, the Director of the ONMSD appointed a Project Lead to plan, develop and implement a quality assurance system for HSE CNMEs, Voluntary CNMEs and Centres for Learning and Development as previously identified. The Project Lead reported to the Education Lead.
- 2.1.2 The Project Lead invited each Centre to undertake a self-evaluation of its current quality assurance system against QQI guidelines to determine their capacity to be a sustainable provider of QQI programmes. A site visit was conducted by the Project Lead and a gap analysis of each Centre highlighted areas for further development to meet the requirements of new QQI

Guidelines. A plan was initiated to meet the necessary requirements and develop a new collaborative QA System.

2.2 Regional PPPG Development Teams

- 2.2.1 Four regional PPPG development teams were established to capture a broad range of experience and expertise in the development of a repository of QA Policies and Procedures. Each team was represented by a regional Director of Centre and a Specialist Coordinator/Registered Tutor from Centres within that region. (Appendix 1 Membership of the PPPG Development Teams)
- 2.2.2 All members of the PPPG Development teams and the PPPG Steering group were required to complete a non-conflict of interest declaration which was managed by the Project Lead. There were no conflicts of interest stated. (Appendix 2: Conflict of interest Declaration form template)
- 2.2.3 Terms of Reference are outlined in Appendix 3
- 2.2.4 This Quality Assurance System supersedes the following documents
- Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) Level 5 Provider Quality Assurance System CNMEs (2006)
 - Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) Level 8 Quality Assurance Manual (2009) Regional Centre of Nursing & Midwifery Education (RCNME), Tullamore, Co. Offaly
 - Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) Level 8 Quality Assurance Manual (2009) RCNME Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown, Dublin North East.

2.3 Literature Search Strategy

Database/ Website name

QQI Relevant Guiding frameworks

NMBI Standards and Requirements

HSE Policies Procedures and Guidelines

- 2.3.1 Method of appraising evidence: All evidence was considered in relation to the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines listed in 2.5 (<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Core-QA-Guidelines.aspx>) It was necessary to adhere to the requirements in these guidelines.
- 2.3.2 Summary of the evidence from the literature: Sources of evidence utilised will be reflected in the policies and procedures associated with the following Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines
1. Governance and Management of Quality
 2. Documented approach to Quality Assurance
 3. Programmes of Education and Training
 4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
 5. Teaching and Learning

6. Assessment of Learners
 7. Supports for Learners
 8. Information and Data Management
 9. Public Information and Communication
 10. Other Parties Involved in Education and Training
 11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
- 2.3.3 Outline of PPPG steps/recommendations
(Appendix 4: PPPGS Six Step Development Process)

Stage 3: Governance and Approval

3.1 QQI QA Oversight Group

- 3.1.1 The QQI QA Oversight group is responsible for the provision of strategic direction in the establishment of the CCNME to become one provider to gain QQI accreditation.
- 3.1.2 Membership of the QQI QA Group and Terms of Reference are outlined in Appendix 5.

3.2 PPPG Steering Group

- 3.2.1 The PPPG Steering group was ultimately responsible to ensure a co-ordinated approach was undertaken in the development, review and approval of PPPGs.
- 3.2.2 Membership of the PPPG Steering Group, the PPPG Governance approval group and Terms of Reference are outlined in Appendices 6, 7 and 8.

3.3 Director of ONMSD Approval and Sign Off

- 3.3.1 The final draft of the HSE National Policy for the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) Overarching Education Policy (2020) for the purpose of QQI accreditation of programmes of education only was submitted for approval to the Director of the ONMSD by the Chair of the PPPG Steering Group. The final draft was accompanied by the signed PPPG Checklist for Developing PPPGs (2016) (Appendix 9) confirming that all stages in the development of the policy had been completed in accordance with the HSE National Framework for Developing Policies Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines (PPPGs) (HSE, 2016). Approval was granted.

3.3 Attach any copyright/permission sought

- 3.3.1 Copyright and permissions required were received for the development of this QA document, where relevant.

Stage 4: Communication and Dissemination

4.1 The Quality Assurance System was disseminated to all stakeholders

4.2 The following activities were undertaken by the Project Lead to ensure all relevant stakeholders were informed of all PPPGs in the QA document:

- All relevant stakeholders received communication via email;
- Dissemination of communication links to ONMSD webpage were circulated to all stakeholders including healthcare organisations and professional bodies.

- 4.3 The QA document will be accessible on the ONMSD website and online platform following QQI accreditation

Stage 5: Implementation

- 5.1 The Quality Enhancement Committee has responsibility for dissemination of new and revised PPPGs to the CCNME
- 5.2 Directors of Programme Teams within the CCNME have specific responsibility for the implementation of the quality assurance system in relation to their respective Centre
- 5.3 Each Programme Coordinator is responsible for the quality assurance of their respective programme
- 5.4 All staff members of the CCNME have responsibility for implementing the quality assurance system in their respective programmes.

Stage 6: Monitoring, Audit and Evaluation

- 6.1 The Academic Council have overall responsibility of monitoring, auditing and evaluating the quality assurance system
- 6.2 The Quality Enhancement Committee is responsible for the management of the quality assurance system.

Stage 7: Revision/Update

- 7.1 The Quality Enhancement Committee of the Academic Council is responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and review of the quality assurance system and will conduct a PPPGs review with all stakeholders on a 3 yearly basis. (Refer to Procedure on PPPG Review)
- 7.2 Developing new PPPGs or amending existing PPPGs, if new evidence emerges, is outlined in the Procedure on PPPG Development. (Refer to Policy Development, Approval and Maintenance and Procedure for Developing New Policies, Procedures, Protocols or Guidelines (PPPGs))
- 7.3 Version control
- 7.3.1 Responsibility for review of the Quality Assurance system will be undertaken by the Quality Enhancement Committee and will be due for revision in February 2025.

8.0 References

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). (2015). *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* [online]. Available from: https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf [accessed 22 April 2022].
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