Griffith College

Coláiste Uí Ghríofa

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies and Procedures

Apprenticeship Programmes

June 2020

Contents

Glossary

AO	SOLAS authorised officer, based in an Education and Training Board (reference section 2.1.1)
APC	Griffith College's academic and professional council (reference section 2.5)
ASC	Academic success coach (reference section 3.7)
CSG	Consortium steering group (reference section 2.4)
CSWP	Competencies and skills workbook and portfolio (reference section 7.2.10)
ELM	Employer liaison manager (reference section 3.4)
HEA	Higher Education Authority (reference section 2.2)
LAP	Local administrator for programme (collaborative provider) (reference section 3.5.4)
LCP	Local collaborative provider (reference section 3.5)
LML	Local module leader (within collaborative provider) (reference section 3.6)
LPB	Local programme board (within collaborative provider) (reference section 3.5.2)
LPD	Local programme director (within collaborative provider) (reference section 3.5.3)
MOA	Memorandum of agreement (reference sections 2.4, 4.1.4 and 12)
NAP	National administrator for the programme (reference section 3.3)
NCP	National coordinating provider (i.e. Griffith College) (reference section 3.1)
NFQ	National framework of qualifications, https://nfq.qqi.ie/ (reference section 1.2)
NML	National module leaders (reference section 3.6)
NPB	National programme board (reference section 2.6)
NPD	National programme director (reference section 3.2)
QAE	Quality assurance and enhancement
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (www.qqi.ie) (reference section 2.3)
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS, www.solas.ie) – the Statutory body with national responsibility for apprentices and apprenticeship programmes (reference section 2.1)
VLE	Griffith College's virtual learning environment, Moodle (reference section 7.2.10)
WM	Workplace mentors (reference section 4.3)

1   Introduction

This document sets out the quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures to be followed in the management and delivery of apprenticeship programmes where Griffith College is the coordinating provider. This document is informed by and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Apprenticeship Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- Advanced Healthcare Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship validation document
- The Industrial Training Act 1967, which regulates apprenticeships
- Griffith College's – Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies, Procedures, Practices and Guidelines:
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for use by all Providers (QQI 2016)
- Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI 2012)
- Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes (QQI 2016)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI 2018)
- QQI Assessment & Standards 2013.

1.1   Definition of an apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is defined as a programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre. It is a blended combination of on-the-job employer-based training, off-the-job training and online learning.

The national apprenticeship system is governed by legislation, principally the Industrial Training Act, 1967. The legislation sets out the overall structure of the national system and the protections for – as well as the responsibilities of – apprentices, employers, and education and training providers.

SOLAS is the statutory agency responsible for apprenticeships on behalf of the government and works in close partnership with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) with respect to programme funding and accreditation respectively. SOLAS also liaises directly with industry and with education and training providers across further and higher education sectors. SOLAS's responsibility includes maintenance of a national register of employers approved to employ apprentices and a related national register of apprentices.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 underpin apprenticeships, supporting validation and quality assurance arrangements for apprenticeship programmes nationally. The national apprenticeship system is funded by employers through the National Training Fund and from the exchequer.

1.2 Apprenticeship programme characteristics

Apprenticeship programmes have particular quality assurance requirements. These are specified in the Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes. An apprenticeship programmes has the following characteristics:

a) The programme prepares the participant for a specific occupation for which an Occupational Profile (to be defined later) has been established.
b) Access to the programme is via a contract of apprenticeship between an approved employer of apprentices and the apprentice.
c) The programme leads to a professional award at the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level, between Level 5 and Level 9 inclusive, that is aligned with the QQI Professional Award-Type Descriptor for that level, and consistent with the approved Occupational Profile. QQI may issue a separate set of guidelines that will cover apprenticeship programmes developed at NFQ Level 10.
d) The programme is a blended combination of on-the-job (employer-based) training and off-the-job training with an education / training provider.
e) For a programme to be classified as an apprenticeship at entry level, it must have a duration of no less than two years.
f) The structure of the programme provides for more than 50% workplace-based learning.
g) It is assumed that apprenticeship programmes are restricted to occupations approved by the State for inclusion in the list of apprentice occupations and there will be one programme (nationally) per occupational profile.

Apprenticeship programmes at Griffith College are developed in accordance with the above characteristics.

1.3 Objective of an apprenticeship

The objective of a statutory apprenticeship is to provide apprentices with the required knowledge, skills and competences to work autonomously in their selected craft or occupation. The apprenticeship is a statutory validated training and educational programme for SOLAS-registered apprentices which is enterprise-led in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders. The occupational profile sets out apprentices' roles.

1.4 Apprenticeship programme development

Apprenticeship programmes are developed in accordance with the Apprenticeship Council's Developing a National Apprenticeship Handbook, incorporating a process of ten steps.

Griffith College's apprenticeship programmes are designed using an industry-led iterative process, supported by Griffith College as the coordinating provider. These programmes are developed in accordance with Griffith College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual (sections B1 and B3, respectively).

In developing apprenticeship programmes, Griffith College ensures that each programme's minimum intended programme learning outcomes are mapped to the appropriate level on the Professional Award-type Descriptors (Award Class: Professional) For the Alignment of Professional Awards at NFQ Levels 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. This mapping – *Review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Apprenticeships at Griffith College against the criteria set out in the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes – Topic Specific*

(QQI 2016) – is included in the documentation forwarded by Griffith College to QQI and panel review members for consideration as part of the programme validation process.

Apprentice Programme proposals are submitted to QQI for validation in accordance with section B3 of Griffith College's QAE Procedures.

1.5   Occupational profile

An occupational profile is a core element of an apprenticeship. It provides a clear summary of the occupational skills, knowledge and competences apprentices will have on successful completion of their education and training.

The 2014 Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland underlined the importance of the occupational profile and the essential role of industry in developing such profiles. The Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes 2016 also identifies the central function of the occupational profile in clarifying what the qualified apprentice will know and be able to do, as well as the roles and responsibilities of those overseeing apprenticeship education and training, both on-the-job and off-the-job.

The consortium steering group (CSG) (reference section 2.4) develops an occupational profile as part of an apprenticeship programme's top-level development.

1.6   Quality assurance and enhancement

Griffith College has agreed its quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) policies and procedures with QQI. These apply to all of the college's academic programme and by extension to the college's apprenticeship programmes.

Griffith College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual - Policies and Procedures has been approved by QQI for application to all of the college's programmes. This document supplements the college's existing quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures to meet the particular requirements of apprenticeship programmes. This document has been developed in accordance with the scope of the Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes (QQI 2016).

Griffith College has completed a mapping of the contents of this Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies and Procedures for Apprenticeship Programmes to the requirements of the Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes (QQI 2016). The output is presented in the document *Review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Apprenticeships at Griffith College against the criteria set out in the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes – Topic Specific (QQI 2016)*, which was provided in the documentation pack (reference document #2a) for QQI review of this *Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Apprenticeships at Griffith College* document.

2 Governance Structure

Apprenticeship programmes involve the education and training of apprentices in both on-the-job and off-the-job settings. Apprentices have twin roles, firstly as learners on programmes leading to nationally accredited awards and secondly as employees where they combine their work duties with related on-the-job mentored training and development.

Various institutions and governance bodies work collaboratively to ensure the quality of apprenticeship programmes for learners and employers alike. These include:

Institutions
- An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS) – the further education and skills training public body with statutory responsibility for the management of national apprenticeship programmes
- The Higher Education Authority (HEA) – the higher education public body with statutory responsibility for funding national apprenticeship programmes
- Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI) – the public body with statutory responsibility for the evaluation and national accreditation, and quality assurance oversight, of further and higher education awards
- The National Coordinating Provider (NCP) – in this instance Griffith College - the educational institution with responsibility for delivering the apprenticeship programme through a team of people comprising a national programme director, national administrator for the programme, national module leaders and academic success coaches.
- Employer organisations with employers, workplace mentors and apprentices.

Governance Bodies
- The Consortium Steering Group (CSG) – an employer-led body with responsibility for the specification and monitoring of an apprenticeship programme ensuring its relevance and value to employers and employees (apprentices)
- The National Programme Board (NPB) – the team of people involved in the delivery, management and oversight of the apprenticeship programme
- The Academic and Professional Council (APC) – the academic governing body of Griffith College, the national coordinating provider for its respect of its accredited programmes
- The National Examination Board – the examination board of Griffith College, the national coordinating provider overseeing the setting, conducting, assessment and reporting of examinations and their results.

This chapter details the roles and responsibilities of each of the institutions and governance bodies listed above with respect to apprenticeship programmes. It is assumed that Griffith College is the national coordinating provider and the only provider of the apprenticeship programme nationally. Later chapters provide additional information where there are also local collaborative providers involved.

A diagram showing the relationship between the various institutions and governance bodies is shown overleaf (Figure 1), followed by details of the various institutions and governance bodies involved.
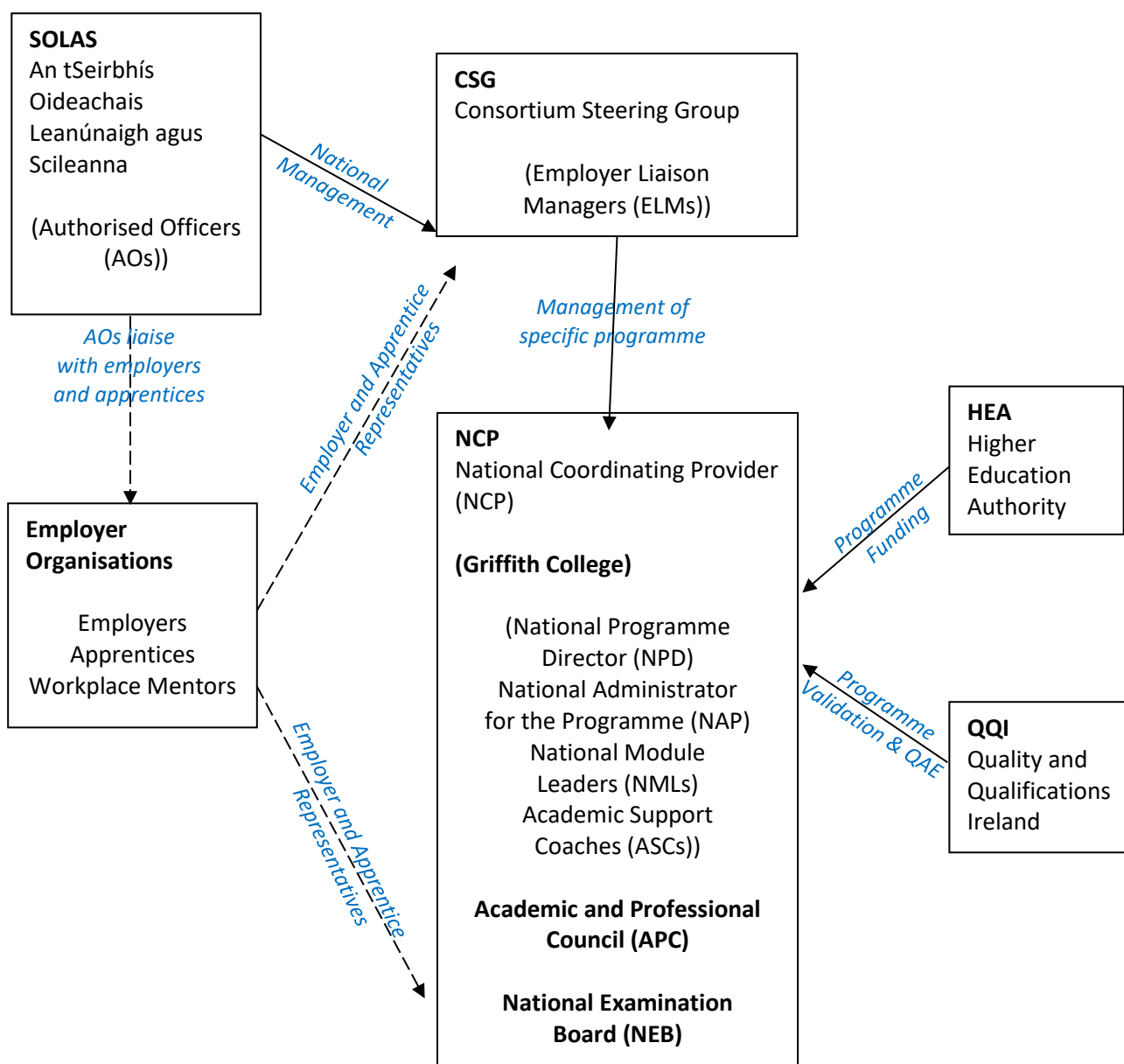
Figure 1: Overall Governance and Reporting Structures for Apprenticeship Programme

2.1 SOLAS

SOLAS has overall statutory responsibility for the management of national apprenticeships as set out in the Industrial Training Act 1967. SOLAS has an established network of authorised officers who are based within the education and training boards (ETBs) – to support the implementation of their statutory brief nationally.

SOLAS has the statutory responsibility for registering all apprentices and ensuring that they meet the entry criteria set out in the validation document and are employed by an approved employer. SOLAS maintains a register of apprentices. The selection of apprentices is governed by the access criteria agreed in the validation document.

SOLAS also maintains a register of approved employers.

2.1.1 Authorised Officers

SOLAS has established a network of authorised officers who carry out activities on its behalf and implement its statutory brief. Authorised officers (AOs) are located within the Education and Training Boards. SOLAS's authorised officers:

- brief employers on their role and responsibilities in the on-the-job elements of the programme including the Apprenticeship Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- visit employer sites
- approve employers' sites as suitable locations to deliver the relevant apprenticeship programme
- register approved apprentices proposed by approved employers
- monitor employers' and apprentices' progress through the programme
- maintain employer and apprentice registers
- work collaboratively with the programme team delivering the apprenticeship

2.2 Higher Education Authority (HEA)

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory funding authority for apprenticeship programmes. Griffith College has a reporting responsibility to the HEA in this regard.

2.3 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has a statutory role in assuring that apprenticeship programmes lead to professional awards at levels between 5 and 9 inclusive on the national framework of qualifications (NFQ). QQI ensures that apprenticeship awards are aligned with the Professional Award-Type Descriptors at the appropriate level and are consistent with the approved Occupational Profile.

QQI's Topic Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes apply to the design and operation of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures for apprenticeship programmes. QQI also has a statutory role in quality assurance oversight and review in relation to the application of these guidelines.

2.4 The Consortium Steering Group (CSG)

The consortium steering group (CSG) comprises all of the relevant apprenticeship programme's key stakeholders including employers, occupational associations, occupational regulators and Griffith College (in its role as the coordinating provider), and any other collaborative providers who are involved in the programme. The CSG represents as many different sectors as possible within the relevant industry and is predominately made up of industry stakeholders.

The role of the CSG is to ensure that the apprenticeship programme, for which it has been established, conforms to, and evolves with, the requirements of the occupation. The CSG's purpose is to ensure that the apprenticeship programme is enterprise-led, meets labour market needs, and that graduates from the programme fit the specific occupational role assigned to them.

The CSG acts as the 'guardian' of the occupation, performing the critical role (in conjunction with SOLAS, the statutory regulator), of coordinating employers involved in the programme. The members of the CSG sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) (reference document "MOA for CSG members") governing the implementation of the apprenticeship programme.

The CSG is chaired by an elected representative from the industry sector. The CSG reports to SOLAS (as the statutory body) and the HEA (as the funding organisation).

The roles and responsibilities of the CSG are set out in the [Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship programme. June 2016: Appendix 2, pp 43-45.](#)

In performing its duties, the CSG:

- receives reports from the programme board and the coordinating provider on the progress of the delivery of the programme and any recommendations for changes to the validated programme
- approves changes to the programme
- receives feedback from employers
- is the ultimate point of appeal for apprentices (if they have exhausted all other avenues as set out in this document)
- reviews the occupational profile
- appoints an employer liaison manager (who may be an employee of one of the members of the CSG) to support employer / apprentice engagement.

Once the programme is operational, the CSG convenes at least twice a year to consider feedback from the industry and to receive updates on the programme implementation and progress. The minutes are prepared for each of the meetings to evidence the decisions taken and to create action plans for the next period.

The appointment of new consortium members is governed by the consortium MOA which all CSG members have signed (reference document "MOA for CSG Members").

2.5   Academic and Professional Council (APC)

Griffith College's Academic and Professional Council (APC) oversees the planning, coordination, quality, development and improvement of apprenticeship programmes.

Details of the role and responsibilities, membership and meeting frequency of the Griffith College APC are set out in sections A2 and A3 of [Griffith College's QAE Policies](#) manual.

2.6   National Programme Board (NPB)

The national programme board (NPB) is responsible for academic issues relating to the programme. The role of the NPB is to take responsibility for programme management, development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation in accordance with any regulations agreed by Griffith College's APC and those stipulated by QQI. Details of the role and responsibilities, membership and meeting frequency of Griffith College's programme boards are also set out in sections A2 and A3 of [Griffith College's QAE Policies](#) manual.

The membership of the national programme board for an apprenticeship programme comprises:

- the national programme director (NPD)
- national administrator for the programme (NAP)
- national module leaders (NMLs)
- academic success coaches (ASCs)
- apprentice representative(s)
- workplace mentor representative(s)

The national programme board (NPB) is chaired by an elected representative from the sector's employers, and reports to the consortium steering group (CSG) and to the national coordinating provider's academic and professional council (APC).

Where there are collaborative providers involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship programme (reference section 3.5, below), they are required to appoint their own local programme board to oversee local delivery of the apprenticeship programme.

Where the apprenticeship programme is also delivered locally by collaborative providers, the national programme board includes representatives from the various local collaborative programme providers (typically the local programme director (LPD)).

The responsibilities of the apprenticeship programme board are set out in the Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship programme. June 2016: Appendix 2, pp 32-33, and include:

- monitoring and management of programme delivery and related feedback
- recommending updates to the programme and programme delivery
- leading programme reviews
- providing feedback mechanisms for apprentices
- preparation, maintenance and publication of a programme handbook
- reviewing external examiner reports and implementation of improvements
- reviewing learner feedback and implementation of improvements
- taking an overview of exam broadsheets to identify and query any anomalies
- supporting the director of academic programmes with programmatic review
- escalating programme compliance issues, e.g. exam deadlines not being met
- writing annual monitoring reports with feedback and input from members of the national programme committee, local programme committees and other fora, and follow through on the implementation of any recommendations
- co-ordinating – with the marketing department and CSG – the preparation of programme marketing material and ensuring that marketing material provided for brochures and other communication channels is relevant
- dealing with academic concerns relating to the programme.

In accordance with sections A2 and A3 of Griffith College's QAE Policies, the national programme board meets at least once per semester to review the ongoing management of the programme and to address any specific issues arising from its operation, including matters raised via the class representatives or matters raised via other mechanisms affecting the programme.

2.7   National Examination Board (NEB)

The National Examination Board (NEB) for Apprenticeship programmes operates in accordance with Griffith College's QAE Policies - sections E13 and E14.

The role and responsibility of external examiners is set out in Griffith College's QAE Policies, section E2, which supports the fair and consistent assessment of apprenticeship learners.

The roles and responsibilities of apprenticeship exam boards are set out in the Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship programme. June 2016: Appendix 2, p33.

Membership of the national examination board includes the chair of the national programme board, the national programme director and employer representatives from the national programme board, in particular those with significant examining expertise.

Where the apprenticeship programme is also delivered by local collaborative providers, the national examination board composition also includes each collaborative provider's local programme director and external examiners (a minimum of one from each provider).

The national examination board is responsible for the final holistic assessment of competency of an apprentice. It reviews all the evidence presented from module leaders and the reports from academic support coaches in relation to the apprentices' progress and attainment of learning outcomes.

3   Programme Management Roles and Responsibilities

This section of the quality assurance and enhancement document outlines the management roles involved in the delivery of an apprenticeship programme where Griffith College is the national coordinating provider (NCP) and where there are other local collaborative providers (LCPs).

The following diagram (Figure 2) shows the relationship between Griffith College, as the NCP, and local collaborative providers (LCPs), if/as relevant. It identifies the various programme operational and academic oversight entities. Details of their activities, interfaces and reporting requirements are provided in this and subsequent sections of this QAE document.
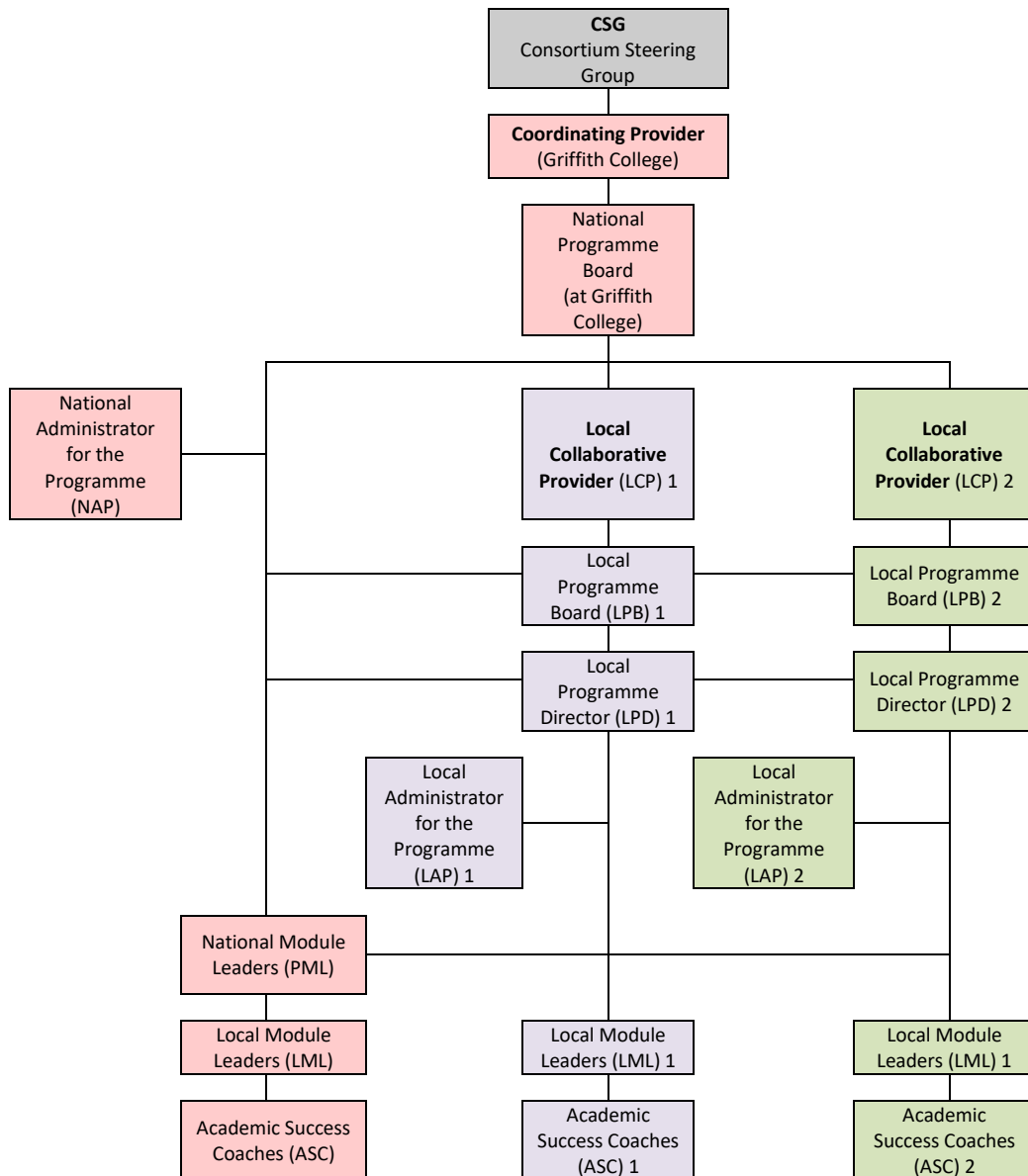
Figure 2:   Intra-Provider Operational and Reporting Structures for Apprenticeship Programme

3.1   National Coordinating Provider (Griffith College)

As the national coordinating provider (NCP), Griffith College has responsibility for developing the apprenticeship programme so that it meets the standards required by QQI for validated programmes, allowing it to be placed on Ireland's national framework of qualifications (NFQ).

Griffith College is a member of the consortium steering group (CSG) with responsibility for reporting on academic matters. The college has a signed memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the CSG outlining the roles and related responsibilities for all involved. Griffith College is represented on the CSG by its national programme director (NPD).

In its capacity as national coordinating provider, Griffith College has responsibility for:

- coordinating the activities of the CSG (as directed by the chair)
- creating and coordinating the activities of an industry-led national programme board (NPB)
- appointing a national programme director and national administrator for the programme
- working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure the programme delivery is a success, meets the needs of the sector, and the programme evolves with the requirements of the occupational profile
- delivering the programme in accordance with the programme validation documents including any updates recommended by the NPB
- providing induction, support and continuing professional development opportunities for module leaders, academic success coaches and workplace mentors
- ensuring that each apprentice receives the necessary support and guidance to facilitate them to successfully complete the programme
- complying with the roles and responsibilities of national coordinating providers as set out in the [Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship programme. June 2016: Appendix 2, pp 13-15](#)
- developing a community of practice and maintaining a database for:
  - employers
  - national module leaders and local module leaders
  - workplace mentors
  - academic success coaches
  - apprentices
- developing templates for and maintaining memoranda of agreements (MOAs) with:
  - CSG members
  - Employers
- maintaining award standards and programme quality through annual and quinquennial review of programmes ensuring continued alignment with evolving occupational profiles
- arranging additional external reviews by the consortium, QQI and/or the statutory agency, where appropriate.
- implementing changes recommended by the national programme board and approved by the consortium steering group

Where the apprenticeship programme is also delivered by local collaborative providers, Griffith College, as national coordinating provider, has the additional roles of:

- managing the appointment of local collaborative providers (LCPs)
- ensuring the agreed quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures are adhered to, and applied consistently, across all LCPs
- developing memoranda of agreement (MOAs) for the appointment and monitoring of LCPs
- ensuring consistency of delivery and assessment across all LCPs.

3.2   National Programme Director (NPD)

Griffith College appoints a national programme director (NPD) to each apprenticeship programme offered within the College. The NPD coordinates and reports to the national programme board (NPB) on academic matters. Where Griffith College holds the role of national coordinating provider, the national programme director (NPD) has responsibility for:

- representing Griffith College on the consortium steering group (CSG)
- discharging Griffith College's role as national coordinating provider as outlined in this document
- providing academic leadership for staff (e.g. module leaders, administrators for the programme, academic success coaches, etc.)
- being the main point of contact for the funding and statutory agencies
- advising and assisting the CSG in the admissions process as appropriate
- coordinating the activities of the national programme board
- identifying and nominating suitable external examiners for appointment by the college's academic and professional council (APC)
- organising the examination and moderation processes
- governance and management of the delivery of the programme in accordance with agreed quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures
- providing regular and timely reports to the CSG and the national programme board (NPB)
- providing feedback to the programme board and making recommendations for changes to the delivery
- managing processes dealing with individual or group apprentice issues.
- advising on the need to recruit additional academic staff and sitting on interview panels where appropriate
- advising on and updating job descriptions as required
- signing off on appointments and schedules for staff.
- giving guidance to new staff and those from other education providers on the following:
  - overview of the programme
  - programme curriculum
  - programme teaching, learning and assessment methodologies
  - programme schedules, submission deadlines
  - providing feedback for staff and learners
  - schedule and importance of attending programme board meetings

Where there are also local collaborative providers (LCPs) involved in the running of the programme, each LCP is required to appoint its own local programme director. The local programme director (LPD) reports to Griffith College's national programme director (NPD). The LPD also manages a local programme board (LPB), which in turn reports to the national programme board (NPB), in relation to the local delivery of the apprenticeship programme.

3.3   National Administrator for the Programme (NAP)

The national administrator for the programme (NAP) is responsible for all administrative matters related to the programme, including public information, registration, timetables, communication with lecturing staff/tutors, graduation and additional general responsibilities. The NAP reports to the national programme director. The NAP collates reporting information for the consortium steering group and the national programme board. The NAP is the primary point of contact for the programme, and refers issues as appropriate.

Where there are also local collaborative providers (LCPs) involved in delivering the programme, they are each required to appoint their own local administrator for the programme (LAP). The LAP reports to the local programme director (LPD).

3.4   Employer Liaison Manager (ELMs)

Employee liaison managers (ELMs) are appointed by the consortium steering group (CSG) and are external to Griffith College, the national coordinating provider. The role of employer liaison managers is to act as the advocate for employers of apprentices. They assist in the recruitment of employers and advise potential employers on the necessary arrangements and facilities that are required to be approved as an employer of apprentices, in advance of their engagement with authorised officer appointed by SOLAS. The employment liaison managers provide feedback to the national programme board behalf of employers. They support employers and mediate employer issues.

Employer Liaison Managers are responsible for:

- assisting in the recruitment and management of potential and approved employers for apprentices
- ensuring employers meet the required standards of both the statutory body SOLAS and those set out in the programme validation document
- providing programme feedback from an employer perspective to the programme board
- providing a link between employers and the consortium steering group
- annually reviewing employers' capacity to meet the needs of the apprenticeship programme
- dealing with any complaints against an employer.

3.5   Local Collaborative Provider (LCP)

Where the consortium steering group (CSG) seeks to extend the delivery of the programme to new locations, the national coordinating provided (Griffith College) appoints local collaborative providers (to facilitate this activity).

Local collaborative providers (LCPs) are appointed following a due diligence process carried out by Griffith College (in its role as national coordinating provider). This due diligence activity is implemented in accordance with Griffith College's collaborative provider procedures – Griffith College's QAE Policies, section L1. LCPs sign an agreement with Griffith College, as the national coordinating provider, which sets out each organisation's responsibilities in respect of the delivery and management of the apprenticeship programme (reference the document "MOA for Collaborating Providers").

Once appointed, each local collaborative provider (LCP) is responsible for the local delivery of the apprenticeship programme in their own institution. Each LCP appoints the following team to manage the local delivery of the programme:

- A local programme board (LPB)
- A local programme director (LPD) (who is a member of the national programme board)
- A local administrator for the programme (LAP)
- Local module leaders (LML, reference section 3.6) to deliver the off-the-job education and training elements
- Local academic success coaches (LASC, reference section 3.7) to monitor the institution's own apprentices' progress through the programme.

Local collaborative providers are required to sign memoranda of agreements (MOAs) with each employer and each respective apprentice outlining their responsibilities with respect to the apprenticeship programme (reference the document "MOA apprenticeship learning").

Local collaborative providers use the same competency and skills workbooks and portfolios (CSWPs) to facilitate the development, monitoring and assessment of their apprentices' learning and attainment.

Local collaborative providers report to the national programme board (NPB) and are required to meet QQI and Griffith College's quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures standards in relation to the delivery of the programme. The national programme director is responsible for quality assuring and enhancing the standard of the collaborative providers' delivery: this is done through a combination of visits and reviews of the evaluation forms from their institution and involves national benchmarking.

3.5.1 Quality assurance procedures
The local collaborative provider (LCP) is required to have and apply quality assurance policies and procedures standards which are commensurate with those of QQI and Griffith College. These are considered during the due diligence and risk assessment process in advance of LCP approval, and continue to be monitored by means of annual reports to the national programme board.

3.5.2 Local Programme Board (LPB)
The collaborative provider appoints a local programme board (LPB) with responsibilities for local programme provision. The local programme board reports to the national programme board (NPB) (reference section 2.6)

3.5.3 Local Programme Director (LPD)
The local collaborative provider appoints a local programme director (LPD) who has a specific local remit for programme delivery in line with the required quality assurance policies and procedures.

The LPD, reports to the collaborative provider on administrative matters and reports to the local programme board (LPB) on matters related to the local provision of the programme. The LPD also has a reporting responsibility to the national programme director (NPD) and to the national programme board (NPB) of which the local programme director is a member.

3.5.4 Local Administrator for the Programme (LAP)
Each local collaborative provider appoints a local administrator for the programme (LAP). The LAP has a specific local remit for programme administration in line with the required quality assurance policies and procedures.

3.5.5   Induction of Local Collaborative Provider staff

The national programme director (NPD) provides comprehensive induction and ongoing training support for local collaborative provider directors and staff

3.6   National Module Leaders (NMLs) and Local Module Leaders (LMLs)

National module leaders (NML) are appointed for each programme module by Griffith College, in its capacity as national coordinating provider. National module leaders act as a point of contact for both on- and off-the-job training delivery nationally in respect of specific modules. Module descriptors detailing the curriculum and assessment methods are those validated by QQI with the related quality assurance and enhancement procedures in accordance with Section I1 of the Griffith College QAE procedures. National module leaders attend national examination boards at end of each semester.

Where apprenticeship programmes are also delivered by local collaborative providers (LCPs), each local collaborative provider appoints local module leaders (LMLs) with responsibility for local delivery of the programme's modules. Local module leaders (LMLs) deliver the off-the-job elements of their allocated modules within their local institution. They report to their local programme director (LPD) and are advised and guided in their module delivery by corresponding national module leaders.

National module leaders (NMLs) are responsible for gathering input from all local module leaders (LMLs) nationally and provide guidance and advice in respect of assessment briefs and examinations. National module leaders are responsible for compiling recommendations for module amendments via feedback from LMLs, external examiners and from apprentice evaluations.

National module leaders are members of the national programme board (NPB) and report to the national programme director (NPD). National module leaders serve as champions of specific modules both within their own institution and nationally amongst collaborative providers.

The role of national and local module leaders in respect of their own modules is to:

- deliver a minimum of 85% of the classroom-based elements of the module in their location
- maintain attendance records
- manage health and safety in the classroom
- manage security of assessments and confidentiality of all information received
- assess the apprentice assessments (first marking)
- identify and seek approval for guest speakers if relevant
- look after the cohort of apprentices for the duration of the module
- ensure the module is delivered in accordance with the QQI validation document
- complete an evaluation at the end of each delivery
- comply with all reporting requirements
- attend at least one workshop for the module per annum
- liaise with the academic success coach to coordinate the achievement of the module competencies in the workplace
- appraise apprentices that may require additional support
- collaborate effectively with the other members of the implementation team and the community of practice amongst module leaders.

Where a programme is also delivered by local collaborative providers, national module leaders have the following additional responsibilities to:

- ensure there is equivalence of provision of the module and its assessment nationally
- induct new local module leaders to the module
- support local module leaders in their delivery of the module
- arrange continuing professional development training for their cohort of local module leaders
- convene at least one workshop for the module per annum with the local module leaders to discuss the module, its delivery, assessment and to consider matters arising.

3.7 Academic Success Coaches (ASCs)

Academic success coaches (ASCs) play a vital advocacy and support role for apprentices. They monitor, guide and support apprentices as they progress through their programme. They serve as constructive and supportive sounding boards for apprentices' concerns and aspirations.

The primary role and function of academic success coaches is to enable apprentices to successfully complete the apprenticeship to the best of their abilities. ASCs are located in the national coordinating provider (Griffith College) and in every local collaborative provider in which the programme is offered.

Academic success coaches report to their providers' programme director. In this way, ASCs based in Griffith College report to the national programme director (NPD) and ASCs based in local collaborative providers report to local programme directors (LPDs).

Academic success coaches may also have separate responsibilities in related roles, for example as national or local module leaders.

The role of the academic success coach (ASC) is to:

- provide comprehensive support to the workplace mentors, including newly appointed mentors as a result of apprentices changing employers during their programme
- provide comprehensive support and encouragement to the apprentice
- visit an apprentice in their workplace at least twice in each academic year and more often where an issue is identified. At each visit, the ASC meets with the learner and the workplace mentor
- assess the continuing suitability of the apprentice to the training programme and the work-related role
- contact the apprentice at least twice per semester; this can be by phone or by meeting
- ensure an apprentice is meeting the required programme learning outcomes standard throughout the programme
- advise the workplace mentor as to what is suitable evidence to demonstrate achievement of competencies
- actively monitor each assigned apprentice's submission of evidence and alert apprentices in respect of any changes that might be required
- check the validity and authenticity of evidence produced by apprentices
- oversee the academic standard of the on-the-job elements of the programme
- link with the national (and where applicable also local) module leaders who are delivering the off-the-job training
- link with employers, and report the progress of each of their allocated apprentices at the end of each semester

- report on the effectiveness of the programme to the national (or where applicable also to the local) programme board(s).
- moderate workplace mentors' assessment of apprentices' evidence
- participate in standardisation meetings which consider the assessment of work-based learning.

4 Programme Delivery Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Employers

Employers are integral members of the collaborative team involved in the delivery of an apprenticeship programme. Employers are responsible for employing and paying the salaries of apprentices in accordance with Irish employment legislation and taxation requirements. Employers engage their own staff to manage the recruitment and initial induction of apprentices to their organisation. They assign a suitably qualified workplace mentor to each apprentice. Ideally the workplace mentor is a different staff member to the apprentice's direct line manager.

To participate in the apprenticeship programme, employers must offer apprentices a contract of employment for at least the duration of the programme. Employers are required to release apprentices as part of their working week to attend the off-the-job training elements.

Employers are expected to be in a position to provide apprentices with the full range of learning and development opportunities to meet all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes of the apprenticeship programme. Where an employer is unable to provide the full range of learning and development opportunities required, they must plan for the apprentice to acquire any outstanding competencies with another employer who is in a position to provide the appropriate learning and development opportunities. Apprentices remain in the employment of their original employer during any time they spend with an alternative employer to attain and evidence their competencies. The requirement for a supplemental arrangement is identified and resolved at the employer self-evaluation stage, in consultation with the employer liaison manager.

Employers are responsible for maintaining relationships with their apprentices. Workplace mentors advocate on behalf of their assigned apprentice(s) where required, for example, in the case of a dispute with the line manager / programme director. Workplace mentors facilitate apprentices with opportunities to practise competencies as set out in the competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios (CSWPs).

Employers are supported by employer liaison managers (ELMs) and by the national and local programme directors (NPD and LPDs).

4.1.1 Self-Evaluation

Employers must be able to demonstrate through self-evaluation (reference the document "Employer Self Evaluation") that they can:

- offer apprentices an employment contract for at least the duration of the programme
- meet the standards required for a suitable workplace for training apprentices as set out in the Apprentice Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- provide a suitably qualified workplace mentor for the duration of the apprenticeship
- provide the necessary opportunities and equipment for the apprentice to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme as set out in the validation document either on site or in an alternative employer site
- facilitate the apprentice with time off during their working week to attend the off-the-job education and training elements of the programme
- meet the reporting requirements of the programme
- engage and work collaboratively with the SOLAS authorised officers
- work collaboratively with the programme implementation team.

Following the self-evaluation process, gaps in the learning opportunities may be identified. Where there are gaps, employment liaison managers (ELMs) work with employers and apprentice(s), to identify alternative strategies to fill the gaps and/or secure the learning in another organisation so that the apprentice(s) can achieve all the programme learning outcomes.

4.1.2   Site visit
Potential employer sites are visited by an ELM and the national programme director (or their nominee). Other representatives may accompany them if required. Visits are used to explore in more depth the arrangements in place for the delivery of the apprenticeship training and to ensure due diligence and quality assurance considerations are met.

4.1.3   Approval process
Following the visit, the ELM produces a report for consideration by the consortium steering group (CSG). If the CSG approves the employer as a suitable location, the employer then applies to SOLAS for approval (by an authorised officer). SOLAS carries out its own assessment of the suitability of an employer and communicates the outcome of that review to the CSG.

4.1.4   Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
Employers are required to sign the following documents and memoranda of agreement (MOA) which set out their agreement to pro-actively participate in the delivery of the programme:

- an employment contract with the apprentice
- the Apprenticeship Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- a MOA with the consortium steering group (reference the document "MOA Employer")
- an apprenticeship learning agreement between the employer, apprentice and the academic provider (reference the document "MOA apprenticeship learning").

4.1.5   Programme evaluation
Employers complete an evaluation of their perception of the effectiveness of the programme at the end of each stage. This is forwarded to the national programme board and the CSG for their consideration.

4.2   Apprentices
Apprentices are learners who are enrolled on an apprenticeship programme. They are employed full-time by an employer who facilitates their full participation in the programme. Apprentices are responsible for their own learning.

Apprentices are required to sign the Apprenticeship Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices and a tri-party agreement with their employers and the academic provider (reference the document "MOA apprenticeship learning").

Apprentices complete an evaluation of the programme each semester in respect of programme delivery and resourcing in relation to both on-the-job and off-the-job activities. These evaluations are considered and acted on by the national or local programme directors. Apprentices also provide ongoing feedback on the programme through the provider's virtual learning environment. Each cohort of apprentices elects a class representative who liaises with the delivery team on behalf of the group.

The roles and responsibilities of the apprentice are to:

- meet the minimum entry requirements
- attend an introductory programme
- recognise the role of the employer, mentor, academic success coach and the tutor
- abide by the apprenticeship council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- collaborate with their employer in a spirit that acknowledges the significant investment their employer and the State is making in them
- collaborate with their mentor and academic success coach
- attend the off-the-job training sessions
- take responsibility for their own learning and self-development
- successfully manage the completion of the programme competencies and skills set
- be proactive
- attend additional support workshops where relevant
- commit to the full duration of the programme
- raise any complaints or appeals in a timely manner using the policies and procedures provided
- complete all assessments within the timetable provided
- provide formal feedback through the evaluation forms
- provide informal feedback through the VLE.

4.3   Workplace Mentors (WMs)

Workplace mentors (WMs) are employer-based and are responsible for the delivery of the on-the-job training elements. WMs work collaboratively with their assigned apprentices and with the wider employer team, to provide the apprentice(s) with the opportunities to practise and achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. WMs are experienced practitioners in their discipline. WMs report to their employer and are supported on academic matters by academic success coaches

The workplace mentor role includes:

- mentoring the apprentice
- sharing their own knowledge and skills with the apprentice
- providing pastoral care
- being an advocate for the apprentice in the workplace
- facilitating, managing and monitoring the apprentice practicing and achieving the programme competencies
- ensuring the apprentice uploads their evidence to the competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios
- assessing the apprentice's evidence of achievement of competencies
- providing timely feedback to the apprentice
- reporting on the apprentice's progress
- providing timely feedback to the academic success coach and the national programme director/local programme directors
- certifying the validity and authenticity of evidence produced by apprentices
- implementing any changes to the programme that may be requested
- working collaboratively with the other programme team members.

WMs are given training it the use of the national coordinating provider's virtual learning environment. They provide advice and guidance to apprentices enabling them to attain their required competencies. They assist apprentices in their use and recording of competencies and skills in the competencies and skills workbooks and portfolio (CSWP) which provides a record of the apprentices' attainment throughout the programme.

The workplace mentors submit an evaluation of the programme at the end of each semester to their employer and to the national (or local) programme director of the apprentices' educational provider.

5 Apprentice Programme Assessment

5.1 Off-the-job assessment

National module leaders (NMLs) are responsible for the development of all assessment materials for a specific programme module. This ensures national consistency in the assessments provided to apprentices. Where there are multiple locations for delivery NMLs consult with local module leaders (LMLs) on the development of assessment materials. NMLs submit all proposed assessment materials to the national programme board for approval prior to their use. Each assessment presented has outline answers and / or model solutions and a marking scheme, where relevant.

Programme assessment is conducted in accordance with Griffith College's QAE Policies and Procedures Manuals 2018/2019, including the following:

QAE policies
- A1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy
- A2 Academic and Professional Council (APC)
- A3 APC terms of reference
- E2 Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners
- E9 Examination Regulations
- E10 Role and Responsibility of Invigilators
- E11 Assessment Control Principles

QAE procedures
- C4 Deferrals procedure
- E1 Procedure for Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners
- E3 Assessment Submission, Approval & Correction Procedure,
- E5 Internal review procedure
- E6 Internal moderation procedure
- E7 Procedure for extensions of deadlines for the submission of assessed work and late submission penalties
- E8 Procedure on provision of assessment feedback to learners
- E12 Assessment control procedure
- E13 Review board procedure
- E14 Examination board procedure
- E15 Appeals procedure
- F2 Learner feedback procedure and the programme validation document
- J6 Academic Misconduct Procedure

Each programme validation document sets out the sample assessments and marking grids for the programme's modules. Assessments are moderated by Griffith College in accordance with Section E6 of the Griffith College QAE procedures to ensure consistency in the standard of material produced and assessor marking, as well as being externally examined.

5.1.1 Assessment correction

The Assessment Submission, Approval and Correction Procedure is contained in Griffith College' QAE Procedure, section E3, which serves to:

- outline for lecturers the operational procedure for submission, approval and correction of coursework and examinations
- outline the information required by a lecturer in order to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to the operational aspects of submission, approval and correction of coursework and examinations.

5.1.2 Internal moderation procedure

Assessments are moderated by Griffith College in accordance with Section E6 of the Griffith College QAE procedures to ensure consistency in the standard of material produced and assessor marking. This procedure is applied to all apprenticeship programmes delivered nationally by Griffith College, in its capacity as national coordinating provider.

5.1.3 Late submissions

The Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section E7, Extensions of Deadlines for the Submission of Assessed Work and Late Submission Penalties applies in this instance.

5.1.4 Deferrals

Griffith College' QAE Procedures, section C4, sets out the Griffith College procedures for a learner requesting a deferral. Deferrals are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

5.1.5 External review of assessment

The following documents outline the external review of assessment as follows:

- the nomination and appointment of external examiners is set out in Griffith College' QAE Procedures Section E1
- Griffith College's QAE Policies, section E3, sets out the role and responsibilities of external examiners.

5.1.6 Feedback on assessment

The policy for providing learner feedback is defined in Griffith College's QAE Policies, section F1, with the procedure for the provision of assessment feedback to learners set out in Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section F2.

5.1.7 Appeals procedure

Griffith College' QAE Procedure, section E15, sets out the procedure to be followed where an apprentice wishes to appeal an academic decision.

5.1.8 Academic misconduct procedure

The academic misconduct procedure is set out in Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section J6.

5.2 On-the-Job assessment

Apprentices are required to keep separate records of both their learning and work hours in the workplace to support their apprenticeship competencies and skills attainment evidence.

Assessment of 'on-the-job' achievement of learning outcomes is structured using a competencies and skills workbook and portfolio (CSWP). The workbook outlines the competencies and skills required by the apprentice and provides a means where the apprentices' attainments can be recorded and

evidenced. The CSWP is operated as an online resource whereby apprentices can record their attainment in the online workbook and include a portfolio of additional supporting evidence of their work, assessments, projects, reflections, etc. Workplace mentors and academic success coaches can also view their assigned apprentices' CSWP workbooks and portfolios in order to monitor and support the apprentices' progress. CSWPs also facilitate their attainment and recording of competencies and skills where apprentices are required to change employment on either a temporary or permanent basis to complete their apprenticeship.

Workplace mentors are required to evaluate the evidence provided by apprentices in their CSWPs, and to ensure that it:

- is valid, i.e. it relates to the learning outcome it was intended to satisfy
- meets the standard, i.e. it demonstrates the achievement of the intended learning outcome(s)
- is authentic, i.e. the evidence is produced by the apprentice
- is consistent, i.e. achieved on more than one occasion
- is current, i.e. must be generated during the programme unless the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is being used.

Academic success coaches (ASCs) also have access to their assigned apprentices' CSWPs. This enables them to provide apprentices with guidance, encouragement and support as they progress through their programme. ASCs also play an importance advocacy role serving the best interests of the apprentices.

Apprentices are given three attempts at each competency and skill. After each attempt the apprentice receives feedback from their workplace mentor (WM). Apprentices' achievement of these competencies and skills are monitored by the ASC. If the apprentice fails on the third attempt, the WM, their academic success coach, and the employer reviews the apprentice's progress to date and determine the most appropriate and supportive action to take in the interests of all concerned.

6 Quality Assurance Responsibilities

The following table summarises the responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement of the apprenticeship programme listing the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved.

QAE Responsibility	Responsible Board/Role
Governance	Statutory Body SOLAS and its authorised officers Higher Education Authority (HEA) Consortium steering group (CSG) – industry-led National coordinating provider (NCP Griffith College) Academic and Professional Council (Griffith College) National programme board – (industry chair) National examination board
Regular review of the occupational profile	Consortium steering group (CSG)
Monitoring and updating of the programme	National programme board with CSG approval National programme director (NPD)
Academic quality and standards and integrity	National coordinating provider (NCP) National programme director (NPD) Academic and Professional Council (APC) of the National coordinating provider (NCP) Collaborative providers - local programme directors
Overseeing consistency of delivery and assessment nationally	National programme director National module leaders
Monitoring and guiding apprentices	Programme directors Employers Workplace mentors Academic success coaches National and local module leaders
Relationship management – CSG and Employers	National programme director Employer liaison managers
Relationship management – apprentice and the off-the-job provider	National and local programme directors Academic success coaches National and local module leaders
Monitoring and facilitation of the on-the-job elements	Workplace mentors
Relationship between the workplace mentor and the off-the-job provider	Academic success coaches
Moderation of on-the-job elements	Academic success coaches
Relationship between employer and apprentice	Employers
Delivery of off-the-job training	National and local module leaders

7   Programme Provision Activities

7.1   Marketing

Griffith College's marketing department and the national programme director are responsible for all aspects of marketing the programme to both employers and potential apprentices. The marketing department follows [Griffith College's QAE Policies](#), section C1 - Programme Information Provision when providing information to apprentices and employers. [Griffith College's QAE Procedures](#), section K1, also applies when compiling and approving academic marketing material.

All marketing activities adhere to the Generation Apprenticeship marketing guidelines as issued by the statutory regulator (SOLAS), the Apprenticeship Council and the funding body (Higher Education Authority). The apprenticeship is listed on the Generation Apprenticeship site.

The most appropriate channels are used to promote the apprenticeship programme such as webpages, social media, the Apprenticeship Council and relevant exhibitions.

Marketing efforts are targeted towards the recruitment of apprentices, employers or both, to achieve a balance between the number of employers available and the number of apprentices seeking places.

7.2   Access transfer and progression

7.2.1   Recruitment and admission of apprentices

The admission of apprentices into the programme is preceded by the approval process for employers which is managed by the consortium steering group's employer liaison managers and SOLAS, as described above.

The recruitment and admission for apprenticeships is as follows:

- applicants put forward by approved employers are invited to an information session with Griffith College (as the national coordinating provider or where appropriate with local collaborative providers).
- applicants are provided with an in-depth understanding of what is involved in the programme by the national coordinating provider or local collaborative provider
- the apprentices' eligibility is checked to ensure they meet the entry requirements of the programme.
- applicants are met after the information session to identify any learning gaps they might have.
- applicants who meet the entry requirements and wish to proceed with the programme following this information session are put forward by the employer to SOLAS.

Where Griffith College is the national coordinating provider for an apprenticeship programme it is responsible for overseeing the admission of SOLAS registered apprentices into the College and the apprenticeship programme.

Apprentices admitted to Griffith College are given induction in line with other learners. The college's learner induction policy is set out in [Griffith College's QAE Policies](#), section D2.

7.2.2   Selection process

Applicants are invited to apply initially for the apprenticeship through the Griffith College website. The website information is compliant with the programme information provision policy set out in [Griffith College's QAE Policies](#), section C1.

Applications received by Griffith College are checked to see if the applicant meets the criteria set out in the validation document. Where the criteria are clearly not met, the potential apprentice is informed of this fact and they are provided with feedback on areas where further information or development is required.

Applicants who meet the entry criteria are invited to an introductory session. Applicants are required to provide evidence of their identity and experience to date. This typically involves a detailed CV, copy of photo ID, utility bill or other suitable evidence of postal address, certified copies of previous awards and details of two character-references who can be contacted. Where a potential apprentice is coming from an existing employer, a single employer reference is sufficient.

7.2.3   Linking to Approved Employers

Where applicants are already in employment with an approved employer, the application process can progress directly. Where applicants are not currently employed with an approved employer, they are referred to SOLAS-approved employer organisations who have indicated that they have vacancies for apprentices. The approved employer is required to apply their own selection processes to decide if they wish to employ the applicant and support their apprenticeship.

7.2.4   Appeals in relation to the selection process

Appeals are governed by Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section E15. A potential apprentice may appeal any decision made during the admissions process to the national coordinating provider (Griffith College) or where appropriate to their local collaborative provider. Grounds for appeals to Griffith College are also outlined in section E15.

An application for appeal to Griffith College must be made within five working days of receipt of the unsuccessful application notification letter.

7.2.5   Appeals against selection by employers

Any appeals that are related to the selection process implemented by employers must be made using the appeals procedure of that employer.

7.2.6   Briefing of SOLAS authorised officers

The national programme director arranges a briefing session with the SOLAS authorised officers' network to provide an understanding of the programme. The national programme director builds a relationship with the authorised officers through regular contact.

7.2.7   Bridging mechanisms

The access procedures for the apprenticeship programme are designed to facilitate applicants who have an aptitude and interest in the role and who are in a position to benefit from the programme and complete it successfully.

Applicants with additional learning requirements are invited to apply and where possible are facilitated with additional learning supports, for example learning skills development, study skills, basic IT training, mathematics of language support. These services are provided by Griffith College, in its capacity as national coordinating provider.

Griffith College's academic learner support policy is set out in Griffith College's QAE Policies, section D5. In certain cases, while these supports are provided, an apprentice's start date may be delayed.

7.2.8   Recognition of prior learning

Opportunities for recognition of prior learning are clearly defined in the programme documentation and are incorporated in the recruitment process, with information being provided to potential apprentices.

Procedures for the recognition of prior learning are outlined in [Griffith College's QAE Procedures](#), section C3, recognition of prior learning policy.

7.2.9   Data protection and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

Applicants who register on the programme must consent to certain data about them and their performance being shared different agencies and personnel. This information sharing is necessary to ensure the proper functioning, monitoring and management of the apprenticeship programme. The information is kept to a minimum, balancing the twin requirements of privacy and programme effectiveness in the apprentices' interests.

The following organisations and personnel are provided with access to apprenticeship information of direct relevance to their roles and responsibilities:

- SOLAS, the statutory agency, and its authorised officers
- QQI, the programme awarding body
- the consortium steering group (CSG)
- the national coordinating provider (NCP) (Griffith College)
- local collaborative providers (LCPs) where applicable
- national programme boards (NPB) (and where applicable local programme boards (LPBs))
- employers

Only relevant information to each organisation is shared in accordance with current general data protection regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Griffith College is responsible for storing all data in relation to apprentices in their capacities as learners. Employer organisations are responsible for storing all data in relation to the apprentices in their capacity as employees.

7.2.10   Monitoring apprentices' progression

Apprentices have primary responsibility for managing their own progress through the programme. They are supported by on-the-job workplace mentors and off-the-job by national (or local) module leaders. Academic success coaches (ASCs) also monitor the apprentices' progress, providing support interventions as required and reporting to the national (or local) programme board at the end of each semester.

ASCs liaise with national (or local) module leaders and the apprentices' workplace mentors. The apprentices' progress through the programme is evidenced using the competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios (CSWPs) stored on the college's online computer systems. This allows the sharing of information between apprentices, national (or local) module leaders, on-the-job workplace mentors and off-the-job academic success coaches. Workplace mentors provide timely feedback to academic success coaches on academic issues concerning the apprentice.

The following systems are used by academic success coaches to manage the apprentices' progress:

- national coordinating provider's virtual learning environment (Griffith College's VLE) which supports
  - tracking activities and assessments
  - activity on the supervised mandatory forums
  - tracking participation in the community of practice
  - peer-interaction
  - learning plans both group and individual
  - group work
- competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios (CSWPs) stored on the provider's computer systems to support the recording, monitoring and development of the apprentices' attainments

The following resources and activities are used to evidence and monitor the apprentices' learning and development

- signed and evidenced attendance for both the on- and off-the-job activities
- participation in assessment activities, formative and summative, as outlined in the programme assessment strategy in the validation document
- engagement with Griffith College's learner support services (and / or related services provided by local collaborative providers)
- engagement with apprentices' communities of practice
- engagement and contributions to apprentice online forums
- employers' existing performance appraisal systems
- competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios (CSWP)
- self-directed learning and research
- development plans to address any deficits in learning
- minutes of meetings with workplace mentors and academic success coaches
- evaluations of apprentices' learning and development
- available learning analytics data.

7.2.11   Apprentice agreement

Apprentices and employers are statutorily required to sign Apprentice Council's code of conduct for employers and apprentices which outlines the commitment of the apprentice and the employer to each other. This process is managed by authorised officers appointed by SOLAS.

Employers, apprentices and programme providers are required to sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) outlining their roles and responsibilities in respect of the apprenticeship programme. (reference the document MOA apprenticeship learning).

7.3   Disruption of apprenticeship

7.3.1   Interruption of employment

Where an apprentice is made redundant due to business interruption, an employer liaison manager (ELM) works with the apprentice to assist them in securing employment with an alternative approved employer for the remainder of their programme, so they can complete their award.

Where apprentices are dismissed from their employment for gross misconduct, or failure to carry out their duties, the apprentice's continuation on the programme will be reviewed by the programme director(s) and the apprentice. This process is managed by the programme director, involving and

informing other stakeholders as appropriate (e.g. programme directors, academic success coaches, employer liaison managers).

Where an apprentice needs Garda vetting for the purposes of carrying out their role, and they receive a vetting output that prohibits them from working with vulnerable adults and children, the apprentice's continuation on the programme will be reviewed by the employer and the apprentice, involving and informing other stakeholders as appropriate (e.g. programme directors, academic success coaches).

Apprentices whose involvement in the programme is ended prior to completing the award, are given a copy of their competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios to evidence their programme related attainments.

7.3.2   Dispute with employer
Where there is an irresolvable dispute between an employer and an apprentice, a designated representative of the consortium steering group is appointed to mediate the issue. Where mediation fails to resolve the matter, then depending on the merits of each case, an employer liaison manager (ELM) seeks to arrange for the apprentice to transfer to another approved employer.

7.3.3   Academic failure
Apprentices must pass all the workplace competencies and the classroom-based assessments to be successful in the programme. Reassessment arrangements of an on-the-job assessment requires an agreement with the employer and the consortium steering group. Where apprentices fail to reach the required academic standard within the designated deadlines, they are deemed to have failed the programme and are guided to a more appropriate development programme and standard. These are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Apprentices whose involvement in the programme is terminated for reasons of academic failure are given a copy of their competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios to evidence their programme related attainments.

7.3.4   Deferral
Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section C4, sets out the procedures for a learner requesting a deferral. Deferrals are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

7.3.5   Duty of care to young apprentices
Griffith College acknowledges the various legislation in place for the protection of the younger person and how it might apply to apprentices, in particular, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) where children are defined as persons up to the age of 18.

Given the apprenticeship programme's level on the NFQ, and the relevant occupational profiles involved, it is anticipated that all enrolled apprentices will be over 18 years of age at the time of their admission to the programme.

7.4 Training of workplace mentors

7.4.1 Induction programme

Workplace mentors are supported with training at each stage of the programme. This includes training on the use of the national coordinating provider's (Griffith College's) virtual learning environment (Moodle) and online software system for hosting the apprentices' competencies and skills workbooks and portfolios.

In-person and online training sessions for workplace mentors in each semester:

- evaluate the apprentices' previous semester's results
- provide a briefing on the next semester's:
    - learning outcomes
    - competency assessment workbook and CSWP document
- provides a networking opportunity

Workplace mentors are encouraged to create a community of practice, and liaise directly with the programme providers' academic success coaches.

7.4.2 Record of training and continuing professional development

National and local programme directors retain a record of the workplace mentors' attendance at the training sessions and related continuing professional development events.

8   Managing and Maintaining Quality in Apprenticeship Programmes

Apprenticeship programmes are managed by the national programme board, the national programme director and the national administrator for the programme. Where the programme is also provided by local collaborative providers, the local management of the programme is undertaken by local programme boards and local programme directors, with the local programme director reporting to the national programme director, and also being a member of the national programme board.

The national programme board reports to the consortium steering group and the national coordinating provider's (Griffith College's) academic and professional council (APC) in relation to its quality assurance activities (Refer to Griffith College's QAE Policies- section A3 for terms of reference of the APC).

8.1   Quality environment

Griffith College, as national coordinating provider, has created a quality environment through its Quality Assurance QAE Policies and Procedures and provides a range of learner supports on campus. Further information on relevant facilities is provided in the Apprenticeship (Learner) Handbook and Griffith College's Learner's Handbook.

Each local collaborative provider (LCP) is required to have and apply quality assurance policies and procedures standards which are commensurate with those of QQI and Griffith College. These are considered during the due diligence and risk assessment process in advance of LCP approval, and monitored through the annual report to the National Programme Board.

Griffith College promotes and supports the development of communities of practice for:

- Apprentices
- Mentors
- Employers
- Module leaders and academic success coaches.

8.2   Strategic management of quality

The quality expectations are clearly set out in the Griffith College QAE Policies and Procedures, this supplementary document, and the programme validation document. The College ensures that all stakeholders involved in the delivery of the programme are aware of and adhere to these standards. Each collaborative provider is required to have and apply quality assurance policies and procedures standards which are commensurate with those of QQI and Griffith College.

All on-the-job and off-the-job stakeholders involved in the apprenticeship programme support the updating and development of these QAE standards to ensure they remain relevant and up to date with best practice. Annual and quinquennial evaluations are conducted to collate and report to the national programme board on the programme's performance.

Quality is managed through a constant cycle of careful design, implementation, gathering feedback and revision. The national programme director is responsible for ensuring that quality updates are integrated into subsequent delivery of each apprenticeship programme.

8.3   Programme operation

8.3.1   Class representatives
In accordance with Griffith College's QAE Policies, section J2, a class representative is elected by each cohort of apprentices. The purpose of the class representative is to channel any concerns the apprentices may have about the programme through a central point. The class representative also promotes a community of practice amongst the apprentices.

8.3.2   Delivery schedules
The draft timetable for an apprenticeship programme is set out in the validation document and the programme is delivered accordingly. Apprenticeships may run to three semesters per stage to accommodate the off-the-job training on a part-time basis and to minimise employer business interruption.

8.3.3   Attendance
Employers are responsible for managing the apprentices' on-the-job attendance, with education provider managing the apprentices' in-class attendance. Employers and apprentices sign off monthly attendance sheets. These are recorded in the competencies and skills workbooks and show the hours worked and, within those hours, the hours spent under instruction.

Module leaders manage the related apprentice attendance records in respect of their modules.

8.4   Supports for apprentices

8.4.1   General
Griffith College apprentices have access to the following services:

- IT services
- learning development support
    - mathematics support
    - academic writing support
    - computing support
- careers and employability services
- disability support services
- medical and counselling services
- students' union / clubs and societies.

Griffith College, as the national coordinating provider, requires local collaborative providers to provide equivalent supports for its apprentices.

Griffith College's QAE Policies, section D2 Learner Induction Policy sets out how learners are provided with a comprehensive induction to the College. Apprentices has their own workplace mentors and allocated academic success coach to support them in their induction to the programme and throughout the duration of their apprenticeship.

8.4.2   Learner support
Griffith College's academic learner support policy, as set out in Griffith College's QAE Policies, section D5, applies. Local collaborative providers are required to provide equivalent learner supports.

8.4.3 Library

The College library resources and services are available to registered apprentices regardless of their location of study. The use of the library is governed by Griffith College's QAE Policies, section H2 – Library User policy.

Griffith College has a policy of making various books, periodicals and literature available through its library. The library acquisitions policy is set out in Griffith College's QAE Policies, section H1.

8.5 Complaints

Griffith College's Learner Complaints Procedures are set out in Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section J4. Details of the complaints policies and procedures (along with relevant remediation facilities available to apprentices, employers and providers) are included in the individual / specific memoranda of agreement (MOA).

All formal complaints are monitored. Academic support coaches support apprentices in accessing the appropriate complaints procedures as required. The national programme board is responsible for ensuring all complaints are handled appropriately.

8.6 Codes of Conduct

Apprentices are subject to the following codes of conduct:

- their employer's code of conduct (available from their employer)
- the Apprentice Council's code of practice for employers and apprentices
- the provider's learner code of conduct as outlined in Griffith College's QAE Policies, section J3.

Specific codes of conduct, and associated policies and procedures, are identified in the individual / specific memoranda of agreements signed by the participating stakeholders.

8.7 Learner Disciplinary Procedure

The learner disciplinary procedure is set out in Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section J5. Details of the disciplinary policies and procedures are identified in the individual / specific memoranda of agreements.

9   Qualifications and Recruitment of Staff for Apprenticeship Programmes

The required qualifications of academic staff are set out in the validation document.

The staff selection procedure for the recruitment of academic staff is governed by Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section I1. Prior to commencing delivery on the programme, all academic staff must complete induction training for delivery of the relevant apprenticeship programme.

10 Apprenticeship and Programme Review Processes

Regular review and evaluation are a key element of the programme life cycle. Programmes evolve through a cycle of design, delivery, review and evaluation, making amendments that are incorporated back into delivery. Programmes evolve through constantly learning from each cohort of apprentices, mentors, academic success coaches, module leaders and employers. Programme review at Griffith College is governed by Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section G1. The table below sets out the feedback and reporting strategy for apprenticeship programmes across the academic year.

Source of feedback or report	Frequency	Data Collator	Report/data recipient
Apprentice feedback (Griffith College's QAE Policies, section F1)	Each Semester	National administrator for the programme (NAP)	National programme board (NPB)
Mentor evaluation	Each Semester	National administrator for the programme (NAP)	National programme board (NPB)
Module leaders - evaluation	Each Semester	National administrator for the programme (NAP)	National programme board (NPB)
Academic success coach - report	Each Semester	Academic success coach (ASC)	National programme board (NPB)
Employer liaison managers – report	Annually	Employer liaison managers (ELMs)	National programme board (NPB)
Employer evaluation	Annually	National administrator for the programme (NAP)	National programme board (NPB)
Authorised officers	Annually	National programme director (NPD)	National programme board (NPB)
End user evaluation (Facilitated by the employers)	Annually	National administrator for the programme (NAP)	National programme board (NPB)
Third-party evaluations	Biennial	National programme director (NPD)	National programme board (NPB)
Programme Board report	Each Semester	National programme director (NPD)	Consortium steering group (CSG)
Programme review (ref. Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section G1)	Annually	National programme board (NPB)	Griffith College academic professional council; Consortium steering group
Re-validation	Every 5 years	National programme board (NPB) and National programme director (NPD)	QQI
Review of apprenticeship provision (see section 10.1 below)	Annual	National programme director (NPD)	Consortium steering group
Review of occupational profile (see section 10.2 below)	biennial	Employer liaison manager	Consortium steering group
Review of Apprenticeship Capacity (see section 10.3 below)	Annually	National programme director (NPD)	Consortium steering group

Source of feedback or report	Frequency	Data Collator	Report/data recipient
Evaluating the expansion or contraction of the apprenticeship programme (see section 10.4 below)	Annually	National programme director (NPD)	Consortium steering group
Review of the operations of the Consortium Steering Group (CSG) (see section 10.5 below)	Every 5 years	Consortium steering group (CSG)	Consortium steering group

10.1   Annual review of apprentice provision

The national programme director undertakes an annual review of the operation of all apprenticeship programme provision. This review takes into consideration the individual programme reports, reports from College support providers and the outcomes. This review also informs the consortium steering group's report on apprenticeship capacity.

10.2   Review of occupational profile

The consortium steering group reviews the occupational profile on at least a biennial basis to ensure that it reflects needs of the occupation. Reviews may inform minor or major curriculum changes to the apprenticeship programme or may trigger a requirement for revalidation, if the amendment to the profile is of material significance. Any changes to the occupational profile require approval from the National Apprenticeship Council and SOLAS, the statutory body.

The review includes:

- feedback received from employers' HR department on the effectiveness of the programme
- literature review of the occupation
- feedback from industry experts
- review of the impact of technology on the occupation
- feedback from previous graduates.

10.3   Review of Apprenticeship Capacity

The consortium steering group reviews the sectoral capacity on an annual basis, normally in February. In reviewing capacity, regard is given to:

- the number of trainees in the system
- progression rates of apprentices within the sector
- the recruitment and any retrenchment plan of the institutions within the sector.

The evaluation reports provided by Griffith College, in its capacity as national coordinating provider as to the operation of individual programmes, as outlined above, form part of this review.

10.4   Evaluating the expansion or contraction of the apprenticeship programme

The decision to expand or contract an apprenticeship programme is made by the consortium steering group based on all information provided via annual or quinquennial review.

10.5 Review of the operations of the consortium steering group (CSG)

The consortium steering group (CSG) critically evaluates its composition and operation at least once every five years. This review takes place in conjunction with scheduled apprentice programme reviews operating under its remit.

This review does not preclude normal annual review and amendments of operations of the CSG which may arise through feedback from members, employers, apprentices, statutory agencies, Griffith College in its capacity as national coordinating provider, local collaborative providers, or any other stakeholder associated with the apprenticeship programme.

This review includes consideration of:

- the responsibilities of individual local collaborative providers including the coordinating provider
- relationships between stakeholders
- effectiveness of reporting procedures
- effectiveness of channels of communication
- corporate governance
- any necessary changes.

10.6 Other reviews

Griffith College (as national coordinating provider) reports as required to the statutory bodies and regulators, including SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna), the Apprenticeship Council, HEA (Higher Education Authority), QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) and various other government departments and agencies.

Griffith College has completed a mapping of the contents of this Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies and Procedures for Apprenticeship Programmes to the requirements of the Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes (QQI 2016). The output is presented in the document *Review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Apprenticeships at Griffith College against the criteria set out in the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes – Topic Specific (QQI 2016)* (ref document #2a), which was provided in the documentation pack for QQI review.

11 Information

This section deals with how apprenticeship information and data are managed.

11.1 Management information and data

Contact details of all stakeholders and minutes of meetings are held on the College's IT systems.

11.2 Public information

Public information is governed by Griffith College's QAE Policies, section C1 – Programme Information Provision Policy.

11.3 Apprenticeship handbook

Griffith College's QAE Procedures, section K2 – Procedure for Compiling and Approving College Handbooks for Academic Programmes, applies to the development of the Apprenticeship Handbook. The Apprenticeship Handbook should be read in conjunction with the Griffith College general Learner Handbook.

12 Memoranda of Agreement Overview

Memoranda of agreement (MOAs) are developed, and utilised, to support the collaborative arrangements of apprenticeship programmes, in accordance with Griffith College's QAE Policies, section L1.

MOA templates are available to support the following parties:

- Consortium steering group (CSG) members
- CSG and national coordinating provider
- Local collaborative providers
- Employers
- Apprenticeship learning.

Samples of these MOA documents were provided in the supplementary documentation pack to support QQI's review of this *Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Apprenticeships at Griffith College* document.

13 Supporting Documents

Other documents which support the apprenticeship programme within Griffith College include the following:

- Employer self-evaluation
- Collaborative provider site evaluation template.

Samples of these self-evaluation documents were provided in the supplementary documentation pack to support QQI's review of this *Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Apprenticeships at Griffith College* document.