

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND
TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL, IRELAND**

Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna, Éire

**Criteria and Procedures for the Delegation
and Review of Delegation of Authority to
Make Awards**

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*Criteria and Procedures for the Delegation and
Review of Delegation of Authority to Make Awards*

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**Criteria and Procedures for the Delegation and
Review of Delegation of Authority to Make Awards**

Foreword

This document defines the criteria and procedures that will be adopted by the Council in conducting evaluations of applications for and reviews of delegated authority. The criteria and procedures have been developed following consultation with stakeholders and in agreement with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

The document is of particular relevance to recognised institutions of the Council that already have delegated authority and to those institutions that wish to apply for it.

The document supersedes the Council's previous publications: Policy, Criteria and Procedures on Delegation of Authority to Make Awards, 2002 and Criteria and Procedures for the Delegation and Review of Delegation of Authority to Make Awards, 2003.

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February 2004

Criteria and procedures for the Delegation and Review of Delegation of Authority to Make Awards.

February 2004

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Introduction

General Introduction

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (“the Council”) was established on 11 June 2001, under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, (“the Act”). The Council is the national qualifications awarding body for higher education and training outside the university sector in Ireland, other than the Dublin Institute of Technology. The Council’s role and functions include the setting of standards for named awards, the validation of programmes, the agreement of providers’ quality assurance procedures and the review of the implementation and effectiveness of those procedures. The Council may also, as part of its function, delegate authority to make awards to recognised institutions. This document sets out the criteria and procedures which the Council will adopt in deciding whether such authority should be delegated or continue to be delegated.

Delegation

The Council intends to pursue a progressive approach to third-level education and training. As part of this approach the Council is committed to being proactive with regards to the delegation of authority to make awards and has adopted this position as one of its strategic objectives. The Council welcomes the delegation of authority to recognised institutions to make awards and will facilitate optimum delegation of authority to recognised institutions i.e. the Council will delegate authority for as wide a range of awards as possible subject to rigorous criteria and procedures and consistent with the requirements of the Act. As such, this approach takes account of the maturation of the recognised institutions and the extent to which they have developed the capacity and processes to develop, quality assure and self-validate programmes of higher education and training leading to awards whose standards have been set by the Council. It also recognises that self-regulation and self-validation for established higher education and training institutions, such as the Institutes of Technology, which allows for those institutions to take appropriate responsibility for their own processes relating to programme development, subject to regular review, is in line with best international practice.

Recognised institutions with delegation of authority are entrusted with serious responsibilities for which they are accountable. The granting and review of delegation of authority to a recognised institution is therefore subject to the institution meeting the criteria defined by the Council and agreed with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (“the Authority”).¹

The role of the Council in the context of delegated authority is one of overview. Self-regulation and autonomy enables the recognised institutions to take more responsibility for their own actions in a context of accountability and the need to meet the information needs of the Council. The Council has endeavored to follow this position in the

¹ Under sections 29 and 30 of the Act, the Council and the Authority must agree the criteria and procedures for the delegation and review of delegation of authority to make awards.

determination of the criteria and procedures to be put in place for the implementation of delegated authority.

The Council will adopt the general approach of delegating authority to make awards on the basis of an award-type.² When the Council delegates to a recognised institution the authority to make awards the recognised institution may develop a new programme or amend an existing programme leading to a named award of a particular award-type. The recognised institution may validate such a programme by satisfying itself that a participant may meet the standards of skill, knowledge or competence determined by the Council for such a named award. The recognised institution may then proceed to make awards in relation to that programme subject to informing the Council that it intends to do so. The Council will not put any further validation process in place. On receipt of the notification from the recognised institution, the Council will add the named award to the Order in Council which gives delegated authority generally to that recognised institution. In keeping with the Council's quality assurance function, the validation process operated by the recognised institution will be in accordance with quality assurance procedures agreed with and subject to review by, the Council.

The Council will, in line with the development of the national framework of qualifications and the associated policies and criteria established by the National Qualifications Authority, develop a policy on the titles of named awards and institutions with delegated authority will be required to operate within this policy.

² The terms “named award” and “award-type” are used in a manner consistent with the policies and criteria established by the National Qualification Authority of Ireland in the National Framework of Qualifications.

PART 1 - Criteria for the delegation and review of delegation of authority to make awards.

Authority to make awards will be delegated to a recognised institution in accordance with the criteria set out below. The criteria will be used for both an initial application for delegation of authority and the review of delegation of authority. In the first instance, the criteria will be used to assess the capacity of a recognised institution to operate under delegated authority. To this end the Council will satisfy itself, based on the recognised institution's past, current and planned management processes, including those processes for the development, programme validation, implementation and review of its higher education and training programmes, that it is reasonable to award delegation of authority to make awards. In the case of a review of delegated authority, the criteria will serve to help the Council take a rounded view of how the recognised institution has operated delegation of authority in all its respects.

The Council will issue a guide to recognised institutions, which will elaborate the criteria and may be used for the preparation of documentation to be submitted to the Council and for the evaluation/review panel visit. The criteria are set out here under four headings: Operation and Management, Education and Training Programmes, Council Conditions attaching to delegation of authority and Objects of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.

1.1 Operation and Management

The Act clearly sets out that the Council and the Authority, in deciding whether to grant delegated authority, have to review and be satisfied with the operation and management of the recognised institution in relation to programmes of higher education and training that it provides, organises or procures. The Council intends that the evaluation of the operation and management of the recognised institution will be undertaken using the criteria listed below. The criteria are designed to assess, in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured, the efficiency and effectiveness of the recognised institution's:

- Governance, organisation and administration
- Planning and evaluation
- Academic and other staff policies
- Library and information resources
- Physical resources
- Learner services
- Public responsibility and integrity
- Financial resources and management

The Council notes that, in undertaking the review of the operation and management, some of the criteria are generally consistent with requirements of the Regional Technical

Colleges Act 1992, under which, existing recognised institutions operate statutory obligations.³

1.2 Educational and training programmes

The criteria set out here are intended to assist the examination of the recognised institution's processes for the development, validation, implementation and review of its higher education and training programmes. In reviewing the programmes, account will be taken of the effectiveness of processes operated by the recognised institution

- to develop and validate those programmes, and
- to maintain and continuously improve the quality of those programmes.

This is a prime criterion.

As appropriate for the delegation of authority, the Council shall also seek to establish that:

- The institution's quality assurance procedures have been agreed with the Council in accordance with the Council's 'Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education'.
- The institution has, or in the case of review can show evidence of the effective operation of, quality assurance procedures for:
 - the design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules, including the assurance that the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by the Council have been incorporated into outcomes to be associated with the successful completion of the programme.
 - the regular evaluation or review of existing programmes, subjects and modules, including the assurance that the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by the Council have been incorporated into outcomes to be associated with the successful completion of the programme.
 - the fair and consistent assessment of learners.
 - the on-going monitoring of programmes.
 - the selection, appointment and development of staff who are providing programmes.
 - the evaluation of premises, equipment and facilities in relation to programmes
 - the evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures.

³ There may be a need for the evaluation/review to have regard to audits/reviews undertaken in relation to any of the above by other parties

1.3 Conditions attached to Delegation of Authority

These criteria focus on the recognised institution's capacity to comply with or its record of compliance with the conditions determined by the Council for the purposes of the delegation of authority. Council conditions shall include:

- adherence to the agreed wording on parchments issued by the recognised institutions, as defined in the Order in Council granting Delegation of Authority.
- co-operation and assistance to the Council, and the Authority where appropriate, in the performance of their functions.
- establishment of procedures for the assessment of learners which are fair and consistent and for the purpose of compliance with standards determined by the Council under the Act.
- implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression determined by the Authority under the Act.
- consultation with other providers as stipulated under Sections 28 and 29 of the Act.
- provision of such information as the Council requires for the purposes of the performance of its functions, including information in respect of completion rates.
- fulfilment of such other conditions as the Council may from time to time determine, in consultation with the recognised institution.

1.4 Objects of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999

The purpose of these criteria is to establish whether the recognised institution can show how its application of delegation of authority will be or has been supportive of the objects of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. In addition to those objects of the Act that are specifically evaluated in the preceding criteria, the recognised institution should be able to demonstrate, through its policies and operational procedures, that it shall or has operated delegation of authority in a manner that:

- contributes to the provision of a system for the co-ordination and comparison of higher education and training awards.
- facilitates lifelong learning through the promotion of access and opportunity for all learners.
- promotes the recognition of knowledge, skill or competence acquired.
- contributes to the realisation of national education and training policies.
- promotes co-operation with other providers.
- promotes diversity within higher education and training and between higher education and training and further education and training.
- contributes to the realisation of national policy and objectives in relation to the extension of bi-lingualism in Irish society.

PART 2 - Procedure for the delegation of authority to make awards.

- 2.1 The Council will, on receipt of an application from a recognised institution for authority to make awards, organise the evaluation of that recognised institution in a manner which supports its strategic objective to optimise delegation of authority, subject to the provisions of the Act.
- 2.2 The application will set out the process of consultation undertaken by the recognised institution in advance of making the submission, including consultation with any provider referred to in section 29(2) of the Act and stakeholders generally.
- 2.3 The Council will consider the extent to which the consultation required under section 29(2) of the Act has taken place and will agree to an evaluation process commencing where it is satisfied with this.
- 2.4 The Council will, in co-operation with the recognised institution concerned, conduct this process in line with operational guidelines for the evaluation of delegated authority to make awards which the Council has developed.⁴
- 2.5 An recognised institution applying for delegation of authority to make awards will undertake a self-evaluation report which addresses the criteria determined by the Council and agreed with the Authority and submit that self-evaluation report to the Council.
- 2.6 The Council will examine the self-evaluation report and if satisfied that it addresses the criteria determined by the Council will, with the agreement of the Authority, arrange a subsequent evaluation of the recognised institution.
- 2.7 The Council will arrange for the subsequent evaluation of a recognised institution by at least five persons who have a particular knowledge and experience of higher education and training and quality assurance systems in higher education and training, and whom the Council considers appropriate, including persons with relevant international experience. The Council will supply the support secretariat to the persons appointed.
- 2.8 Persons selected by the Council may not be drawn from the Council or its Executive, the Council of the Further Education and Training Awards Council or its Executive or from the Authority or its Executive.
- 2.9 Ethical guidelines in relation to the selection and participation of persons selected by the Council for the evaluation of a recognised institution will be drawn up and implemented by the Council. Such guidelines will include a requirement that such persons declare any personal, professional, academic or business interests that could conflict with their panel membership responsibilities.
- 2.10 A site visit to the recognised institution will be undertaken, by the persons appointed by the Council, to assess, clarify and verify the self-evaluation report, the

⁴ Supplementary Guidelines for the Delegation and Review of Delegation of Authority to Make Awards have been produced as a separate document.

Council's findings and any other relevant documentation on the basis of the criteria for delegating authority to make awards, following which the first draft of a report will be sent to the recognised institution.

- 2.11** The report will address the four major areas of the criteria and include a rationale for the findings against each of them. The recognised institution will be invited to comment on the report, in relation to those findings
- 2.12** The persons appointed by the Council will consider any comments made by the recognised institution before a final report is forwarded to the chief executive of the Council.
- 2.13** The report submitted to the chief executive of the Council will reflect the findings of the evaluation. The report will be accompanied by any comments received from the recognised institution and an indication of the opinions of the persons appointed by the Council, on those comments.
- 2.14** Having taken account, *inter alia*, of the self-evaluation and subsequent evaluation reports, the Council will decide whether it wishes to seek the agreement of the Authority to be satisfied that the recognised institution meets the criteria determined by the Council for the delegation of authority to make awards. In deciding to seek any such agreement, the Council will advise the Authority of the rationale for its decision.
- 2.15** On receipt of the Authority's agreement, the Council will make a decision on the delegation of authority to the recognised institution. Public announcement of a decision to grant delegation of authority can then be made by the Council or the recognised institution or both.
- 2.16** The Council will approve the delegation of authority to make awards to a recognised institution by an Order in Council and attach such conditions as it thinks fit.
- 2.17** As soon as possible after the completion of the process, the Council will publish the findings of its subsequent evaluation and its own decisions in relation to the delegation of authority. This will include publication on the Council's website. The recognised institution will be required to publish its own self-evaluation report on its website at this stage, if it has not already done so.

PART 3 - Procedure for the review of delegation of authority to make awards.

- 3.1** The Council will conduct the review of delegation of authority to a recognised institution from time to time as it thinks fit and in any case not less than once in every five years, or as directed from time to time by the Authority.
- 3.2** The Council will inform a recognised institution with delegated authority to make awards, in writing, of the proposed timing of a review.
- 3.3** The Council will review a recognised institution with delegated authority to make awards, in co-operation with the recognised institution concerned, and conduct the process in line with operational guidelines for review of delegated authority to make awards, which the Council has developed.⁵
- 3.4** An recognised institution which is scheduled for a review of its delegated authority to make awards will prepare a self evaluation report against the criteria determined by the Council and agreed with the Authority and submit that self evaluation report to the Council.
- 3.5** The Council will examine the submitted report and, if satisfied that it addresses the criteria determined by the Council will arrange a subsequent review of the recognised institution.
- 3.6** The Council will arrange for the subsequent review of a recognised institution by at least five persons who have a particular knowledge and experience of higher education and training and quality assurance systems in higher education and training, and whom the Council considers appropriate, including persons with relevant international experience. The Council will supply the support secretariat to the persons appointed.
- 3.7** Persons selected by the Council may not be drawn from the Council or its Executive, the Council of the Further Education and Training Awards Council or its Executive or from the Authority or its Executive.
- 3.8** Ethical guidelines in relation to the selection and participation of persons selected by the Council will be drawn up and implemented by the Council. Such guidelines will include a requirement that such persons declare any personal, professional, academic or business interests that could conflict with their panel membership responsibilities.
- 3.9** A site visit to the recognised institution will be undertaken by the persons appointed by the Council, to assess, clarify and verify the self-evaluation report, the Council's findings and any other relevant documentation on the basis of the criteria for delegating authority to make awards, following which the first draft of a report will be sent to the recognised institution

⁵ Supplementary Guidelines for the Delegation and Review of Delegation of Authority to Make Awards have been produced as a separate document.

- 3.10** The report will address the four major areas of the criteria and include a rationale for the findings against each of them. The recognised institution will be invited to comment on the report, in relation to those findings.
- 3.11** The persons appointed by the Council will consider any comments made by the recognised institution before a final report is forwarded to the chief executive of the Council.
- 3.12** The report submitted to the chief executive of the Council will reflect the findings of the evaluation. The report will be accompanied by any comments received from the recognised institution and an indication of the opinions of the persons appointed by the Council, on those comments.
- 3.13** Having taken account, inter alia, of the self-evaluation and subsequent evaluation reports, the Council will decide whether it is satisfied that the recognised institution meets the criteria determined by the Council for the delegation of authority to make awards. The Council will advise the Authority of its decision and the rationale for that decision. Public announcement of a decision to continue to grant delegation of authority can then be made by the Council or the recognised institution or both.
- 3.14** The Council will approve the recognised institution for continued delegation of authority by an Order in Council and attach such conditions as it thinks fit.
- 3.15** If, having taken account, inter alia, of the self-evaluation and subsequent evaluation reports, the Council is not satisfied with the recognised institution's capacity to continue to meet or comply with the criteria determined by the Council, it will notify the recognised institution concerned, in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for that opinion. Notification will state that the recognised institution may make representations to the Council with regard to the withdrawal of delegation of authority to make awards, no later than three months following issue of the notification.
- 3.16** The Council will consider representations made by a recognised institution against a decision of the Council to withdraw Delegation of Authority.
- 3.17** If after three months, and if appropriate, following consideration of any representations made to the Council by the recognised institution, the Council is still of the opinion that delegation of authority to make awards should be withdrawn, it will inform the recognised institution, in writing, of the date from which withdrawal of delegation to make awards will take effect. The Council will advise the Authority of its decision and the rationale for that decision.
- 3.18** A recognised institution which has been informed of the Council's intention to withdraw delegation of authority to make awards and which has unsuccessfully made representations to Council, may appeal to the Authority against the decision of the Council. Such appeals will be conducted in accordance with procedures determined by the Authority.

- 3.19** In the event of withdrawal of delegated authority to make awards, the Council will put in place procedures to undertake the making of awards, which will have regard for the best interests of the learners and will communicate such arrangements to the recognised institution and the learners concerned.
- 3.20** As soon as possible after the completion of the process, the Council will publish the findings of its subsequent evaluation and its own decisions in relation to the delegation of authority. This will include publication on the Council's website. The recognised institution will be required to publish its own self-evaluation report on its website, at this stage, if it has not already done so.

APPENDIX 1

Section 29 and 30 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 (No. 26 of 1999).

29. —(1) Subject to *subsection (2)*, a recognised institution may request the Council to delegate to it the authority to make higher education and training awards.

(2) Where a programme of higher education and training is organised or procured, in whole or in part, by a recognised institution and is provided, in whole or in part, by any other provider, the recognised institution shall consult with such other provider before making a request under *subsection (1)* for delegation of authority to make awards in respect of that programme.

(3) Upon receipt of a request under *subsection (1)*, the Council shall determine and publish, in such form and manner as it thinks fit, criteria for the purposes of this section and shall, in accordance with *subsection (4)*, review—

(a) The operation and management of the recognised institution concerned in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured by that recognised institution, and

(b) Those programmes.

(4) In carrying out a review under *subsection (3)*, the Council shall implement the procedures agreed from time to time with the Authority which procedures shall include—

(a) evaluation by the recognised institution of—

(i) the operation and management of the recognised institution concerned in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured by that recognised institution, and

(ii) those programmes,

(b) where the Council, with the agreement of the Authority, is satisfied with the result of the evaluation referred to in *paragraph (a)*, subsequent evaluation by such persons who have a particular knowledge and experience related to higher education and training, as the Council considers appropriate, including persons with relevant international experience, and

(c) publication, in such form and manner as the Council thinks fit, of a report of the findings of those evaluations.

(5) Where the Council is satisfied, with the agreement of the Authority, following a review under *subsection (3)*, that—

(a) the operation and management of a recognised institution in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured by the recognised institution,

and

(b) those programmes

meet the criteria determined by the Council for the purposes of this section with the agreement of the Authority, then the Council may delegate to that recognised institution the authority to make such higher education and training awards, subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, as the Council specifies by notice in writing to the recognised institution concerned and the Authority.

(6) The conditions referred to in *subsection (5)* shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, conditions requiring the recognised institution concerned to—

(a) co-operate with and assist the Council, and the Authority where appropriate, in the performance of their functions,

(b) establish the procedures referred to in *section 23(1)(e)*,

(c) implement the procedures referred to in *section 23(2)(d)*, and

(d) provide such information as the Council requires for the purposes of the performance of the functions of the Council, including information in respect of completion rates.

(7) The Council shall, for the purpose of determining the conditions referred to in *subsection (5)*, have regard, in particular, to programmes, if any, referred to in *subsection (2)*.

(8) A review which, at the commencement of this Part, has been or is being conducted on the direction of the Minister in relation to the delegation of authority to an institution established by or under section 3 of the Act of 1992 to make higher education and training awards, which following such commencement becomes a recognised institution, shall be a review for the purposes of this section where the Minister so determines and the Minister shall inform the Council, by notice in writing, of any such determination and may give such directions to the Council and the Authority, as he or she considers appropriate.

30.—(1) The Council shall from time to time as it thinks fit and in any case not less than once in every five years, or as directed from time to time by the Authority, review, in such manner as it thinks fit—

(a) the operation and management of a recognised institution, to which authority to make awards has been delegated under *section 29*, in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured by that institution,

and

(b) those programmes.

(2) Where the Council, having carried out a review under *subsection (1)*, is of the opinion—

(a) (i) that the operation or management of the recognised institution concerned in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured by that recognised institution, or

(ii) that those programmes, do not meet the criteria determined by the Council under *section 29(5)*, or

(b) that the conditions specified by the Council under *section 29(5)* are not being complied with, or

(c) that there are other reasonable grounds for withdrawing the authority to make awards delegated to that recognised institution under *section 29*, it shall inform the recognised institution concerned, by notice in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for that opinion and the notice shall state that the recognised institution may make representations to the Council in relation to that withdrawal not later than three months after the receipt of the notice by the recognised institution.

(3) Where, after the expiration of three months from the service of the notice referred to in *subsection (2)* and after consideration of any representations made to the Council, the Council remains of that opinion it may withdraw the authority to make awards delegated to the recognised institution under *section 29*, by notice in writing addressed to that recognised institution, from such date as it considers appropriate and until such time as it may be satisfied of whichever of the following is appropriate—

(a) (i) that the operation and management of the recognised institution concerned in relation to programmes of higher education and training provided, organised or procured by that recognised institution, or

(ii) that those programmes, meet the criteria determined by the Council under *section 29(5)*, or

(b) that the conditions specified by the Council under *section 29(5)* are being complied with, or

(c) that the grounds referred to in *subsection (2)(c)* for withdrawing the authority to make awards no longer exist.

(4) A review under *subsection (1)* shall be carried out in accordance with such procedures as may be determined from time to time by the Council with the agreement of the Authority and those procedures shall provide for an appeal to the Authority against a decision to withdraw the authority to make awards delegated under *section 29*.

APPENDIX 2

Glossary

Access - the process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.

Assessment - the total range of written, oral and practical tests, as well as projects and portfolios, used to decide on the student's progress in the programme unit or module.

Assessment Criteria - descriptions of what the learner is expected to do, in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved.

Authorised Award - an award made by a recognised institution under authority delegated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council.

Award - that conferred, granted or given by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.

Award-Type - an award-type is a class of named awards sharing common features and level. Award-types can reflect a mix of standards of knowledge, skill and competence, which is independent of any specific field of learning. Descriptors can be defined generically for award-types.

Awarding Body - a body that makes awards.

Credit - the currency used to measure student workload in terms of the notional learning time or learner effort required to achieve specified learning outcomes.

Delegated Authority - power given to a provider to make awards, under Section 19 of the Act, in respect of specified programmes.

Field of Learning - a basis for grouping awards within the framework based on the subject matter of the learning they contain.

Higher Education and Training - education and training, other than primary or post-primary education and training, which is determined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland under *section 10* of the Act to be higher education and training.

Learner - a person who is acquiring, or who has acquired knowledge, skill or competence.

Module or Subject - a self-contained, formally structured learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Named Awards - the particular awards, within an award-type, which are named with respect to field of learning. 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.

Order in Council - a formal document approved by the Council at a meeting, setting out a decision of the Council in relation to the performance of a statutory function of the Council. An Order in Council is authenticated by the Seal of the Council.

Order of Council - a formal document setting out a decision made in accordance with established Council policies and procedures regarding the matters referred to. An Order of Council is authenticated by the signature of the Chief Executive, or of an officer duly authorised in this regard by the Chief Executive.

Programme - (of education and training) is any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence and includes courses of study.

Progression - the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme where each programme is of a higher level than the preceding programme.

Provider - a person who, or body which, provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training.

Recognised Institutions - means the Institutes of Technology governed by the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992.

Stakeholder - any person, or party who has an interest in the Council, including learners, parents, graduates, staff members, the broader academic and professional community, government, business and industrial organisations, local and national communities.

Standards - the knowledge, skill and competence expected from the learner who is to receive an award.

The Act - the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.

The Authority - the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

The Council - the Higher Education and Training Awards Council.

Transfer - the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.

Validation - this is a 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.