



# **Racing Academy and Centre of Education Quality Assurance Manual**

Version 12 (September 2021)

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RACE QA Manual v12

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## **Provider Profile**

Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE) was established in 1973 as a social project to offer support to young racing apprentices and has evolved to become the national training academy for the Irish horseracing industry offering courses for jockeys, stable staff, racehorse trainers, breeders and others involved in the thoroughbred sector. RACE is a not-for-profit educational initiative and registered charity supported by various State agencies and the racing industry. It occupies an attractive campus on the edge of the Curragh plains in Co. Kildare which serves as a hub for the industry and, in addition to extensive training facilities, houses several of racing's representative bodies and the Irish School of Farriery. An emphasis on the all-round development of each person is reflected in the motto 'Training for today – educating for tomorrow'. With extensive experience of delivering international training programmes to learners from more than thirty countries, RACE has become an international centre of excellence for the racing industry and an important element in the drive to promote Ireland as a world leader in the equine sector.

## **Mission**

*"To be a world centre of excellence for training and education within the thoroughbred racing industry, offering training of the highest standard to meet the needs of the racing industry and our learners".*

## **Vision**

- To advance the education and development of individuals working in or wishing to pursue a career in the equine industry.
- to educate and instruct individuals in all aspects of the equine industry, including the art and skill of riding, horse care and management.
- To raise the overall education and skills standards of the industry.

## **Values**

### Excellence

RACE is committed to excellence and delivering a training service to the highest standards. We are ambitious in our plans, always try to take the longer-term view and are willing to invest in areas which will enhance performance and productivity. We promote an environment of continuous improvement and adopt a quality approach incorporating professionalism and integrity in our dealings with colleagues, learners, and other stakeholders.

### Respect

The ethos or characteristic spirit that motivates RACE is based on the value of each individual person and the respect they are due. We are committed to dealing with every individual with courtesy, fairness, and consistency with the aim of enabling each person to maximise their personal potential. We practice open and honest communication with colleagues and learners alike, providing regular feedback on performance. We seek to maintain an environment which encourages the formation of good habits and builds strong characters in our young people.

## Care

We take very seriously our responsibilities in looking after the needs of young people placed in our care. Because of the inherent risks associated with working with racehorses, constant vigilance is applied to health & safety issues. Comprehensive procedures and regular staff training ensure the maintenance of a suitable environment for the safeguarding and nurturing of young people on residential courses and the promotion of their all-round development. This concern for individual welfare and development extends beyond graduation in a life-cycle approach to support services.

## Teamwork

RACE adopts a teamwork approach to how we work together and how we deliver our services. Flexibility and a spirit of cooperation characterise our dealings with colleagues, stakeholders and industry bodies and all staff are encouraged to be positive, display leadership and have a strong sense of responsibility for their contribution to RACE services and culture. We always strive to work in partnership with other industry bodies towards common objectives.

## Continuous Improvement

RACE is committed to continuous improvement in the design and delivery of our training services. We constantly evaluate our performance and seek feedback from learners and stakeholders in order to improve aspects of our service and maximise our potential. We recognise that we operate in a constantly changing environment and must be open to change and development. Staff are encouraged to update their skills, to be resourceful and show initiative in identifying practical solutions. We regularly benchmark our performance to ensure we are providing practical and relevant services and producing graduates who are fit for purpose.

## **Scope of Provision**

### Accredited Training

- Major and minor awards at levels 5 in horsemanship as a first provider. These are delivered in a flexible manner to suit the needs of learners already working in the horse industry or seeking lifelong learning opportunities.
- Programmes delivered under contract for ETBs as a second provider, principally a level 4 award in horsemanship in conjunction with the trainee jockey programme.

### Non-Accredited Training

- Online programmes, industry specific workshops and short courses of practical skills development for learners working within the horse industry.
- Licence preparation courses delivered on behalf of the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB).

### Collaboration with Other Providers

We deliver training, as a second provider, under contract with Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board (KWETB). Programmes are delivered in accordance with curricula developed by the ETBs and to meet the requirements of KWETB's quality assurance agreement with QQI. RACE collaborates closely with KWETB in the administration, delivery, monitoring, and review of such programmes.

### Learner Profile

Young people who are seeking to make a career in the horse industry either as jockeys, stable staff, or other relevant roles and who are leaving mainstream education before completing the senior cycle.

Mature learners with some background in horses who require professional training to prepare them for sustainable careers in the thoroughbred racing industry.

Employees within the thoroughbred sector who would like to continue or further their education and allow for transfer and progression.

Those already working or considering a career in the thoroughbred industry who wish to achieve formal certification.

## Governance and the Management of Quality (Core Guidelines 1)

### Governance Structure

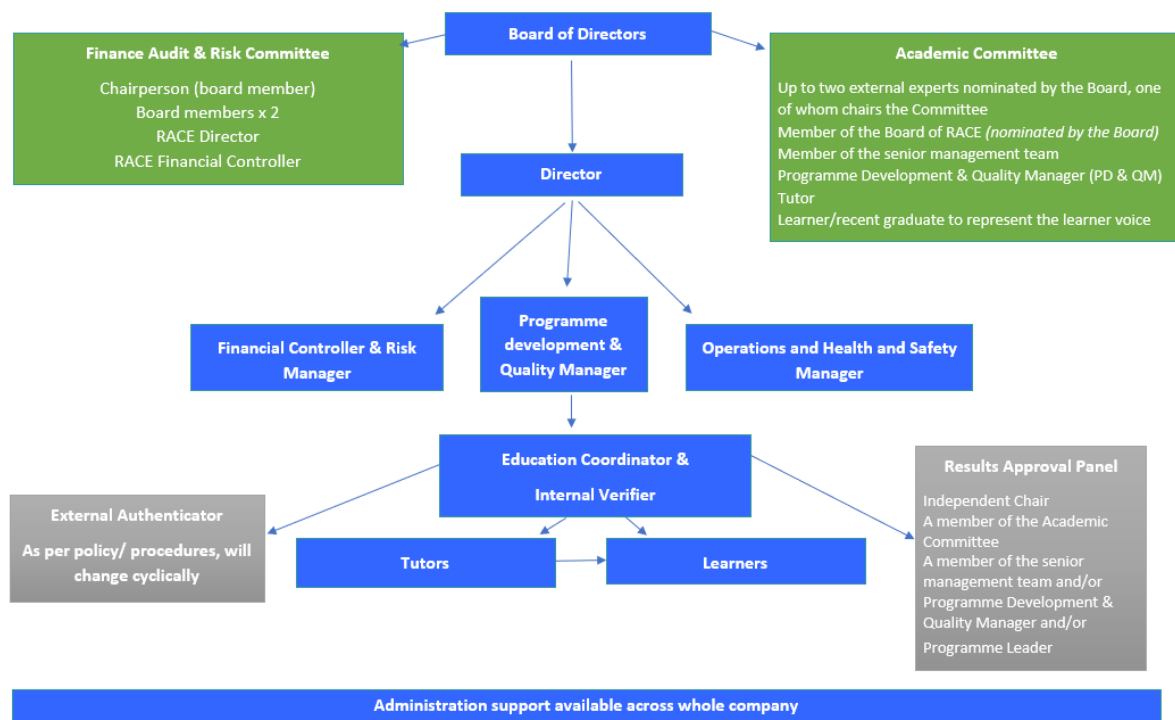
The Board of Directors is the highest level of governance in RACE and is the primary body for corporate decision-making, providing oversight and strategic direction and ensuring compliance and promoting a culture of quality in RACE. The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of RACE to the director and Senior Management Team.

The Board of Directors has delegated authority for oversight of our academic and quality standards to an Academic Committee which is made up of both internal and external members and tutor and learner representatives. It is responsible for academic decision-making and protecting learner interests, programme approval and self-evaluation. Our Results Approval Panel, which also has external and internal members, maintains oversight of our authentication and certification processes and ensures that assessment results are fully quality assured and signed off prior to submission for certification.

Our goal is to have a streamlined corporate structure with relevant skill sets represented at board level and to invest in the RACE management team and functional business areas to support a transformational growth path. Our system of governance is central to the implementation of our QAS and is designed to ensure that there is a clear separation of responsibilities for academic and commercial decision-making and to ensure that there is no undue influence by the Board of Directors, director, or Senior Management Team on academic decision-making.

These governance units are identified in the RACE organisation chart (Figure 1)

Figure 1: RACE Organisation Chart





## Terms of Reference for Governance Units

We have detailed Terms of Reference that include membership, responsibilities, quorum, frequency of meetings and, criteria for selection of external members for all units of governance where applicable.

- Terms of Reference – [Board of Directors](#)
- Terms of Reference – [Academic Committee](#)
- Terms of Reference – [Senior Management Team](#)
- Terms of Reference- [Results Approval Panel](#)

## Risk Management

Risk management is an ongoing process that involves examining significant risks and regular reporting on our risk profile to the relevant governance units.

### Supporting Document

- [Risk Register](#)

The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Directors) maintains oversight of risk in RACE. Membership includes at least three board directors and the committee meets on a quarterly basis. The director is responsible for the management of risk on a day-to-day basis according to the steps detailed in our management of risk procedure. It is an ongoing process that seeks to identify, manage, and mitigate against or treat risk and involves examining significant risks and regular reporting on our risk profile to the relevant governance units. The risk register, which accounts for different dimensions of risk and includes a structured approach to mitigation of risk in key areas, is updated on a quarterly basis by the director with input by the in relation to programme/academic risk. A review of risk and the risk register is a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors.

## Health and Safety

RACE ensures the physical premises and facilities are accessible and maintained in such a manner as to ensure the health and safety of staff and learners. RACE have comprehensive safety policies and procedures in place, including a safety statement, record of staff briefings and staff training and record of fire drills. RACE has a dedicated Health and Safety Officer who reports to the Director. Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of health and safety policies, procedures, and practices within his/her area of work. The organisation fully complies with all health and safety legislation. The following health and safety procedures are in operation in RACE.

- Safety statement in prominent display throughout the campus
- Hazard risks and assessments
- Health and safety is addressed at tutor and learner induction and in the respective handbooks
- Fire drills
- Regular inspection of equipment: lift, fire alarm system etc.
- regular inspections by a Health and safety consultant

- Health and Safety issues pertaining to the use of off-site training venues are managed through the quality evaluation procedures.

## **Equality and Diversity**

### Equality and Diversity Statement

RACE is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. We aim to create and support a culture of diversity and inclusion, where the contributions and individuality of all are valued. We are committed to creating and maintaining a teaching and learning environment where there is equality of opportunity in accordance with current legislation, best practice, and the philosophy of our organisation. We facilitate access, as far as practical, to our programmes for all applicants as long as they meet the minimum entry requirements.

We make staff and learners aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity at induction and in the respective handbooks. Training is provided to staff to ensure that they are aware of equality and diversity issues and have the capacity to promote equality and combat discrimination. We review learner evaluation forms, and our complaints register for details of any reports of incidents of discrimination and act on them accordingly. We consider equality and diversity issues as part of our programme design and review processes and a part of our self-evaluation. Our equality and diversity statement is published on our website and is prominently displayed in our training centre to evidence our commitment to embedding a culture where difference is not just accommodated, it is celebrated.

### **Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)**

#### **Policy**

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Section 65, mandates that providers must have specific protection for enrolled learners (PEL) in place for each programme of 3 months duration or more where fees have been paid by, or on behalf of, the learner. As a provider of such programmes RACE is committed to complying with this section of the Act and to protecting our learners.

#### **Responsibilities**

The Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the PEL arrangements we have in place meet our statutory obligations.

The Academic Committee maintains oversight of PEL arrangements and reviews the arrangements annually

The Programme Development and Quality Manager is responsible for managing and reporting on PEL arrangements.

### Reference Documents

- [Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act](#)
- [Guidelines for Providers 2014, Operating Principles for PEL Arrangements of Providers](#)
- [Protocols for Protection of Enrolled Learners - Guidelines for Providers](#)

## Management of Quality

### Quality Policy

RACE is a learner-centred organisation which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance. We are committed to continuous improvement in the design and delivery of our training services. We constantly evaluate our performance and seek feedback from learners and stakeholders in order to improve aspects of our service and maximise our potential. We recognise that we operate in a constantly changing environment and must be open to change and development. Staff are encouraged to update their skills, to be resourceful and show initiative in identifying practical solutions. We regularly benchmark our performance to ensure we are providing practical and relevant services and producing graduates who are fit for purpose.

### Scope of the QAS

This QAS applies to all activities associated with training provision, and to the work of our governance units, staff, tutors, external advisors, learners, and other stakeholders involved in training for or on behalf of RACE. This document describes our QAS which includes the policies, structures and processes, guidelines and handbooks that are in place to assure and improve the quality of training provision.

The QAS is informed by and designed to ensure compliance with

- *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines published by QQI (April 2016)*
- *Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines-Independent/Private Providers*
- *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes March 2018/QG8-V1*

The following legislation applies:

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) 2019
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015
- Equal Status Acts 200-2015
- Children First Act 2015

### Aims of the Quality Assurance System (QAS)

Drawing on QQI guidance documents, this manual outlines the policies and procedures we have defined, documented, and approved to ensure a QAS, that:

1. Is appropriate to the purpose of the organisation and the needs of the learners.
2. Includes a commitment to meeting requirements of the learners and to continual improvement of programme development, delivery, and review.
3. Provides a framework for establishing and reviewing quality objectives.
4. Is communicated and understood at appropriate levels in the organisation.
5. Is reviewed for continued suitability.
6. Ensures all tutors will be appropriately qualified and have relevant industry experience.
7. Will seek and act on feedback from all stakeholders.
8. Is honest, open, and transparent.

### Embedding a Quality Culture in RACE

The Board is responsible for ensuring effective resourcing and implementation of the QAS and is committed to embedding a culture which recognises the importance of quality, quality assurance, quality improvement and enhancement. Responsibility for the leadership and management of quality are designated within the roles of staff members.

- We document and communicate our QAS to all employees. The role of each staff member and tutor in assuring quality is set out in their role description and is addressed at induction.
- We expect all staff and contractors to take a proactive part in implementing the QAS, as it reflects their work on a day-to-day basis.
- We contract tutors who are committed to achieving top class learning outcomes.
- We work hard to integrate the QAS into normal day-to-day activities in a systematic, streamlined way.
- We invest time and resources in assuring quality and maintain a solid, robust QAS which makes it easier to embed quality in everything we do.
- We highlight and discuss quality-related issues at all governance and team meetings.
- We invite feedback from internal and external stakeholders with regard to the quality of what we do and act on the feedback. This helps to drive continuous improvement.
- We have allocated specific responsibility for overseeing the coordination and implementation of the QAS to a senior staff member who has the competence and authority to do this effectively and leads by example.
- WE make a copy of our QAM is available to all staff members and tutors through a shared folder on our intranet and other stakeholder and the general public on our website.

### Responsibility for the QAS

The Academic Committee has delegated authority from the Board of Directors [to](#) oversee matters relating to the provision of education and training programmes. It is responsible for monitoring and enhancement of Quality Assurance. It reports to the Board of Directors.

The Programme Development & Quality Manager (PD & QM) is responsible for ensuring the QAS is implemented and reports to Academic Committee in relation to the effectiveness of the system. The PD & QM monitors how the system and the associated documentation is used. The education coordinator co-ordinates the implementation of the QAS on a day-to-day basis and maintains our QA documents. Tutors have a defined role in implementing the QAS which is written into the role description, highlighted at induction, and addressed at CPD events.

We review the QAS every five years at a minimum with the input of an external QA expert to ensure that it meets RACE's changing and evolving context, regulatory requirements, and the needs of our stakeholders; particularly our learners and is an effective contributor to continuously improving the quality of programmes and services.

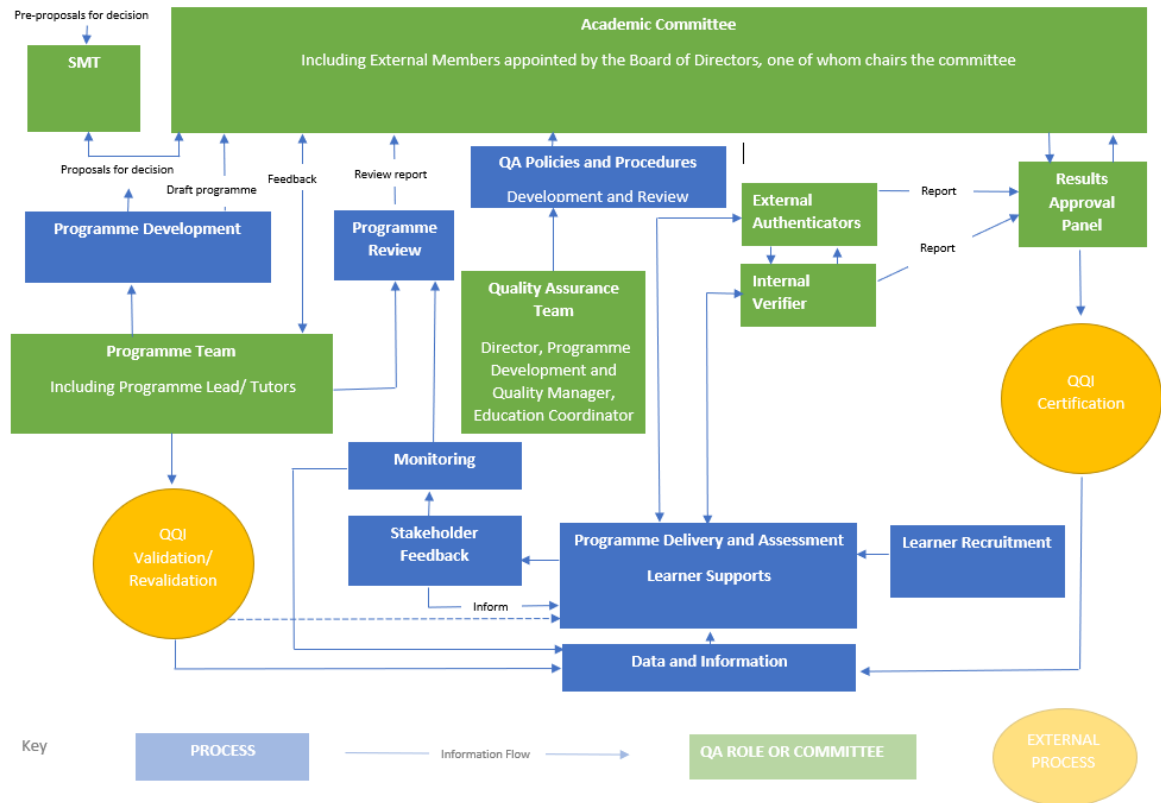
### The Learner Voice in Quality Assurance

We view our learners are being key contributors to the development of the QAS. At induction, and over the course of delivery, we invite learners to let us know what they think and what we could do better both collectively and individually. We are committed to listening and acting on to their feedback in a meaningful and transparent way. We do this through having a learner/recent graduate as a member of our Academic Committee, maintaining appeals and complaints registers, feedback

following delivery, programme review and evaluation, keeping in contact with class reps and other forms of learner consultation and feedback. We value learner feedback and are committed to taking timely action in response to recommendations for improvements, valid issues and justifiable concerns raised by learners.

The quality assurance schema shows the interaction of QA roles and committees, processes, and flow of information, in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: RACE Quality Assurance Schema**



## Documented Approach to Quality Assurance (Core Guideline 2)

### What Are Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

(Ref: QQI Reengagement Application Guide February 2017 V 0.1)

A *policy* is a statement or series of statements which set out a provider's position and commitment(s) on a particular area of education and training provision. It should show that a provider is aware of its obligations in the area and is committing to deliver on these obligations.

A *policy* will:

- Be written for all stakeholders, internal and external, and will have the primary purpose of informing those who read it as to the position of the provider on a particular aspect of its role.
- Set out broad parameters.
- Be available to all stakeholders e.g., on a website.
- Have the understanding and backing of senior management.
- Inform learners of what they should expect from the provider.
- Inform staff of what is expected of them.
- Provide a protection and support to provider staff in carrying out their work.

A *procedure* describes a process intended to deliver all or part of a policy commitment.

A procedure will:

- Be written to be available and understood by the people who will be operating the process or engaging with it.
- Address the practicalities of the process – actions, forms, actors, timelines, information flows, records etc.
- Be designed with the intention of delivering quality and consistency.
- Be capable of being monitored i.e., records and / or indicators will be generated which should show if the procedure is being followed and, crucially, if it is effective.
- Evolve over time as possible improvements are identified and implemented.

### Good Practice in Policy and Procedure Development

We regard our policies and procedures as living documents which grow and adapt continuously. While our policies, by definition, change infrequently, our procedures are constantly being reviewed, amended, and updated or archived/destroyed and benchmarked against prevailing QA requirements.

We design our policies to reflect current best practice in the further education and training sector and the requirements set out in relevant QQI QA guidelines. Each policy has an assigned owner who drafts policies and policy revisions. These are discussed by the senior management team before being presented to the Academic Committee for approval. New policies and significant policy revisions must be approved by the Academic Committee. Approved policy statements are published on our website.

A procedure sets out in detail how we put our policies into practice; 'how to do something' in a situation. For example, our procedure for applying for a reasonable accommodation in assessment set out in step-by-step detail who does what, how, and in what order and what supporting and reference documents we use. We design procedures so that they are easy to follow and use and we use a standard procedure template. The education coordinator is responsible for maintaining our procedures manual.

## Principles of QA Document Design and Use

- We use simple and accessible language designed to suit the user of the document(s).
- We write with the user/s in mind.
- All documents are readily identifiable by name, version number and date.
- All documents have an identified owner.
- We remove obsolete documents from use and securely destroy or archive them.

## Documenting the QAS

The QA Manual is organised in single topic chapters based on the areas listed in Section 2 of QQI's [Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines April 2016](#), the QA principles that underpin the development of our QA policies and procedures. We maintain our QA documents electronically for ease of use and access. The electronic format makes it easier for us to make revisions and control the different versions and reduces the need for emails and paper. We make the QA documents used to guide staff and learners available using the RACE [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) and third parties as required e.g., the external authenticator. A copy of our QAM is published on our website when it has been approved, internally by our Academic Committee and by QQI. There is a copy of the QAM available for reference at each governance unit meeting. All staff are inducted in the benefits, use and implementation of the QAS. The QAM and the Procedures Manual are key documents for induction. All tutors are inducted to the relevant aspects of the QAS via the tutor manual and tutor induction.

## Elements of our QAS

- QA Manual (QAM)
- Procedures Manual
- Role Descriptions
- Risk Register
- Terms of Reference
- Handbooks – Learner, Tutor and Staff
- QA Document Register – an Excel file we use to track QA documents.
- Reference documents (documents that provides pertinent details for consultation e.g., QQI QA Guidelines, Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012)
- Support documents (documents which we use to implement procedures e.g., Internal Verification form, learner evaluation form)
- Visuals - Flowcharts/graphics e.g., organisation chart, governance chart
- Glossary of terms to ensure consistency of naming, role titles and technical terminology by users.

## Document Control

The education coordinator is responsible for controlling the multiple documents that make up our QAS this involves reviewing and updating documents; making changes and updating revision status; controlling document distribution; removing obsolete documents and archiving.

Version control is the means by which we manage different versions and drafts of a document and is a process of naming and distinguishing between a series of draft documents which lead to a final (or approved) version, which in turn may be subject to further amendments. It provides an audit trail for the revision and update of draft and final versions.

## **Learner, Tutor and Employee Handbooks**

We regard the learner, tutor, and staff handbooks as key QA documents. They are reviewed annually with the input of users and reissued with a new version number and date. The education coordinator removes all previous versions from circulation and archives them. We make them available at or in advance of induction and there is a copy in the relevant shared folder. Our aim is to make the handbooks easy to read and user-friendly. We deliberately keep these handbooks as short and concise as possible, making every word count. The contents provide or point to the quality assurance policies and procedures which are most relevance to the users, and we use hyperlinks to guide the user to the detail of the policies and procedures referenced and supporting documents or signposting to the website.

Our staff handbook contains information on our recruitment and selection process, training, promotions, equality, terms and conditions of employment, harassment, bullying and disciplinary rules and procedures and other important regulations. All staff members are given a copy of the employee handbook at induction. Updates to this handbook are issued to staff and require a signature of agreement.



## Programmes of Education and Training (Core Guideline 3)

### Policy Statement

We are committed to providing excellence in the quality of our education service to all our learners founded on our mission statement – *‘To be a world centre of excellence for training and education within the thoroughbred racing industry, offering training of the highest standard to meet the needs of the racing industry and our learners’*. In order to achieve this, we aim to:

- Develop programmes to meet identified learner needs in the thoroughbred horse industries, involving stakeholders in programme development and review whenever possible.
- Ensure that the delivery of programmes meet all programme objectives and learning outcomes.
- Collect feedback from learners, tutors, and stakeholders to facilitate the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programmes and supports.

### Responsibility

- The Academic Committee has overall responsibility for maintaining oversight of programme design and approval, quality, and resources.
- The PD & QM is responsible for managing the programme development process and reporting to the senior management team and the Academic Committee.

### Programme Development, Approval and Validation

#### Needs Identification

We are proactive in seeking out education and training opportunities that respond to the needs of the industry and align closely with EQUUIP’s (Horse Racing Ireland’s Education and Training department) education and training strategy. Sources of programme ideas include:

- Irish Racehorse Trainers Association (IRTA)
- Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB)
- Industry employers and employees (both directly and via industry needs analysis via HRI).

Ideas for new programmes come from a variety of sources; members of the Board of Directors, senior management team, the Academic Committee, staff, or tutors may have an idea for a new programme. We also review feedback from current and past learners in relation to development of progression opportunities and continuing education. Ideas for programmes will be brought to the senior management team by the PD & QM and if aligned with strategy and needs, will be given the go ahead for proposal development. To propose a programme, the proposer must complete and submit a [Programme Proposal Form](#) to the PD & QM, backed up by data that supports the proposal, which includes a section on need identification. This section must include data on:

- How the proposed programme meets national and/or local skills, training, or educational needs.
- The learner profile/target group and the anticipated number of applicants
- Data on programmes already available to the target group
- Stakeholder engagement e.g., employer engagement in identifying skills needs.
- Identification of the award that best meets the needs of the programme (if seeking accreditation)

The PD & QM presents the programme proposal to the senior management team who may agree in principle to allow the proposal to go to the Academic Committee (or reject it). The rationale for providing QQI validated programmes and the associated financial, time and human resource costs are considered by the senior management team and the Academic Committee when reviewing the proposal.

If the programme is being designed to lead to an award on the NFQ, we have the programme validated by QQI before we offer it to learners. As part of the design process, we ensure that the programme is consistent with the QQI award standard(s) and is in line with QQI validation processes and guidelines relating to blended learning where relevant. Information relating to making a validation application to QQI is available on the QQI website and the programme design team are careful to ensure that they are referencing the most recent documents.

### Programme Development and Approval

#### Pre-Development

- A programme idea is presented by the PD & QM to the senior management team to decide if it should progress to proposal based on alignment with strategy and identified needs.
- Proposer completes and submits a [Programme Proposal form](#) to the PD & QM. The PD & QM presents the proposal to the Academic Committee and the senior management team.
- The Academic Committee reviews the proposal and confirms the proposed programme is in line with RACE aims and objectives and is academically sound. The Academic Committee may seek further information before a decision is made.
- The senior management team reviews the proposal in the context of resource implications and make a recommendation to the Academic Committee to progress the proposal or reject it based on the availability of necessary resource.

#### Development

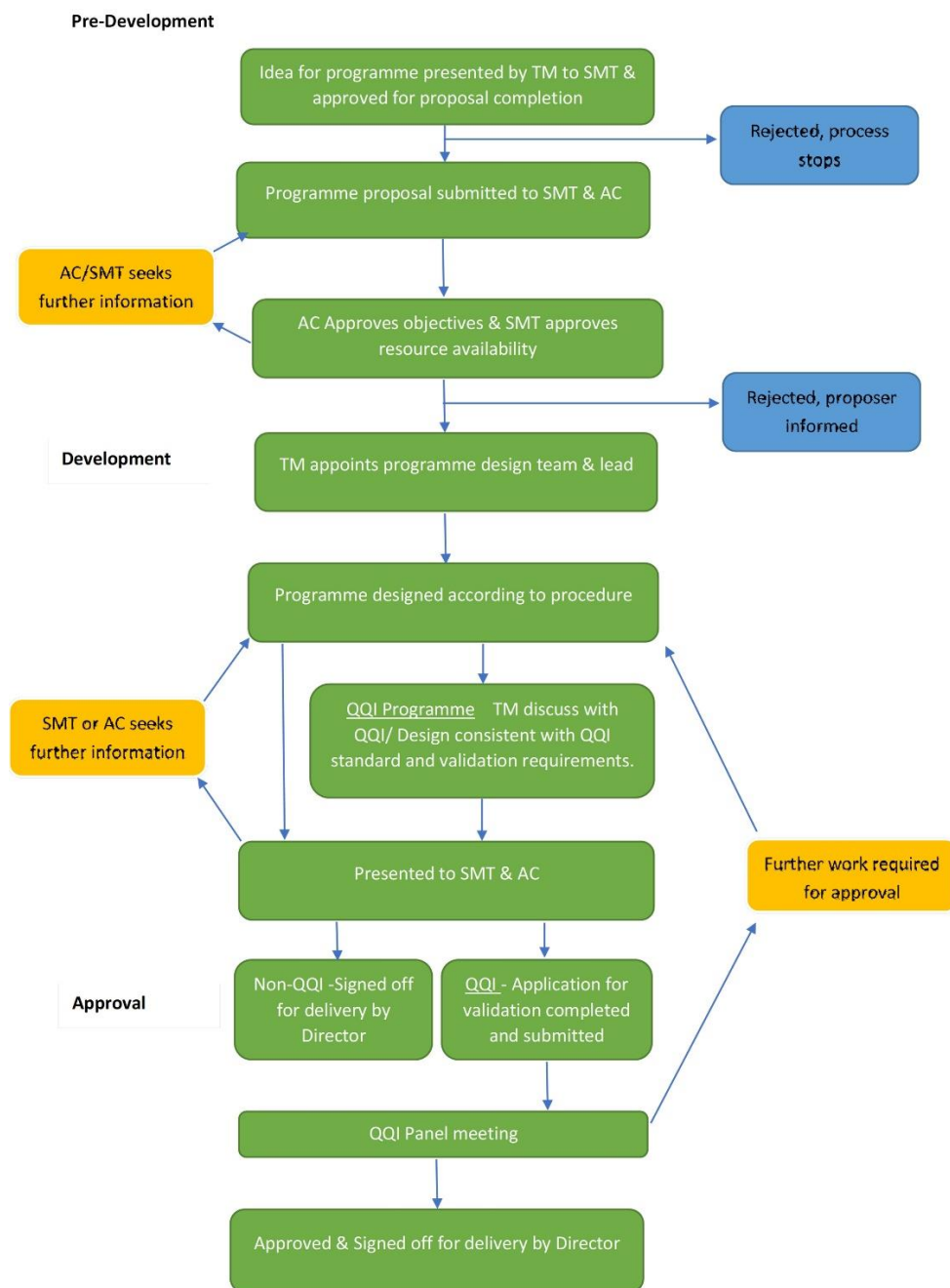
- If approved, the PD & QM appoints a programme design team/programme lead.
- The programme design team designs the programme following our documented procedure Programme Development and Approval (Procedures Manual).
- If the programme is being designed to lead to an award on the NFQ:
  - The PD & QM engages with QQI at an early stage to discuss and agree our plans.
  - The programme design team ensures that the programme is consistent with the QQI award standard(s) and is in line with QQI validation requirements prevailing at the time.
- The programme design team produces a programme descriptor, and an application for validation (if applicable).
- The PD & QM presents these documents to the senior management team and the Academic Committee making a recommendation for approval.

#### Approval

- The Academic Committee evaluates if the programme on the basis that it:
  - written using learning outcomes.
  - is designed to meet the needs of target learners.
  - has a sound and robust teaching, learning and assessment strategy.
  - meets award standard (relevant component specification).
  - complies with requirements of access, transfer, and progression.

- The senior management team and the Academic Committee may seek further information, make recommendations for changes, or engage in discussions with the programme design team.
- If the programme is not designed to lead to an award on the NFQ, it is signed off for delivery by the director at this point.
- Following approval, the PD & QM prepares the application submission and submits the application to QQI via the QBS using the QQI templates.
- The PD & QM coordinates the QQI panel meeting and RACE’s preparation for the meeting involving members of the programme team and members of the Academic Committee and senior management team as required.

**Figure 3: Programme Development and Approval Flowchart**



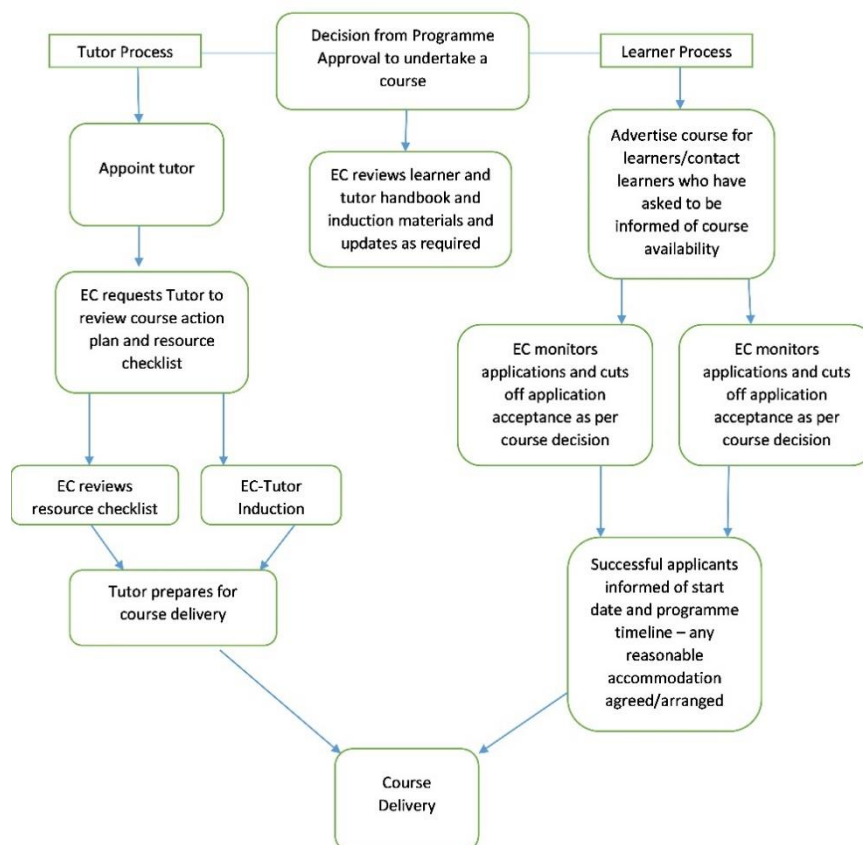
## Programme Revalidation

The PD & QM maintains a schedule of dates for revalidation of our programmes and at least one year before a programme is due for submission for revalidation, the PD & QM submits a proposal to the Academic Committee with a recommendation to revalidate or retire the programme. The Academic Committee considers the proposal and decides on the merits of revalidating the programme and the investment of resources needed for the task. The Academic Committee makes a recommendation to the senior management team. The senior management team considers the Academic Committee recommendation and the financial and resource implication of revalidation and makes a decision. If the decision is to retire the programme, the PD & QM organises an orderly wind-down of the programme and informs QQI and other stakeholders. If the decision is to revalidate the programme, we undertake a self-evaluation as per our documented self-evaluation procedure and comply with prevailing QQI guidelines with regard to revalidation.

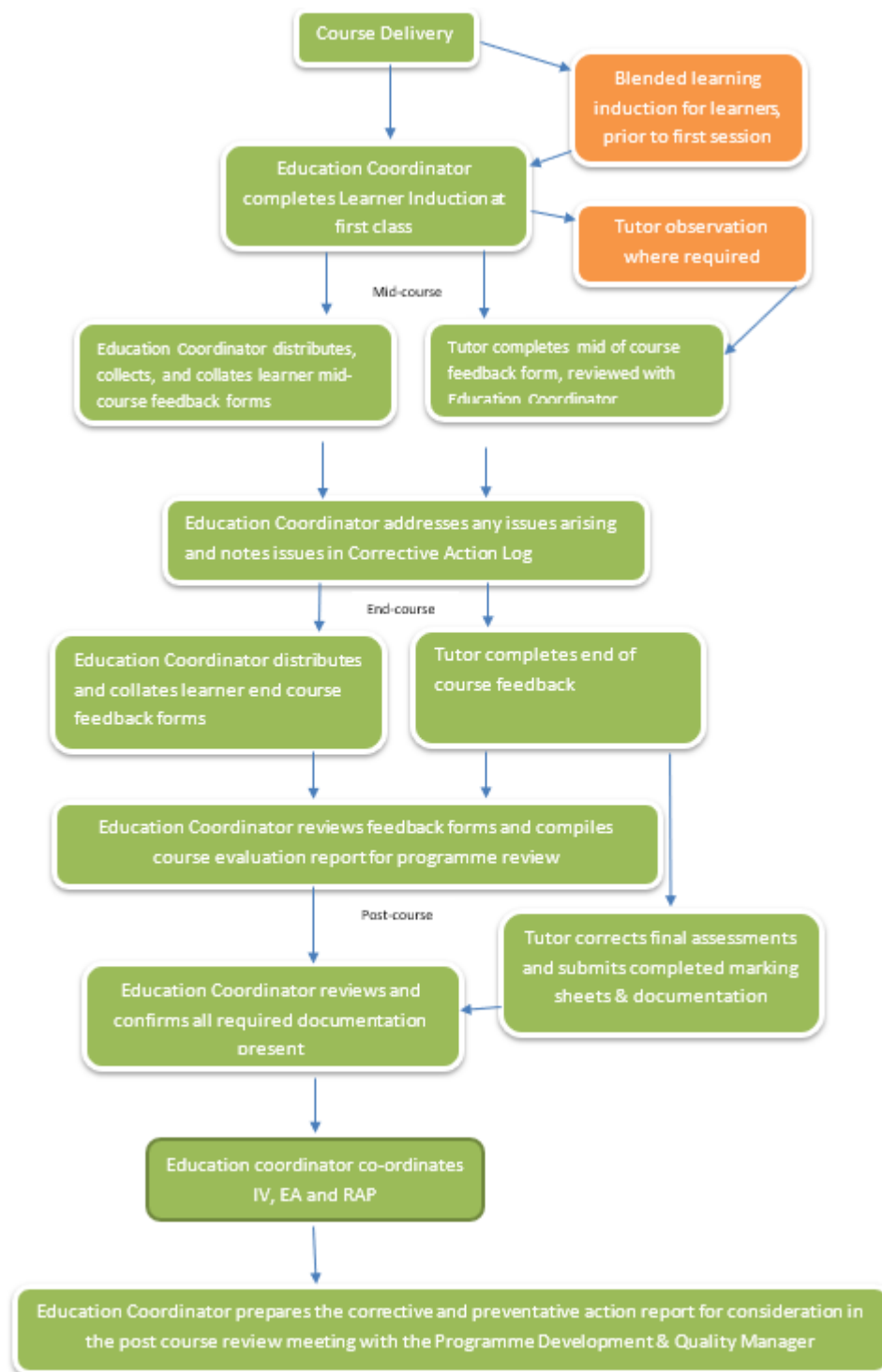
## **Programme Delivery**

The education coordinator works with the PD & QM to plan for programme delivery according to our documented procedure (Procedures Manual) and to ensure that the necessary human, physical and other resources are in place. If new or additional equipment or resources are identified in the pre-programme stage, the PD & QM sources what is needed, in consultation with the senior management team if significant expenditure is required. The education coordinator is responsible for organising programme delivery in line with our documented procedure. The pre-programme and programme delivery process is outlined in the Figure 4 and 5.

**Figure 4: Pre-programme Delivery Flow Chart**



**Figure 5: Programme Delivery Flow Chart**



**Access, Transfer and Progression**

RACE recognises the importance of facilitating access, supporting transfer, and promoting progression for all learners to enhance their educational opportunities. In order to achieve this, we undertake to:

- Provide comprehensive, accurate and clear programme information to prospective and current learners.
- Have a transparent and fair selection process.

- Welcome applications from non-standard learners.
- Promote transfer and progression opportunities for our learners.

### Admissions

Equality and inclusivity are fundamental to RACE admissions and we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all learners, combating discrimination, and promoting and accommodating diversity. We make every effort to accommodate additional needs, resources available are limited and many of the equine specific modules have a physical component. We have minimum entry requirements for each programme which are clear and reflect the level and content of the programme and the access transfer and progressions associated with the programme.

Learners apply directly to RACE using the standard application form which can be downloaded from our website. The applicant must confirm they understand and meet the minimum entry requirements and that they are available to attend the scheduled sessions (online and/or face-to-face). The education coordinator reviews the application forms and checks that the applicant meets the entry requirements. Applicants are then sent the '[selection test pack](#)' which verifies that they meet all entry requirements. The selection test includes a practical assessment, interview, and portfolio submission. Subject to meeting all entry requirements we offer places based strongest match and then on a first-come first-served basis where applicants are equal. If we refuse an applicant a place, the education coordinator provides the applicant with written feedback on the reasons why we are not offering a place and lets them know that they can appeal this decision.

### Transfer and Progression

RACE aims to design programmes that, where possible, offer opportunities for transfer and progression. We offer support, information and encouragement to our learners who wish to progress to further or higher levels on the NFQ. We identify the transfer and progression options which are open to learners on receipt of an award.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

We recognise prior learning for entry to a programme and for exemptions. If an applicant does not meet the minimum entry requirements for a programme, they can apply for admission through recognition of prior learning. This is stated clearly in our programme information. The PD & QM reviews each application for entry via RPL on a case-by-case basis and meets the applicants to discuss the application, verify the evidence submitted to support the application and to decide if the applicant is suitable for the programme and vice versa. The evidence submitted by the applicant may include some or all of the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- References
- Details of training programmes attended
- Job descriptions and relevant work experiences
- Personal statement

The PD & QM lets the applicant know the outcome of their application in writing and if the decision is not to offer a place to the applicant, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision.

We also facilitate learners in gaining exemptions if they have already achieved certification for modules of a major award. Applicants for exemptions must submit the original award certificate (not

a copy) to the education coordinator who retains a copy and returns the original immediately to the applicant by registered post. The certificate must have been achieved in a timeframe in line with QQI guidelines.

## **Staff Recruitment, Management & Development (Core Guideline 4)**

### **Policy Statement**

RACE recognises the importance of recruiting qualified, professional staff to ensure provision of a quality service to our learners, and of supporting staff development to meet the requirements of new learning programmes. In order to achieve this, we undertake to:

- Follow best practice in the process of staff recruitment, consistent with employment equality legislation.
- Promote and support staff development on an ongoing basis and particularly in advance of the introduction of new learning programmes.
- Up skill staff in teaching and learning methodologies as appropriate.

The recruitment of administrative and support staff is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team and is implemented in line with RACE's corporate HR procedures. RACE have secured the services of a Human Resource company ([www.thehrcompany.ie](http://www.thehrcompany.ie)) to provide consultancy and HR services.

### **Responsibility**

- The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for staffing in RACE.
- The Academic Committee maintains oversight of programme-related staffing.
- The PD & QM is responsible for the management of tutors (terms and conditions, performance issues or development requirements).
- The education coordinator is responsible for coordination of tutors (schedules, learning environment and documentation requirements).

The procedures described here refer primarily to the recruitment, management, and development of tutors.

### **Recruitment and Selection of Tutors**

Most of our tutors are contracted part-time to deliver a specific module. All contract appointments are made based on a short-term contract, the terms of which are set out in a contract which is signed by both the tutor and the PD & QM.

### Supporting Documents

- Tutor Role Description
- Statement of Required Qualification (programme-specific)
- Programme Descriptor Template

We identify the knowledge, skills and competencies required of members of the programme team at the programme design stage and these are set out in the programme descriptor. These are used consistently in the selection process and there is a clear recruitment process consistent with employment equality legislation.

### Steps in the Process

Generally, RACE recruit for a panel of tutors to be available for the delivery of modules across a range of subject areas. However, the recruitment process for a panel or individual tutors will take the same format.



- The PD & QM and education coordinator determine the subject area(s) required and prepare a suitable advertisement.
- The selection criteria of tutors is as per the validated programme information and where delivery is via blended learning this will be referred to in the advertisement and included in the interview process.
- The job is advertised via agreed routes (industry press and/or social media channels).
- Applicants are short-listed where required and suitable candidates are called for interview.
- Education coordinator sets up the interviews, with education coordinator and the PD & QM present.
- Tutors are required to make a presentation to the panel on their subject as part of the interview process and where delivery will be via blended learning, will have to interact with the RACE [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) as part of the interview process also.
- The most suitable tutor is identified (for each subject area) and informed of that determination by the education coordinator.
- Any remaining suitable tutors are informed they are on a panel of tutors and may be contacted for future delivery of modules.
- Any unsuitable tutors are notified and given feedback on the reasons why they were not allocated to the panel at this time.
- All applicant who are taking up a role where they may have contact with those aged 18 years or under or vulnerable adults will undergo Garda Vetting. The education coordinator will forward their details on agreement of role, to the Operations Manager in RACE for processing.
- The education coordinator will notify the PD & QM when a tutor has been offered and agreed to deliver for RACE and the PD & QM will request a contract via the HR Company. Once the contract is complete, the education coordinator and tutor will proceed to the 'pre-course procedures' that form part of the Programme Delivery procedures (Procedures Manual).

#### **Statement of Required Qualifications – Tutors**

##### Pedagogical qualification minimum requirement:

A teaching / training qualification a minimum Level 6 on national framework of qualifications.

The content of the course must have included elements covering:

- Planning for training
- Training Needs Analysis
- The trainer role
- Motivation
- Communication
- Training methods
- Evaluation and assessment
- Quality assurance in training and education
- Equality issues in training

Where a tutor more experienced in the professional area does not hold a teaching qualification, they may be considered subject to agreeing to immediately starting a qualification at this level and completing it within 12 months of the start date.

##### Professional qualification and experience minimum requirements:

The Tutor must hold a recognised qualification at least 1 level above (equivalent to the National Framework of Qualifications) the module that is being delivered and have at least 2 years related professional experience in the discipline.

Or

The Tutor must hold a recognised qualification at the same level (equivalent to the National Framework of Qualifications) and have a minimum of 4 years related professional experience in the discipline.

In addition to the qualifications outlined we also value these qualities:

- Ability to draw from their own practical work experience to enhance their training role
- Excellent planning, prioritising, facilitation, presentation, interpersonal and communication skills
- Good IT Skills
- Experience of online training delivery or operating in a blended learning environment (for blended learning) or a comfort and willingness to develop in this regard

### **Supports for Tutors**

We place a strong emphasis on providing a high level of support for tutors and particularly recently recruited tutors. We keep them informed of issues relating to their programme and service areas, take their views on board and ensure that they have easy access to the information they need to carry out their roles to a high standard.

- Tutors go through a 'pre-course procedure' which forms part of the 'programme delivery procedure', which includes a tutor induction. Tutor induction includes blended learning induction where relevant.
- Tutors have access to the tutor handbook, a copy of our QA manual, QA documents they need, and useful resources and references.
- All tutors have access to education coordinator as a support for queries in relation to facilities, learners, learner supports and scheduling. They have contact with the education coordinator via e-mail, SMS, or telephone for the duration of the programme.
- All tutors have access to the programme lead for queries in relation to content.
- All tutors who will be delivering via blended learning, have access to an online course page on the RACE [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) with additional resources for blended learning.
- We regard tutors as full members of our programme team and invite and expect them to attend programme meetings to contribute to programme development and review.

### **Tutor CPD**

We expect contracted tutors to keep up to date with developments in their field of expertise, maintain membership of relevant professional bodies, engage in professional networking and to manage their CPD. We support tutors in accessing programme-related training and development events. Where any gaps are identified in tutor knowledge or skills we respond.

### **Monitoring and Managing Tutor Performance**

The PD & QM monitors new tutor performance closely and all new or inexperienced tutors undergo tutor observation where a tutor [observation form](#) is completed.

If there are any concerns raised by learners formally through mid-course feedback or casually directly to the education coordinator, where appropriate the education coordinator will follow up the tutor and provide feedback. Any concerns the education coordinator feels require further follow up, will

be discussed with the PD & QM and action agreed. Action might include tutor observation, meeting between PD & QM, education coordinator and tutor.

Where poor performance is identified in relation to learning environment or documentation management, the tutor is given clear feedback from the education coordinator on improvements required and a timeframe for any requirements. Where poor performance is identified in relation to subject matter delivery, the PD & QM will discuss with the tutor and action agreed. Actions might include closer supervision and support of the tutor. Where improvement is not seen following feedback then the tutor may be replaced and removed from the tutor panel for future delivery.

The education coordinator also meets the tutor at the conclusion of module delivery for a debriefing for the purpose of giving feedback and discussing what went well and any suggested improvements or areas for development. The tutor [mid](#) and [end](#) feedback reports and learner [mid and end feedback forms](#) will be used for the basis of this discussion.

In preparation for this meeting the education coordinator also reviews:

- Learner attendance/drop-out rates (the education coordinator follows up with learners who exit early)
- External authenticator feedback
- Assessment results and evidence of formative and summative feedback provided
- Complaints and Appeals Registers

### **Contingency Plan for Tutor Absence**

The education coordinator confirms availability well in advance with tutors. However, if a tutor is unavailable at short notice, the education coordinator will organise a replacement tutor from our tutor panel. If an appropriately qualified tutor is not available, then the class is postponed, and learners are notified as soon as possible of the postponement and the rescheduled class date & time. In these instances, the education coordinator will often gather feedback from learners as to the best timing for the rescheduled class. Access to programme resources on shared online folders enables a stand-in tutor to get up to speed with the programme and where the learners are at quickly and easily.

### **The Tutor Voice**

We recognise that tutors play a crucial role in ensuring the quality of our programmes and supporting our learners.

- We have programme team meetings at least once per year where tutors and support staff can review progress and discuss any areas of concern. These meetings facilitate networking and sharing of learning among staff and tutors and may also identify tutor training needs.
- We involve tutors in programme development and review processes.
- We have a tutor as a member of our Academic Committee.
- We involve tutors and staff in ongoing development and enhancement of our QA systems e.g., tutor input in the content of the tutor handbook.
- The education coordinator ensures that tutors are informed of issues relating to their modules.

## **Teaching and Learning (Core Guideline 5)**

### **Policy Statement**

RACE works hard to ensure that tutors and learners achieve the highest possible standards by creating and sustaining a teaching and learning environment, face-to-face and online, that is positive, appropriate, and inclusive. All stakeholders, from members of our governance units to our learners, have specific role in contributing to sustaining this environment. By knowing and understanding how they are performing, staff at all levels can enhance and share strengths and identify areas for improvement. We seek regular feedback from teaching staff, learners, and stakeholders. We provide all our tutors and learners with the resources they need to achieve their maximum potential.

### **Responsibility**

- The Academic Committee is responsible for maintaining oversight of the teaching and learning environment and teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
- The Director, with the senior management team, is responsible for ensuring that resources are in place to ensure a quality teaching and learning environment.
- The PD & QM is responsible for ensuring that our teaching, learning and assessment strategies are implemented and for supporting their implementation.
- The tutors, with the support of the education coordinator, are responsible for creating an environment where learners can maximise their potential.

### **The RACE Teaching and Learning Environment**

We aim to creating a positive, safe, and inclusive teaching and learning environment in the face-to-face and virtual classroom where learners, tutors and all members of the programme team feel supported, challenged and respected. We facilitate a diverse range of learners to access lifelong learning and help them to be effective workers in the equine sector. We focus on designing and providing teaching and learning environments that enables learners to achieve the best possible learning outcomes and design programme where the content is both engaging and challenging. We ensure that the physical and IT infrastructure is adequate and suitable for our training programmes and for our learner profile. We keep the numbers per class small ensuring individual support. Our tutors are selected based on their background, experience, and commitment to working with our learner profile. Our overall approach to teaching and learning incorporates the core principles of adult education where:

- Learners are expected to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning within a supportive environment.
- Learners are encouraged to use their life experience to support their learning.
- Learners respond positively to self-directed learning.
- Learners are focused on achieving their goals.
- Learners are given the opportunity to discuss their own performance and plan improvements.

### **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

RACE places a strong emphasis on the practical application of programme content in order to ensure the learners achieve the intended learning outcomes i.e., knowledge, skill and competence at completion. Learners are typically working fulltime in the thoroughbred industry and learn best when they can apply or see how they would apply knowledge and skills.

We apply a 'tell, show, do, apply' model for skills development or practical task development. The tutors tell the learners what they need to do, shows them how to do it and then allows them the opportunity to practice. The 'tell' part may happen in advance in a classroom-based session (face-to-face or virtual) or may take place at the start of the practical session. We apply best practice in the demonstration (show) of practical tasks and ensure learners apply best practice in their development (do) of the skill. we expect the learners to practice the skills by applying them to own horses or in their workplace as part of their self-directed learning,

The RACE pedagogical model is based on the Victoria State Pedagogical Model, which aligns well with our teaching and learning ethos (State of Victoria, 2020), see Table 1.

The five 'domains' of this pedagogical model are:

1. Engage
2. Explore
3. Explain
4. Elaborate
5. Evaluate

## RACE adaptation of Pedagogical Model, State of Victoria (2020)

State of Victoria (2020) *The Pedagogical Model*. State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training, 2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002, Australia.

**Table 1: RACE Adaptation of Pedagogical Model, State of Victoria (2020)**

Engage	Explore	Explain	Elaborate	Evaluate
Tutors engage their learners in building supportive, inclusive, and stimulating learning environments. Tutors motivate learners to manage their own learning.	Tutors present challenging tasks to support learners in generating and investigating questions, gathering relevant information, and developing ideas. They help learners expand their perspectives and preconceptions, understand learning tasks, and prepare to navigate their own learning.	Tutors explicitly teach relevant knowledge, concepts, and skills in multiple ways to connect new and existing knowledge. They monitor learner progress in learning and provide structured opportunities for practising new skills.	Tutors challenge learners to move from surface to deep learning, building learner ability to transfer and generalise their learning. They support learners to be reflective, questioning, and self-monitoring.	Tutors use multiple forms of assessment and feedback to help learners improve their learning and develop agency. They monitor learners progress and analyse data to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of their teaching practices, identify areas for improvement and address learner individual needs

## **Delivery Methods**

We document programme content to include the activities, strategies, methodologies, and resources in our Programme Descriptors, and is agreed at the programme validation stage by QQI if the programme is designed to lead to an award on the NFAQ. We design a range of methodologies as part of our delivery strategy. We expect tutors to use a range of delivery methods and to consider the different learning styles when preparing their programme materials.

### Delivery Methodologies

- Classroom-based – face-to-face and virtual - instruction – impart information and create a learning environment for class discussions, explore issues that have arisen as part of programme content or assessments. Group work is used to help learners develop their analytical and communication skills and to create a collaborative learning environment which our learners enjoy and benefit from as part of their experience.
- Practical demonstrations and training – demonstrations of practical skills via face-to-face delivery (access to horses, facilities and equipment is generally required), are given in line with best practice and learners are supervised in carrying out practical skills with feedback given throughout practice.
- Simulated work environment – for modules with practical equine element, skills are demonstrated and practiced in the way they would be carried out in a workplace.
- Workplace/ On-the-job training learning - via work experience module placement, gives learners opportunity to apply what they have learned in a real working environment.
- Blended Learning - allows for lectures to be delivered via live webinars, course work to be available online and all assignments to be submitted digitally.
- Field trips – bring the programme content to life.

### **Independent and self-directed learning**

We regard Independent and self-directed learning as being a critical element of the learning journey and key to bedding in the learning. The tutors clearly outline to learners at induction and throughout the programme what we mean by Independent and self-directed learning. The tutors advise them with regard to a range of strategies and check-in with the learners regularly to confirm that they are engaging in self-directed learning. The focus on independent learning help learners to develop an autonomous work and learning ethos.

### **Blended Learning**

Our blended learning strategy is designed to help us deliver teaching and learning according to the same principles and standards that we apply for face-to-face delivery. Training sessions are delivered according to the same values, albeit through use of a virtual classroom and group work will be facilitated through use of breakout rooms.

Learners can see, hear, and interact with the tutor and participate in group exercises in the virtual classroom, speak to each other, and ask questions both verbally and through the live chat function. The tutors speak directly to learners as a group or individually, share PowerPoints and do whiteboard exercises. The tutors make resources and content available online via [the RACE Learning Management System](#) (LMS) at a pace appropriate to the learner capabilities (the RACE Learning Management System (LMS) platform is available to face-to-face learners).

Any materials designed specifically for blended or online learning are approved in advance by the PD & QM. RACE provides training for tutors on the use of technology (how to use and when to use each of the types available), classroom management (e.g., rapport, engagement) and how to restructure content for blended learning.

## **The Teaching and Learning Environment**

We consider the following to be important components of an effective learning environment.

- Quality of the teaching and support staff
- An appropriate physical and IT infrastructure
- A commitment to learner success
- Clarity of responsibilities
- Celebration of success and achievement
- Attention to the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of staff, tutors and learners
- The promotion of a collaboration environment and learner connectedness
- Hard work

We ensure that the resources necessary for programme delivery and successful participation by learners are allocated and maintained and that measures are taken to ensure that learners have adequate access to facilities and resources - especially learners with additional needs. We review the adequacy of the resources throughout delivery of the programme and adjust where necessary, making note on the programme descriptor of what is required. The PD & QM keeps tutors informed with regard to facilities and resources required and allocated to their programme and ask for their feedback as part of our monitoring and evaluation. Programme meetings and feedback forms include review of facilities and resources.

### **Physical Infrastructure**

#### Classrooms

Classrooms are well ventilated and/or heated and have suitable furniture to allow optimum teaching and learning. Each classroom is equipped with sufficient sockets, IT provision, whiteboards, flip charts, projectors and PCs as required. All facilities are easily accessible and wheelchair friendly. There are facilities for accessing tea/coffee and light refreshments during breaks.

#### Practical training facilities

Practical training facilities include an American style horse barn and additional stabling to accommodate upwards of 40 horses in total, a large indoor arena, an outdoor arena, an enclosed sand gallops, starting stalls, hurdles, fences, a horsebox and horse walker. The practical training facilities are equipped with sufficient tack and equipment required.

#### IT facilities

RACE have a dedicated IT training room with 15 individual computer stations, printers, and a tutor station. There are tablets and camcorders available to tutors for use in recording skills demonstrations.

### **Use of Offsite Training Facilities**

If premises outside of RACE are considered for use, they are checked out by the PD & QM in advance and benchmarked against our [Premises Selection Checklist](#) before being approved for use.

The following criteria apply:

- The premises must meet all health and safety regulations.
- Must be suitable for the programme and for the learner profile.
- The training room/centre must be secure.
- Where appropriate the premises will be accessible to those with special requirements i.e., wheelchair access.
- There must be access to toilet/washroom facilities.
- There must be adequate heating, lighting, and ventilation.



- There must be appropriate fixtures and fittings i.e., tables and chairs.
- There must be appropriate IT resources and facilities.
- There must be adequate parking facilities and ideally accessible via public transport (if possible).

Due consideration is given to the location of the premises, with regard to the distances learners may have to travel. Where possible, we select facilities chosen which are centrally located, in terms of the geographical location of learner.

## **Assessment of Learners (Core Guideline 6)**

### **Policy Statement**

RACE seek to ensure that all assessment procedures and practices are fair and transparent, clearly understood by all involved in assessment, in line with assessment requirements and national standards, and consistent in implementation across assessors.

RACE is fully committed to ensuring that our assessment processes are:

- Understood by staff and learners
- Valid for the purpose of QQI awards
- Fair to learners, in terms of access and process
- Internally verified as fair and consistent
- Externally authenticated as consistent with national standards
- Consistent with QQI assessment policy and guidelines

### **Responsibility**

- The Results Approval Panel approves results and make recommendations for corrective action.
- The PD & QM has overall responsibility for our assessment processes.
- The education coordinator is responsible for the implementing our assessment procedures and acts as internal verifier.
- The tutors and assessors are responsible for ensuring all assessment activities are carried as per agreed assessment plans and act as internal assessors.

### **Overview of assessment process**

#### 1. Assessment

- The programme team devise the assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria.
- The tutors carry out assessment.
- The tutors mark and grades the assessment evidence.
- The education coordinator records outcomes.

#### 2. Authentication

- The education coordinator verifies that all assessment procedures have been applied and monitors the outcome of the assessment process.
- The PD & QM assigns an external authenticator which meets our stated selection criteria.
- The external authenticator moderate's assessment results by sampling learner evidence according to our sampling strategy.

#### 3. Results Approval

- The Academic Committee establishes a Results Approval Panel.
- The Results Approval Panel reviews approves and sign-off assessment results.
- The education coordinator makes the approved results available to learners.

#### 4. Request for Certification

- The education coordinator submits learner results to QQI via the QBS.

## 5. Appeals Process

- We allow a maximum of 14 days for learners to lodge an appeal.
- The education coordinator processes appeals.

### Planning Assessments

The Programme Leader, working with the tutors, designs assessment instruments at the design stage based on the requirements set out in the awarding body specifications, the learner profile, and the programme profile. We plan and review assessment and update our assessment instruments and processes on a regular basis.

RACE ensures that the assessment of each programme is planned in advance of the programme commencing and is coordinated and scheduled to maximise the value of assessments across the programme. The tutor completes a course action plan, which outlines when assessments will take place, which is confirmed by the education coordinator. The education coordinator meets the tutor for a pre-programme briefing where all aspects of assessment are discussed and agreed. The course action plan is confirmed and any arrangements for reasonable accommodations are discussed.

### Principles of Assessment Design

- Assessment is based on the assessment techniques and weightings specified in the validated programme (if leading to a QQI award)
- Assessment is designed to ensure that the workload before the learners is manageable, challenging and balanced.
- Assessment briefs are designed to give learners a full understanding of what is required and expected in task performances and based on the learners' stage of academic and assessment literacy development.
- A variety of assessment techniques, designed to suit the programme content and the learner profile, are utilised.

### Information to Learners

We ensure that learners have the assessment-related information they need as they need it in an accessible format.

- The learner handbook includes assessment methods & schedules, learner responsibilities in relation to assessment; policy on academic integrity, repeats and appeals process, assessment, and grading requirements.
- The education coordinator discusses assessment at Learner induction. The tutor distributes and talks through the course action plan and confirms that the learners are clear about what is required and what the learner's responsibilities are in relation to assessment.
- The tutor gives copies of assessment briefs to learners at appropriate stages of the programme and a notice of examination in advance of each examination. These are also uploaded to the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS).
- Our tutors emphasise our procedures for dealing with incidents of academic misconduct and timely submission of assessments (also addressed in the learner handbook)
- The tutor's check-in with learners regularly to confirm that they are on track and are clear with regard to what they need to do for assessment.

## **Security of Assessment Materials and Related Processes**

We have systems in place to protect the integrity of assessment documentation and materials, learner work, assessment results and records and assessment events (examinations and skills demonstrations). The education coordinator is responsible for the secure storage (hard copy and electronic) with an electronically guarded storeroom and a password protected shared drive.

The education coordinator adds details of assessments for each learner to the programme records which are maintained securely electronically under programme name and number. The education coordinator appoints and briefs invigilators to supervise exams and verify exam attendance.

All assignments and statements confirming the assessment evidence being submitted is the learners own work are submitted via the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS). Digital records are available from the Learning Management System (LMS) for all assignment submission.

The tutor issues a notice of examination to learners at least two weeks in advance of an examination. A notice of examination is also included in the course action plan. Included in this notice are details of the day/date/time/location/duration and format of the exam and a copy of our examination regulations. There is also a copy of the examination regulations in the learner handbook.

## **Academic Integrity**

RACE's reputation and that of its graduates depends on everyone upholding high standards of learning and assessment. Learners are informed of the procedures in relation to assessment malpractice, including plagiarism, essay mills and referencing techniques in the learner handbook and learner induction. Learners are required to submit a declaration with each assignment confirming that the assessment evidence they are submitting is their own. Assessment malpractice is also covered in the tutor induction and the tutor handbook. Should an instance of assessment malpractice be identified, we have a documented procedure (Procedures Manual) in place that is implemented.

## **Reasonable Accommodation/Compassionate Consideration**

In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g., learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation. We publish details of our reasonable accommodation policy in our learner handbook, and we address it at both Learner and Tutor Induction. We advise applicants to let us know if they need/think they may need additional supports when they are applying for a place (or at the earliest possible opportunity).

The education coordinator discusses any additional needs with learners in advance of course delivery starting and updates the tutor on any additional needs and the accommodations available to address them. The education coordinator requests copies of previous education assessments to assist in determining the best provision of supports. The education coordinator informs the external authenticator about any adaptations made/ reasonable accommodation provided by noting it on the internal verification report and maintains details on the learner record.

## **Repeat/Deferral of Assessment**

If a learner does not achieve a pass standard, we offer them an opportunity to repeat an examination or resubmit an assignment and encourage them to do so. The maximum grade available for a repeat assessment piece is 50%. Exam re-sits and repeat skills demonstrations are dependent on timetabling, the nature of the activity and the practical and/or operational issues involved. Learners may be

allowed to re-sit/repeat an assessment activity, without repeating the classroom sessions, if the same award is being offered in the following assessment period and at the discretion of the PD & QM.

We include information on repeats in the learner handbook.

Any individual assessment that is worth 50% or more of the overall grade for a module, must be passed. Where a submission is submitted late after the specified due date and a request for an extension has not been submitted, a 10% deduction will be applied to the grade for each week the assignment piece is late, to a maximum of two weeks. After two weeks the assignment is considered a fail and must be repeated. Learners can only defer an assessment where extenuating circumstances have been applied for and approved.

### **Consistency of Marking and Grading**

As part of the internal verification process the education coordinator compares results achieved across a range of learners and assessors to check for consistency of marking and highlights any concerns to the PD & QM. We address marking and grading at tutor induction and in the tutor handbook. New tutors are given sample assessment responses at distinction, merit and pass standard to help ensure consistency across modules and marking.

We have detailed marking schemes, sample answers and outline solutions based on the validated assessment strategies, which shows clearly how the assessment evidence is to be marked and graded. All tutors use the same assessment instruments and marking schemes which result in a standardised approach to assessment and consistency in marking and grading.

We ask the external authenticator to comment on the standards and consistency of marking and grading in the external authenticator report and if the external authenticator raises any concerns, they are discussed at the RAP meeting and the RAP advises on corrective action.

### **Blended Learning Assessment**

Practical sessions and practical assessments are primarily carried out onsite and face-to-face. In the limited cases where skills demonstrations are carried out remotely, this is done using the Zoom platform live via Zoom platform and recorded in full. The learner is given a list of resources that they must have available to complete the assessment in the assessment brief, which may include an assistant to video them. If it is not possible to complete the assessment remotely, the assessment is postponed and rescheduled when issues have been resolved or changed to face-to-face if issues cannot be resolved.

### **Internal Verification**

Our process of internal verification is based on the *Quality Assurance Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013'*. The education coordinator is responsible for verifying our assessment process and outcomes in line with our documented procedure (Procedures Manual). The PD & QM is responsible for ensuring that the education coordinator has the expertise, resources, and time to complete internal verification to a high standard. All assessment material is internally verified.

The education coordinator checks that assessment procedures are adhered to by the tutors and applied consistently across assessment activities and the assessment results are recorded accurately, monitors any irregularities or deviations from the normal distribution of marks and highlights any concerns to the PD & QM. They take corrective action if learner results and/or evidence is missing,

i.e., contacts the tutor, rechecking assessments and/or evidence for mislaid items, reviewing attendance registers and submission logs to ensure evidence was received, etc.

### The Internal Verification Report

The education coordinator completes the process by completing the internal verification report using our standard template, which includes observations and recommendations, signs it and makes it available to the external authenticator in advance of authentication and to members of the result approval panel (RAP) in advance of the RAP meeting. The education coordinator presents the internal verification report to the RAP highlighting issues which may need be addressed with corrective action.

### **External Authentication**

Aims of external authentication:

- To check that the learner evidence presented for authentication has been fairly and consistently assessed.
- To confirm that the assessment process is fair, consistent, and valid.
- To verify that the results meet the national standards for the award/s.

The Academic Committee signs-off on the selection and appointment of a suitably qualified external authenticator who meets our selection criteria on the advice of the PD & QM who maintains evidence of suitability. The education coordinator issues a contract and Code of Practice to the external authenticator setting out terms, conditions and expectations which is signed by the authenticator before they undertake authentication. We do not contract the services of the same external authenticator for more than three successive certification periods. External authentication is carried out in line with our [sampling strategy](#) and our documented procedure (Procedures Manual). The education coordinator plans for external authentication and liaises with the external authenticator before, during and after his/her visit and ensures that the tutors are available if the authenticator needs to contact them during the process. The education coordinator invites the authenticator to attend the results approval panel meeting to present a draft report/be available by phone for consultation.

The authenticator completes and submits his/her report by an agreed date and the report is signed and dated by both the authenticator and the PD & QM, stored securely in hard copy and electronically, maintained indefinitely and made available for monitoring purposes.

### External Authenticator Selection Criteria

- Technical/subject matter expertise in the equine sector
- Able to confirm that we are implementing our quality assurance policies and procedures in relation to assessment
- Understand our learner profile.
- Experience of external authentication and/or external examining
- Independent of RACE and the programme

### **Results Approval**

The purpose of the results approval process is to ensure that results are fully quality assured and signed off before we submit them for certification and issued to learners. The process involves the establishment of a results approval panel (RAP) and a procedure for submitting certification data and

issuing results. Our RAP is established by the Academic Committee and reports to the Academic Committee and operates as per the [documented terms of reference](#). The PD & QM convenes a RAP meeting for each certification period to take place as soon as possible following authentication and to facilitate the attendance of the external authenticator to present their report if this is feasible. The panel reviews learner results /outcomes, trends, internal verification, and external authentication reports. The education coordinator maintains records of corrective action taken and notifies QQI immediately if there is any action identified which impacts on the integrity of certification. When results are approved by the RAP, the education coordinator makes them available to learners including notification of a 14-day appeal period. The education coordinator is responsible for ensuring corrective action is implemented and works with the tutors to ensure this. Results are submitted and issued according to our documented procedure (Procedures Manual).

### **Feedback to Learners**

Tutors are required to provide feedback to learners as part of their role and according to the [Tutor Guide to Formative and Summative Feedback](#).

Summative assessments are used to evaluate learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period—typically through exams, assignments, or skills demonstrations. Summative assessment results are recorded as marks that determine the ultimate grade a learner achieves on a module.

Formative assessments refer to a wide variety of methods used to conduct in-process evaluations of learner comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a learning outcome or course. Formative assessments help identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support. The general goal of formative assessment is to improve instruction and student learning *while it is happening*.

### **Issue of Award Certificates**

When we receive the award certificate from QQI, the education coordinator records the receipt and arranges delivery of certificates to learners. The education coordinator sends the award certificates to the learners by registered post or organises a presentation ceremony. If an award certificate is lost, QQI can provide either a Record of Awards or a replacement certificate. QQI charges a €100 fee for a replacement certificate. Learners can apply online on the QQI website and must supply proof of identity.

### **Review, Recheck and Appeals**

If a learner has an issue with the assessment outcome there is a procedure (Procedures Manual) in place that they can follow to have their work rechecked or their grade appealed. Learners are advised of the right to appeal their results in the learner handbook, at induction and with the final results letter. We do not charge a fee to appeal results.

If a learner has a query about the result of an assessment, the tutor explains how the assessment was marked and graded. If the learner is still not satisfied at this point, they can formally appeal the results approved by the RAP within 14 days using the Assessment Appeal Form. The appeals procedure may involve a recheck of learner evidence and result and/or a review of the assessment process.

## Supports for Learners (Core Guideline 7)

### Policy Statement

RACE is committed to creating quality learning experience that supports learners in achieving the learning outcomes, reaching their potential and enjoy the learning journey. We monitor the support and resources available to learners on an ongoing basis and update and expand them as necessary to reflect up-to-date approaches and learner needs as identified through feedback on teaching and learning. We make information about the supports we have in place available to learners in the learner handbook, on our website and [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) and they are discussed and explained at learner induction. Details of supports and resources for each programme are detailed in the respective programme descriptor and are submitted to QQI as part our validation applications. We operate an open-door policy and encourage learners to approach any member of the programme team for support or advice at any time.

### Responsibility

- The education coordinator is responsible for coordinating the various learner supports and monitors the adequacy and effectiveness of supports and reports on them to the PD & QM.
- Tutors are the main source of information for learners and monitors the supports and resources while delivering and bring any issues to the attention of the education coordinator.
- All members of our programme teams have responsibilities, directly or indirectly, in supporting learners.

### Learner Feedback

RACE ensures that regular feedback is canvassed from learners and analysed and acted on for direct improvements for learners and general programme improvement. During learner induction they are informed of how to give and receive feedback, including the mid and end of course feedback forms and the option for giving feedback directly to the education coordinator. Feedback is requested on a variety of areas including content, delivery, facilities (on site or online) and the adequacy of support available.

The education coordinator reviews mid and end of course feedback forms and follows up on any aspect that requires immediate follow up. Follow-up takes place promptly and options include further discussions with learners, discussions with tutor, discussion with PD & QM where formal follow up might be required. From time to time, the PD & QM organises focus group meetings of learners to gather specific or more detailed feedback than might be presented on a feedback form.

Where appropriate the education coordinator will communicate any changes that resulted from feedback received back to the learner(s). Following the marking of assignments or completion of assessments the tutor gives written feedback to learners regarding strengths or weaknesses noted.

### Learner Supports

#### The Learner Handbook and Induction

The education coordinator makes the learner handbook available to learners on the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) in advance of induction and emails them to direct them towards it. The main points from the handbook are then highlighted and discusses at induction. She emphasises the importance of the information contained in the learner handbook and the need for learners to be familiar with it. The education coordinator updates the handbook annually with input from users.



The education coordinator inducts the learners at the beginning of each programme using our [Standard Induction Presentation](#).

Our tutors meet the learners on a one-to-one basis during delivery to discuss progress and offer advice and guidance. The tutor records details on our Tutor / Learner Meeting Records and add details to the learner record. Our administrative support staff support learners at all stages of the learning journey and are available to answer queries and resolve any issues that arise. The education coordinator advises learners on the transfer and progression routes available to them. We also advise learners on employment opportunities open to them in the industry.

We have an instalment payment plan in place for applicants who need it (offered in cases of financial hardship only). We make available and encourage learners to use our on-site computer training room to carry out research or other work directed by the tutor. They also have access to a range of subject relevant library materials. Learners can benefit from assistance with regard to document layout, formatting, editing.

### Class Representatives

At induction, the education coordinator outlines the role and benefits of having a class rep and invites the group to nominate a member of the class to act as class rep. The tutor is available to the class rep throughout the programme to discuss any issues raised by the rep. If a tutor considers any matter raised to be serious, she brings it to the attention of the education coordinator asap. The education coordinator reviews issues raised by Class Reps as part of ongoing monitoring.

#### Class Representative Role

- To represent the views of learners and raise any issues that might impact on the class's learning experience.
- Maintain contact/meet with the tutor to highlight/discuss issues that arise during the programme.

### Additional Supports for Learners on Blended Learning Programmes

- Tutors are available for scheduled periods in the virtual classroom if individual learners have any queries and/or need one-to-one support. These support sessions are timetabled into the programme.
- Training sessions delivered via live webinar are recorded and made available to learners at the tutors discretion
- We describe in detail how the virtual classrom and the blended learning elements work at induction and we make a FAQs available to learners on blended learning programmes.
- The education coordinator who supports the delivery of a blended learning programme is familiar with the blended learning model of delivery, the use of Zoom for virtual classroom and is able to anticipate the likely concerns of learners and respond to learners queries.

### Protection for Enrolled Learners

Learners enrolled with RACE are protected by PEL arrangements from the time that fees are paid, in part or in whole, for enrolment on a programme of education and training of 3 months duration or longer, until they have received certification for the learning achieved or until they have been legitimately excluded from the programme. RACE provides protection to learners by means of policies of insurance underwritten by Aviva Insurance Ireland DAC which satisfies the requirements of Section

65 (4)(b) of the 2012 Act. At a minimum, this policy provides for the return of the fees mostly recently paid.

### **Facilitating Diversity**

Reference: *Teaching and Learning; Making learning accessible for Learners with disabilities in further education. Ahead Educational Press 2011*

It is our policy to ensure that no learner, applicant, or staff member is treated less favourably than others. We accommodate all learners who apply to us to the best of our ability including those who need additional support as long as the requests are reasonable and practicable, and the applicants meets the minimum entry requirements. We have a documented procedure (Procedures Manual) for the provision of reasonable accommodation. We ask learners when they apply to let us know if they need any assistance, e.g., reading, writing, fluency in English language, computer literacy (question on our application form). We ask our tutors to bring any concern to the attention of the education coordinator. We encourage learners to request additional supports at any time during the programme if they need them.

This list of supports we can make available to learners is not exhaustive, and we assure applicants that we do our best to accommodate their specific support need.

- Learners whose first language is not English can be given additional time to complete exams and/or can give responses to exam questions in a bullet format.
- Physical modifications to the training location e.g., seating arrangements etc.
- Learning materials provided in accessible format.
- Additional time allocated to complete assessments.
- Support from a scribe or a reader to complete examinations/assessments

### **Learner Complaints**

We let learners know about our complaints procedure (Procedures Manual) and how and when they can make a complaint at induction and in the learner handbook. We treat all complaints seriously and make it as easy as possible for learners to let us know if they are not satisfied with any aspect of the programme or the supports. We urge them to bring any concerns to our attention at the earliest possible opportunity, beginning with their tutor (unless the complaint is about the tutor). The education coordinator deals with feedback and complaints and tries to resolve issues in a fair, timely and constructive manner, immediately and informally if possible. The education coordinator brings the complaint to the attention of the PD & QM if it is outside their area of responsibility or if they considers it to be serious or if there is risk (e.g., a safeguarding concern)

The education coordinator logs details of complaints on our *Complaints Register* and retains records of correspondence if she categorised the complaint as serious.

## **Information and Data Management (Core Guideline 8)**

### **Policy Statement**

We regard data generated and held by RACE as a key asset that we must manage effectively in order to ensure that the organisation functions to a high standard. Reliable information and verifiable data are critical for informed decision-making and to help us identify what is working well and what needs attention. Staff and contractors who are responsible for data collection, storage, security, maintenance, dissemination, and data quality must do so in a systematic, planned, and secure way. Maintaining the quality of this data is crucial so that internal and external decision-makers have confidence and trust in the decisions they make.

### **Principles which guide RACE Data and Information Management**

- Every data source has a defined owner who has overall responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and security of that data.
- We collect data for specific purposes only.
- Data is recorded as accurately and completely as possible, by the most informed source, as close as possible to the point of creation, at the earliest opportunity.
- We record and manage data in an auditable and traceable manner.
- We protect data from unauthorised access and modification.
- We do not duplicate data unless duplication is essential. In such cases, one source must be clearly identified as the owner.

### **Definitions**

- Data – a general term meaning facts, numbers, letters, and symbols collected by various means and processed to produce information. Data may include personal or sensitive personal elements and needs to be managed in accordance with current data protection legislation and regulation.
- Data management – the management of administrative data i.e., data which is required for the operation of RACE.
- Data quality – the accuracy, completeness, validity, and currency of data.
- Information – data that have been processed into a meaningful form.
- Users – staff who use administrative data as part of their day-to-day work.

### **Responsibility**

- The Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for information and data and ensuring the safeguarding and proper use of data in line with data protection legislation, the requirements of our awarding bodies and best practice guidelines.
- The senior management team has delegated responsibility for the management, maintenance and security of data and information.
- The Academic Committee is responsible for the oversight of the data which relates specifically to training provision.
- The director is responsible for RACE's data protection policy and acts as the Data Protection Officer.
- The PD & QM is responsible for ensuring that the information and data presented to governance units is robust, verifiable, comprehensive, and timely.

## Information Provided to Governance Units

The PD & QM presents a report at each meeting of the Academic Committee which includes data/KPIs on retention, progression, programme & module pass rates, completion, and award classification. This data is also used by programme teams when reviewing programmes.

### Key Performance Indicators KPI's

We define a key performance indicator (KPI) *as a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively we are achieving our objectives*. All the data collected during monitoring and review provides important information about the success of our training provision, areas requiring improvement and opportunities for further developments. The PD & QM monitors the following KPIs and reports on them to the Senior Management Team and the Academic Committee:

- Number of applications received
- Number of programme iterations
- Number of RPL applications
- Learner attrition or drop-out rates/completion rates (face-to-face and blended)
- Attendance rates
- Progression rates
- Assessment results compared to national standards
- Assessment results on blended learning programmes compared to face-to-face programmes/national standards
- Graduation/certification rates
- % tutor turnover
- Number of requests for training from members of programme teams
- Number of CPD events – internal and external
- Number of incidents of poor performance
- Learner rating of tutor and staff performance
- Tutor and learner ratings of the standards of programme resources and learner supports
- Tutor and learner rating of our infrastructure to support blended learning
- Numbers of 'non-standard' applications/registrations
- Number of applications for reasonable accommodation for assessment/ number granted
- Number and level of seriousness of complaints
- Risk Rating
- Number of accidents/incidents

**Table 2: Schedule of Reports Presented to Governance**

Report Title	To/From	Frequency	Presented by
Programme Reports	To Academic Committee	Annually	PD & QM
Risk Register	To Academic Committee	At each meeting	PD & QM
Self-Evaluation Reports/Programmatic Reviews	To Academic Committee	Every 5 years	Self-Evaluation Coordinator
New Programme Proposals	To Academic Committee	As required	Programme Lead

Applications for Validation/Validation Manuals	To Academic Committee	As they arise and prior to submission to awarding body	Programme Team
Results Approval Panel (RAP) reports	To Senior management team, Academic Committee and BOD	Following each RAP meeting	PD & QM to Academic Committee and Senior management team/ Director to BOD
External monitoring reports and implementation / action plans arising	To Academic Committee and BOD	As they arise	PD & QM
External Authentication reports	To Results Approval Panel (RAP)	Each certification period	Education coordinator
Internal Verification reports	To Results Approval Panel (RAP)	Each certification period	Education coordinator
Academic Committee Reports	To Senior management team and the BOD	Following each meeting	Chair
Monthly Management Accounts	Finance, Audit & Risk Committee	Quarterly	Financial Controller

**Table 3: Schedule of Reports Published on RACE Website**

Report Title	Published Where	Frequency	Approved by
Programme/Quality Reports	Website	As they arise	PD & QM
QQI Panel reports	Website	As they arise	PD & QM
External Monitoring reports	Website	As they arise	PD & QM

### **RACE's Learner Record System (LRS)**

#### Definition - Learner Record

A learner record encompasses all records, files, documents, and other materials that are directly related to a learner. Documents included in the learner record include:

- Personal data/ PPSN
- Assessment results
- Attendance records
- Disciplinary records (academic misconduct)
- Records of certification
- Record of reasonable accommodation provided
- Assignments

We set out clearly how we secure personal data and why we are collecting it on our application and registration forms and data captured from our application forms, certification records and attendance records is stored on our **learner record system (LRS)**. We maintain learner records and statistics securely on a password-protected computer drive with access limited to the PD & QM and the education coordinator. This drive hosts all assessment documentation and materials, learner work, assessment results and records, assessment events (examinations and skills demonstrations), learner enrolments, retention, completion, and progression.

We retain hardcopy data for the period of registration of the individual learner.

### **Data Protection**

All personal data generated by RACE is covered by the RACE Data Protection Policy and Procedures

The education coordinator is responsible for safeguarding and securing personal or sensitive information relating to learners and/or tutors. Personal data including assessment materials, recorded either manually and electronically, is stored safely and treated as confidential. This data is processed for specified purposes and on the basis of the consent of the data subject or some other legitimate basis. We securely destroy learner evidence in line with our data destruction and retention schedule. This data includes PPS numbers, sensitive data submitted to support applications for reasonable accommodation and assessment evidence.

Use of the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN Number)

As a unique identifier for individuals, the PPSN is a valuable piece of personal information which we safeguard against misappropriation or misuse. We uphold data protection principles with regard to the PPSN and take all reasonable security steps with regard to the storage and handling of the PPSN and associated data. We do not disclose a person's PPSN to anyone, unless we are satisfied that the person making the enquiry is entitled to that information. Use of the PPSN is confined to staff members who need to use it when inputting learner data on the QQI QBS (the PPSN is used by QQI to uniquely identify individual learners). All staff and trainers who have access to PPSNs through their work, must treat the number confidentially and securely. We understand that it is an offence for any person or body to request or hold a record of a PPSN unless they are permitted by law to do so.

Securing Assessment Evidence

We retain one full set of assessment evidence and associated documentation from one certification period to the next. We dispose of assessment evidence in a secure and timely manner and according to the schedule set out in our data protection policy and after the assigned retention time has expired. We let learners know how long we retain assessment evidence for, who has access to it and for what purpose, and how it is destroyed.

Submission of Data to QQI

We use the QQI Quality Business System (QBS) to request certification and to access other QQI systems, e.g., validation and Q-help. Access to the login to the QBS through a password-protected link is limited to the PD & QM and the education coordinator. All certification data is double-checked for accuracy by the PD & QM and the education coordinator before it is submitted to QQI.

## **Public Information and Communication (Core Guideline 9)**

### **Definition**

Public information refers to the information that we communicate and publish about our programmes, supports and quality assurance.

### **Scope**

All public information related to programmes, QA policies and procedures and quality assurance evaluation reports that have been approved.

### **Policy Statement**

RACE is committed to operating in an open and transparent manner and endeavours to provide timely, accurate, relevant, and easily accessible information about our aims, values, activities and programmes to stakeholders. Our internal and external stakeholders include tutors and staff, governance units, the equine industry, QQI, current and prospective learners and anyone who is interested in what we do. We ensure that clear and accurate information, approved prior to publication, is published about our programmes and courses on our website and in brochures including details of admission requirements, qualification titles and levels, programme content and assessment requirements and regulations. We also have systems in place to facilitate ongoing two-way communications with our stakeholders to get their views, input, and feedback. RACE policies that form part of the QA system are made publicly available on our website.

### **Responsibility**

The PD & QM is responsible for the quality of for the information contained in programme brochures and reports and published on the RACE website. The education coordinator is responsible for maintaining relevant up to date information on the RACE [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) for current learners. The PD & QM must approve all new programme information before it is uploaded to the Learning Management System (LMS).

### **Public Information**

#### Website

<http://racingacademy.ie/>

Our website is the primary vehicle for providing information about our programmes and services and QASs that underpins our provision to potential applicants and other interested stakeholders. Visitors to the website can access details of our programmes and services, career progression and be guided through the steps to apply to a programme, with appropriate direction to support and guidance from staff, as necessary.

#### Social Media

We disseminate information and updates about our programmes and services primarily through our Facebook page, but also via Instagram and Twitter. Typically, information disseminated through social media channels, links or refers back to the relevant section of the RACE website for full information.

#### Participation in Career Events, Conferences, and Industry Events

RACE have a presence at a variety of career and industry events through the year, which change from year to year. For any event where the profile of attendees fits the learner profile for a RACE

programme, programme information is made available via brochures and questions are answered by RACE staff member present. Where possible or practical, current learners might be in attendance with RACE staff to answer questions on the programme.

### Information for Applicants

We provide applicants/ potential learners with enough information to make an informed choice about applying for a place at RACE. We publish programme information on our **website** and in **programme brochures**. The programme information is reviewed and updated by the PD & QM who checks for honesty, transparency and facilitate comparison.

We publish programme information under the following headings:

- Programme and Award Title and Code
- Accrediting/awarding Body
- Level of the award on NFQ, and associated credits
- Programme content
- Programme duration
- Programme fee and any other applicable fees
- Details of Protection of Enrolled Learner arrangements (if applicable)
- Learner profile
- Application process and learner entry requirements
- Teaching, learning and assessment procedures
- Access, transfer, and progression arrangements

We check to confirm that we comply with the spirit and the requirements of the 2012 Act in relation to the information we publish.

### Information for Learners

We make clear and accurate programme and award information available to prospective and current learners at time of recruitment and application. Under the terms of the 2012 Education and Training Act all learners must be provided with information on:

- Awards
- Access, Transfer & Progression Options
- Protection for Enrolled Learners

The tutor is the primary and first point of contact for the learners and is ensuring that the learners are fully informed at all stages of the programme and in particularly in relation to assessment. The education coordinator also makes information available to learners on the RACE [Learning Management System](#) (LMS).

Learners are responsible for:

- Using the various communications media to enhance and support their learning experience.
- Responding to communications from their tutor and other members of the programme team in a timely manner.
- Actively engaging with and acting on the feedback provided by tutors.
- Letting us know about any concerns or issues that may be affecting their ability to learn.



## **Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports**

We publish key findings from QA evaluation reports in an easily accessible format and location on the Quality Assurance page of our website as soon as practicable after the evaluation event and in line with awarding body requirements.

We publish;

- Our QA Manual
- Self-Evaluation Reports
- Monitoring/Panel Reports

## Information Related to QQI

The education coordinator acts as the main point of contact with QQI and is responsible for the timely distribution of communications from QQI to other members of the programme team and members of governance units. She checks the information relating to RACE and our programmes on **QQI register of providers** and the **database of awards and programmes** annually and alert QQI to any amendments/updates which need to be made.

## **Graduate Destinations Surveys (Planned for Q3 2021).**

We invite graduates to participate in a survey six months following completion of a programme with us. The purpose of these surveys is:

- To maintain communication and develop our relationship with our graduates
- To evaluate the impact of RACE programmes on graduates' careers
- To remain up to date with developments in the thoroughbred sector and challenges faced by people employed or seeking employment in the sector
- To identify additional training needs of graduates
- To assess the continued relevance of our programmes in the workplace
- To monitor progression routes of graduates, with regard to career and educational progression
- To inform graduates of opportunities for further study
- To inform our quality assurance review processes including revalidation and programme planning

We collate the findings from these surveys and present them in report format which we make available to the Academic Committee.

## Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review (Core Guideline 11)

### Policy Statement

RACE is committed to a process of continuous quality improvement through regular monitoring and evaluation of programmes and supports which captures learning; identifies good practice and informs the future design and delivery of programmes and services. These processes are a fundamental element of our QAS. We work hard at an organisational level to ensure that quality standards are maintained and enhanced and that our programmes and processes are relevant, fit-for-purpose and up to date. Monitoring is a continuous process that has both formal and informal elements and involves ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that RACE has the structure in place to review the quality of all aspects of programmes.

### Responsibility

- The Academic Committee maintains oversight of all self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes and review and approves reports.
- The senior management team ensures that the resources are in place and that there is organisational commitment to the processes.
- The PD & QM is responsible for managing self-evaluation, monitoring, and review processes.
- The education coordinator is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of programmes quality and tutor performance on a day-to-day basis.

**Table 4: Ongoing Monitoring Activities**

Evaluation Method	Who is monitoring?	Frequency	Where do we get the data?
Analysis of learner feedback. Feedback from Class Rep	Education coordinator	Following each programme	Post-programme learner evaluation forms
Analysis of tutor feedback forms	Education coordinator	Following each programme	Tutor Evaluation Form
Analysis of recorded complaints	PD & QM	Quarterly	Complaints Register
Review any changes to documented risks. Add details of new risks identified	Director	Quarterly	Risk Register
Analysis of tutor performance/learner issues	PD & QM	Following each programme	Tutor/Learners Meeting record
Learner Attendance	Education coordinator	Ongoing during programme	Attendance Records

Learners drop-out/early exit data	Education coordinator	As required	Attendance Records
Adequacy of facilities and resources	Education coordinator /Maintenance Staff	Annually	Learner & tutor feedback
Adequacy of IT infrastructure and resources	PD & QM with IT function and eLearning advisor if required	Biannual	Learner & tutor feedback
Monitoring of tutor performance	PD & QM	Ongoing	Learner feedback/complaints/assessment results/learner attendance. Informal communication with learners/IV and external authenticator reports
Learner enrolments, retention, completion, and progression statistics	Education coordinator	Quarterly	Learner records

### **Programme Monitoring and Review**

We review programmes following completion and implement recommendations for improvements for the next programme delivery.

The education coordinator maintains records of learner participation and achievement including attendance records, progress through the programme, and records of certification and learner usage of the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS).

The education coordinator analyses quantitative and qualitative feedback gleaned from learners and tutors at midway and end points of programmes. For blended learning, the feedback is collected via the LMS. Learners are also encouraged to provide casual feedback at any stage of programme delivery.

All feedback is considered at programme team meeting to include a review of learner attendance, grades, feedback (including learning environment), usage and effectiveness of the LMS, tutor feedback, tutor observation where necessary, IV comments, external authenticator comments, RAP comments and the resources required for the programme.

Programme reports are compiled by the education coordinator and presented to the Academic Committee for comment and feedback.

#### Amendments to Programme Content or Assessment Strategies

Minor changes agreed by the programme team are made following reviews and significant changes, following revalidation if applicable, after self-evaluations.

## Self-Evaluation

We use the [FESS Self-Evaluation Resource](#) as a guide when evaluating programmes.

The PD & QM manages our self-evaluations and is supported by the education coordinator who coordinates the process and provides administrative support.

As a fundamental part of our QAS, we carry out an extensive self-evaluation/programmatic reviews with the input of an external evaluator every five years. We group related programmes for the purposes of evaluation and follow the steps documented in our Self-Evaluation procedure (Procedures Manual).

The aims of self-evaluation are to assess:

- The effectiveness of programmes in meeting stated aims and also on the
- The success of the learners in achieving the MIPLOs.
- The effectiveness of the QAS

Each evaluation:

- Engages all stakeholders
- Uses verifiable data collect from a wide range of sources (data from our on-going monitoring processes is fundamental to the self-evaluation)
- Makes recommendations for improvement
- Ensures sharing of lessons learned
- Confirms if programmes are meeting learner and employer needs
- Confirms if programmes are complying with the requirements of QQI (or other awarding body) if applicable
- Contribute to the enhancement of a quality culture in RACE
- Agrees actions address identified gaps/ weaknesses in our QAS

### Stakeholder Involvement in Self-Evaluation

We invite current and past learners, and early leavers if possible, and tutors to contribute to the evaluation and to give their views through a combination of one-to-one and focus group meetings and feedback forms. The external evaluator also liaises with learners and tutors. We also get the views of employers and other stakeholders who are impacted by the quality of our programmes. We invite the external members of the Academic Committee to contribute to the self-evaluation process. Other stakeholders may include Horse Racing Ireland, Education Training Boards, and Irish Racehorse Trainers Association.

### Involvement of an External Evaluator

RACE contracts an external evaluator to provide external input and guidance with our self-evaluations. The PD & QM, with the approval of the Academic Committee, sources an external evaluator and obtains CVs, details of professional qualifications and relevant experience which confirms the suitability of the appointment. We regard the selection of a suitable evaluator who matches our selection criteria and is competent to make a positive contribution to the process as being key to the success of the self-evaluation exercise. Following approval, the PD & QM set out the details of the arrangements in a contract which is signed by both the PD & QM and the external evaluator.

### Selection Criteria for External Evaluator

- Independent of RACE and the programme.
- Able to provide objective feedback.
- Have broad subject matter expertise and a recognised qualification.
- Capable of comparing the quality of programme(s) being evaluated with that of similar programmes.
- Able to contribute to the development and enhancement of the programme(s) being evaluated.

### Outputs of the Process

1. Evaluation Report
2. Programme Improvement Plan
3. Updates to the QAS
4. Revised programme content and documentation

The PD & QM produces an evaluation report/improvement plan which prioritise areas for development and improvement and presents it to both the Academic Committee and the senior management team for consideration. The implementation of the approved changes/recommendations is monitored and reported on by the PD & QM. Copies of reports are submitted to QQI via the QBS in the format prescribed by QQI and published on the Quality Assurance page of our website.