


NSETS PROFESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT

Criteria and procedures for the:
**Professional Endorsement of
Higher Education Programmes
of Study in Youth Work**

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WHO ARE WE?

- The North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETS) was established on a cross-border basis in 2006 by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and the Youth Affairs Unit of the Department of Education and Science (now the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth).
- NSETS is responsible for the professional endorsement of youth work programmes on the island of Ireland.

WHAT DO WE DO?

- NSETS works to ensure and promote quality standards in the education and training of youth workers through an endorsement process based on a rigorous assessment of all aspects of programme content and delivery.
- NSETS professional endorsement represents a formal recognition by the youth work sector that programmes of study in youth work have met prescribed criteria and are fit-for-purpose.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Institutions submit an application for professional endorsement to NSETS based on set criteria and a panel of sectoral experts (which includes academics and educators, managers, practitioners and other stakeholders) considers its content.
- The panel visits the institution and conducts a series of interviews with the management, programme developers, tutors, students, practice teachers and other stakeholders to determine if the programme and infrastructure supporting it meet the NSETS standards for professional formation. Additional documentary and observational data may also be collected.
- Endorsement may be conditional on specified improvements or amendments to programmes.
- Endorsed programmes are subject to annual monitoring and to a new endorsement exercise every five years.

FOREWORD

This is the third edition of the **Criteria and Procedures** of NSETS, the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work.

The establishment of NSETS as a policy initiative of government departments north and south, and its joint ministerial launch in January 2006, was in recognition of the shared history and traditions of youth work throughout the island of Ireland and the common objective of ensuring and improving quality standards and fitness-for-purpose of education and training for youth workers. There was also a shared commitment to partnership and inclusivity, which is why the structure of NSETS includes representation of all the key stakeholder constituencies within the youth work sector. From the outset NSETS has collaborated with its counterpart ETS committees in England, Scotland and Wales, thereby ensuring mutual recognition of qualifications, workforce mobility for graduate practitioners and the sharing of learning and good practice in relation to training, education and related workforce matters.

At the time of writing, all the third-level professional youth work programmes on the island of Ireland have been submitted to NSETS for endorsement. As endorsement is for a five year period and the monitoring of programmes takes place during each cycle of endorsement, the work of NSETS is dynamic and demanding and it could not be sustained without the support of its secretariat. Previously hosted by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland with funding from the Department of Education (NI), which we gratefully acknowledge, since 2018 funding has been provided by the (now) Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, which awarded the tender to host the secretariat to the National Youth Council of Ireland. We are very grateful to both DCEDIY and NYCI and in particular we would like to thank

the Development Officer, Olive Ring, for her very efficient and utterly indispensable support for the work of the Committee.

The preparation of this revised edition of the NSETS **Criteria and Procedures** has involved an extensive process of consultation and engagement with stakeholders. We would like to thank all those youth work organisations, practitioners, educators and students who took part in the consultation events in Belfast, Cork and Maynooth, and the young people who participated in the focus groups, as well as all those who responded to the online consultative survey. We are grateful for the input of the Youth Work Educators' Forum and we acknowledge the spirit of mutual learning and constructive engagement with which the higher education institutions continue to participate in the endorsement process.

Finally, we thank the other members of NSETS for their contributions to the review of the **Criteria and Procedures** and for their ongoing valuable work on the Committee.

We write at a time when youth work north and south, like all of society, has had to deal with the unprecedented challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic for more than two years. But the outstanding response of youth work and youth workers during the crisis, in support of young people, has won widespread recognition and praise. This may result in enhanced opportunities for the sector in what we hope will be better times ahead. We look forward to working with our colleagues and with the two government departments to ensure that the contribution of NSETS, in response to both challenges and opportunities, is as effective as it can be.

Anne Marie McClure and Maurice Devlin
Joint Chairs, NSETS

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SECTION

1

Introduction
to NSETS

THE NORTH/SOUTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH WORK (NSETS) IN CONTEXT

Introduction

The North/South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETS) is responsible for the professional endorsement of youth work programmes on the island of Ireland. Wales and England have their own education and training standards committees (commonly referred to as ETS Committees) and their own, separate, criteria for professional endorsement/validation. Scotland has a separate but similar process for the approval of higher education programmes which is carried out by the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council.

Unlike other ETS Committees across the UK, NSETS is unique in that its remit spans two political jurisdictions - Northern Ireland and Ireland. This dynamic poses a number of challenges but more importantly creates numerous opportunities and benefits due to the synergy created from the collaborative approach taken to address issues of mutual concern.

The NSETS Committee consists of 16 nominated members, 8 members to represent each jurisdiction, appointed in accordance with agreed procedures North and South. Each jurisdiction nominates a joint Chairperson. In NI, the Co-Chair will be a public appointee of the Youth Council of Northern Ireland¹ and normally the nominated Chair of its Youth Work Training Board. In RoI the Co-Chair will be nominated by southern members and approved by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Specifically, NSETS is responsible for:

- the design and application of the requirements for professional endorsement;
- scrutinising submissions for recognition and ensuring that programmes meet agreed standards;
- appointing and overseeing working groups to evaluate submissions for endorsement;
- ensuring that the practice of professional endorsement is implemented in accordance with agreed values and principles; and
- making recommendations for strategic developments arising out of observations and analysis of trends in endorsement activity.

It is important to distinguish between professional endorsement, as dealt with in this document, and academic validation. "Endorsement" in this context signifies that specific education programmes have met the minimum

standards and prescribed criteria as set out by the youth work sector through NSETS. This is not the same as academic validation which is carried out by the appropriate higher education institutions and authorities. In both Northern Ireland and Ireland legislation provides for an overarching framework for the validation of academic and vocational awards. The process of professional endorsement within individual professional sectors, including youth work, is separate from, but complementary to, these frameworks.

In conferring its endorsement on programmes of professional formation NSETS seeks to promote the highest standards of professional education and training. NSETS expects that graduate practitioners will be equipped with the essential philosophy, skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary in the contemporary world of youth work.

NSETS' ethos is collaborative and supportive and uses a developmental approach in its dealings with all programme providers.

NSETS and the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Work

The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) is a collective bargaining committee for employers and employees in youth and community work in the UK. The entitlement for employees to have a collective bargaining committee was established under Article 4 of the International Labour Act by the International Labour Organisation and took effect from 1951.

The JNC originated from recommendations in the Albemarle Committee review of the English Youth Service in 1960. It developed into its current form and structure following a major review in 1987 when it was renamed the JNC for Youth and Community Workers.

The formation of the JNC represented a landmark in the emergence of youth and community work as a profession. It combined a commitment to securing high quality provision of training and qualifications with a responsibility for negotiating salaries and terms and conditions of service related to those qualifications.

The JNC's first report in 1961 set out the various qualifications recognised as leading to the award of professionally qualified status and it is the JNC that still holds the ultimate responsibility for professional endorsement of programmes.

Initial scrutiny of courses lies internally with the academic institutions. From 1961 to 1982 the JNC both agreed the categories of qualification for recognition, and scrutinised the programmes offered by the various higher education institutions and other bodies providing awards.

1. The Youth Council NI has been non-operational from March 2019 when the term of office of the then Board members expired and in the absence of a Minister, new appointments could not be made. The New Decade, New Approach Strategy which accompanied the re-establishment of the NI Assembly, committed to a review of all arms-length bodies. YCNI remains non-operational pending a Ministerial decision on its future.

After 1982 the detailed scrutiny of awards on behalf of the JNC was transferred to the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW) and, in 1991, to the National Youth Agency (NYA) in England through a memorandum of understanding to establish an Education and Training Committee (ETS) on behalf of JNC. A similar arrangement was subsequently put in place in Wales.

In 2005, the JNC formally agreed to accept recommendations from NSETS on professionally endorsed qualifications in youth and community work. While the JNC does not operate in RoI, its recognition of NSETS endorsement decisions enhances the professional mobility of youth work graduates from all over the island. NSETS was launched in January 2006 by Angela Smith MP, Minister for Education for Northern Ireland and Síle de Valera TD, Minister of State for Youth Affairs in Ireland.

UK and Ireland Collaboration

The ETS committees from across the UK and Ireland come together as the Joint ETS (JETS). This is a forum to share information, discuss issues relating to professional endorsement and to agree protocols for working practices.

A protocol for the mutual recognition of qualifications has been agreed in which each ETS Committee recognises endorsements conferred on programmes of professional formation by the other ETS Committees across the UK and Ireland.

Where a HEI offering a professional youth work programme operates across more than one jurisdiction, the ETS from each jurisdiction is involved in the endorsement process (a 'joint endorsement'). Where a HEI expands an existing endorsed programme into another jurisdiction, a new application for endorsement is made to the relevant ETS. For further information on Joint ETS please see www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/#JETS

NSETS and the Policy Context

NSETS takes account, as appropriate, of all policy and legislation relevant to youth work and to education and training for youth work, in Ireland and the UK and at European and international levels. It expects to see these reflected, again as appropriate, in submissions from HEIs. Below are some relevant policies and legislation within NI and RoI. This list is not exhaustive and may be added to as policy evolves.

Northern Ireland

- 'Together: Building a United Community'
- ETI Inspection & Evaluation Framework (ISEF): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Youth

- Shared Education Act 2016 and Sharing Works Policy
- The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- Children & Young People's Strategy 2019-29
- Education Authority Regional Assessment of Needs
- Regional Youth Development Plan 2020-23
- Programme for Government
- Priorities for Youth Policy
- Community Relations and Equality Policy & Sept 16 addendum

Ireland

- Youth Work Act 2001
- National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) for Youth Work, 2010
- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011; Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020
- National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020
- National Youth Strategy 2015-2020
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- Education and Training Boards Act 2013
- Youth Justice Strategy 2020-2026
- LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020
- **Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021 – 2025**

UK Exit from the EU

The departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 31 January 2020 means that higher education institutions and students in NI and RoI are differently placed with regard to participation in European educational exchange and research programmes such as Erasmus + and Horizon Europe. However, NSETS was established independently of any European Union directives or programmes, including directives relating to professional recognition of qualifications, and therefore its core work of professional endorsement and quality assurance of youth work education and training is unaffected by the UK exit, as is its mutual recognition protocol with the other members of the Joint ETS Forum.

European Context

Policy relating to young people and youth work at European level has expanded and deepened significantly in the years since NSETS was established.

Within the European Union, the EU Youth Strategy provides the framework for youth policy cooperation for the period 2019-27. It focuses on three main areas of action, built on three key words and themes: Engage, Connect, Empower. Emphasis is placed on the contribution of youth work as a 'catalyst for empowerment' and among other things the Strategy invites Member States and the European Commission to 'support quality youth work development at local, regional, national and European level, training for youth workers, the establishment of legal frameworks and sufficient allocation of resources'. The EU Youth Dialogue and working towards the EU Youth Goals (identified through consultation with young people) are also key elements of the Strategy. See: europa.eu/youth/strategy_en

In 2019, the Council of the European Union, in considering the education and training of youth workers, concluded that: 'High-quality, flexible and practice-oriented education and training for youth workers, supported by regular research, is a crucial precondition and a driver for promoting both the quality and the recognition of youth work'. See: data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13595-2019-REV-1/en/pdf

Separately from the EU, the Council of Europe continues the work of promoting democracy, human rights and cultural cooperation for which it was established in 1949. Both Ireland and the UK remain members of the Council of Europe. Since the 1970s it has taken a leading role in supporting youth work training at a European level, particularly through its European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest. In 2020 the Council of Europe launched its Youth Sector Strategy 2030: Engaging Young People with the Council of Europe's Values. It sets out four thematic priorities:

- Revitalising pluralistic democracy
- Access to rights
- Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies
- Youth Work

With regard to youth work, the Strategy states:

This priority covers the Council of Europe youth sector's action to strengthen youth work development, the quality and recognition of youth work (in the member States and at European level) and European co-operation on furthering youth work development through partnerships, such as the one with the European Commission. This priority further includes the promotion of specific non-formal education/learning approaches in the service of Council of Europe values, especially human rights education, education for democratic citizenship, digital citizenship education and intercultural education.

Information about the Council of Europe's Youth Sector Strategy 2030 is available at: rm.coe.int/background-document-youth-sector-strategy-2030-english/1680a0bb33

International

In 1989, governments worldwide promised all children the same rights by adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These rights are based on what a child needs to survive, grow, participate and fulfil their potential. They apply equally to every child regardless of who they are or where they are from. Human rights are founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth or ability and therefore apply to every human being everywhere.

The Convention recognises the human rights of children, defined as all persons under the age of 18. It is the only international human rights treaty which includes civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It sets out in detail what every child needs to have for a safe, happy and fulfilled childhood. The UNCRC is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history.

It enshrines specific child rights in international law, defining universal principles and standards for the status and treatment of children worldwide.

The guiding principles of the Convention are:

- all children should be entitled to basic rights without discrimination;
- the best interests of the child should be the primary concern of decision-making;
- children have the right to life, survival and development;
- the views of children must be taken into account in matters affecting them.

In 2018 the current United Nations Youth Strategy was adopted. Youth 2030: Working for and with Young People aims to 'facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional and country-level action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity around the world, and to ensure their engagement and participation in the implementation, review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as other relevant global agendas and frameworks'. The first progress report on the UN Youth Strategy was published in 2021. All documentation is available at: www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/

National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (NOS)

Representatives of the youth work sectors across Britain and Northern Ireland collaborated with the Learning Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) to agree a suite of updated National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (NOS) in 2012 and updated it in 2019. While NOS have no official status in Ireland they are compatible with current youth work policy and practice throughout the island and have been taken into account in the preparation of these criteria and procedures.

NOS seek to capture and define the skills, knowledge and competences used within a work sector and form an agreed set of aspects, units and elements that are used to describe the quintessential characteristics of youth work. These characteristics are subdivided into a number of domains which outline the knowledge, skills and competences that effective practitioners should possess. At the core, and underpinning the Standards, are values which distinguish youth work from other, sometimes related, professions involving young people. These values need to be placed within the local, social and political context within which youth work activities are undertaken, and of which youth workers will need to be aware. They also illustrate how youth work is involved in the holistic development of young people.

Within the National Occupational Standards the nature and purpose of youth work is illustrated by a functional map. The values imply that the youth worker will demonstrate a clear understanding of equality and diversity and the importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice. It follows that the educational programmes created by youth workers will reflect such an understanding and commitment, as will programmes designed for the professional formation, education and training of youth workers.

For more information on NOS please see NYA website nya.org.uk/resource/national-occupational-standards/

NSETS cautions against seeing NOS as a series of discrete entities devoid of values or a sense of mission and professional identity. Youth workers, in discharging their responsibilities, engage first and foremost as educators with a sense of moral purpose and responsibility. It is the interaction between mission, ethical understanding, and professional knowledge in which the essence of good youth work practice is to be found. Youth work cannot and should never be reduced to a set of discrete skills to be mastered in some mechanical process of assimilation. To adopt such a reductionist approach would be to deny the intellectual basis of youth work and the richness of the ongoing dialogue and learning that enhances professional practice.

Subject Benchmarks

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK) published a Subject Benchmark Statement for Youth and Community Work in 2009 and updated it in 2019. Subject

benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should have demonstrated.

The youth work benchmark statement describes the subject knowledge and understanding that are essential for professional formation programmes for youth work. They should demonstrably inform the design of all programmes for which professional endorsement is sought from NSETS.

Subject benchmark statements provide support to HEI's in pursuit of internal quality assurance. They enable the learning outcomes specified for a particular programme to be reviewed and evaluated against agreed general expectations about standards. Subject benchmark statements allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design and can stimulate academic discussion and debate upon the content of new and existing programmes within an agreed overall framework. Their use in supporting programme design, delivery and review within HEI's is supportive of moves towards an emphasis on institutional responsibility for standards and quality. NSETS will expect to see evidence that the Subject Benchmark Statement for Youth and Community Work has been used to inform the design of all programmes in conjunction with the NOS for youth work.

For more information please see: www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-youth-and-community-work.pdf?sfvrsn=5e35c881_4

The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

Youth Work as Non-Formal & Informal Education

Although the National Occupational Standards cited above provide a useful aid in understanding youth work they must be viewed in conjunction with relevant policy and curriculum documents that set out the context of youth work in the North and South of Ireland. The current curriculum framework for youth work (NI) defines Youth Work as follows:

“Youth work is distinctively educational and involves constructive interventions with young people in non-formal settings. As an educational activity it is at its most effective when it is planned and delivered with clear objectives, and informed through continuous monitoring, evaluation and critical reflection on the processes and practices employed.”

Along similar lines in RoI, the Youth Work Act 2001 and the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 define youth work in the following terms:

“... a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is –

- a. complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and
- b. provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations’.

Both of these definitions share several important features, either explicitly or implicitly: the fundamentally educational nature of youth work and its concern with the personal and social development of young people; the active and voluntary participation of young people in youth work programmes and processes; and the importance of planning and critical reflection.

The values underpinning youth work derive from a clear understanding of and commitment to ethical conduct, equity and the importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice. Situations are created so that young people can learn by interacting with their peers and others, by sharing a range of new experiences which extend, challenge and excite the individual, and lead to opportunities for reflection and action.

The worker’s task is, therefore, to plan and facilitate a variety of challenging, enjoyable and developmental experiences, to take advantage of those which arise spontaneously, and to foster learning by employing a range of interpersonal skills such as group work, advocacy, community development, counselling and individual support, and the promotion of active citizenship. Relevant themes and issues such as health, climate justice, environment, global issues, housing, employment, arts, multiculturalism/interculturalism, racial justice etc, are incorporated as appropriate.

It is clear from the above that the job of the youth worker requires a particular combination of knowledge, skills and personal qualities. As the National Youth Work Development Plan(RoI, 2003) put it:

‘Youth work is not just a vocation, although almost inevitably the people who do it have a particularly strong sense of personal commitment to the work and to the wellbeing of young people. It is a profession in the sense that all those who do it, both volunteer and paid, are required and obliged, in the interests of young people and of society as a whole, to carry out their work to the highest possible standards and to be accountable for their actions.’

This understanding of youth work and of the role and tasks of the youth worker underpin education and training programmes and hence of professional recognition and

programme endorsement.

The following key duties for professional youth workers are identified in the JNC report:

- Performing all the duties in the First and Second levels for Youth Support Workers;
- Managing and developing a range of services;
- Developing staff and facilities;
- Working with other agencies to develop services across the community;
- Leading project development and implementation;
- Management responsibility for staff.

NSETS will expect that all submissions for professional endorsement will build the necessary capacity to meet the requirements listed above.

NSETS Expectations of Professional Formation Programmes

The criteria and procedures for professional endorsement contained in this document have been developed in close collaboration with the sector. The endorsement framework allows for the participation of all the relevant interest groups at all stages of the process. It is intended to facilitate and encourage the development within the youth work sector of a sense of collective responsibility and accountability for best practice in the formation of professional youth workers (and ultimately in the delivery of youth work).

Work with young people takes place in a range of settings, and practitioners might equally be prepared for such work through a range of types of training. However, NSETS is unequivocal in its understanding of the nature of youth work, and while it recognises that some training and education may be aligned with specific policy delivery contexts, specialised approaches or philosophical contexts, it also expects that all endorsed programmes will faithfully reflect and uphold the core philosophy, principles and values that make youth work distinctive. It is therefore incumbent on all programmes that:

- The primary aim of the programme will be the professional formation of youth workers;
- This will be reflected in the programme title (with the explicit use of the term ‘youth work’);
- The programme is designed to enable all graduates to enter any generic youth work post;
- The assessment strategy and rubrics used throughout the programme will be designed to show that the application of learning is focused on the practice of youth work;
- Practice placements and supervision provide the necessary grounding in youth work practice.

Principles into Practice

The Learning Environment

NSETS will expect to see evidence that the learning environment in all institutions will reflect a concern with quality assurance and improvement and a commitment to principles of good practice in higher education. Both Ireland and the UK have quality frameworks for higher education and there are numerous helpful models and resources at European level (see for example the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, www.enqa.eu).

The Learning Process

Similarly, the learning process of programmes must fully reflect the ethics, values and principles underlying youth work and must recognise, incorporate and promote:

- Youth work as an educational process – its educational philosophy, its pedagogical approach and its place in the continuum of education and learning;
- The exploration of the youth worker as a professional – developing an activist identity;
- Models of practice which encourage positive action leading to greater equality and social justice including a global youth work focus;
- Theory and practice as inseparable components in the development of reflective practitioners;
- A range of models, styles and approaches for work with young people and adults;
- Learning as a lifelong developmental process of observation, listening, reflection, analysis and action;
- Conscious competence through reflective learning;
- The value of prior learning and experience;
- The active involvement of the participants at all stages in the learning process.

Minimum Requirements

All proposals for professional endorsement must demonstrate that the following major areas of work are central to the programme:

- youth work as an educational process;
- work with young people and communities;
- work with staff and other agencies;
- development of service provision; and
- administration and finance.

NSETS will expect to find substantial evidence within the programmes of significant, underlying conceptual and policy bases for reflective practice. Submissions must also demonstrate how students are introduced to a range of models of practice and enabled to develop confidence and competence in their application across different contexts and situations.

While contemporary definitions of youth work as a degree subject draw on a range of academic disciplines, the key academic foundations for youth work as an applied subject are to be found in education and social science. As espoused by the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement, programmes of study should encourage students to engage with fundamental questions about the meanings of education, community and development. They should include knowledge of the history and development of youth work, related political and policy developments, and the changing conditions of young people. Students should be able to question their own experience and conduct reasoned argument in the context of wider debates and of social scientific research. All programmes should draw on a range of intellectual resources and academic disciplines to familiarise students with the characteristic debates and terms of engagement of youth work. Other subjects which may inform youth work include history; cultural studies; philosophy; sociology; social policy; law; economics; psychology; sustainable development, health and social welfare.

Programmes will also include grounding in current key issues affecting young people's personal and social education, for example health, housing, employment, education and welfare and the international context of youth work.

NSETS will require submissions to demonstrate that their curricula are fully abreast of contemporary policy and practice initiatives and social developments and ensure that students possess the understanding and skill to translate these into programmes of personal and social education with young people.

Current relevant themes and priorities include the full range of measures and initiatives to engage young people in education, work and training; approaches to promote equity, diversity and interdependence; intercultural and global awareness and competence; political education; methods to facilitate the participation of young people and to encourage active citizenship. The capacity to plan and deliver curricula for personal and social education must constitute an integral part of the practice programme.

It is important that programmes should aid students to develop a strong sense of their own professional identity, enabling them to engage critically with a variety of policy contexts and with complex fields of accountability.

In particular, youth work programmes should equip students to:

- recognise the boundaries between personal and professional life;
- recognise the need to be accountable to young people, their parents and guardians, colleagues, funders and the wider society, and that these accountabilities may be in conflict;
- develop and maintain the required level of skills and competences to do the job;
- promote and develop recognition and understanding of the principles and purposes of youth work in the workplace, in agencies where the principles and purposes of youth work are recognised and explored.

The process of professional formation in youth work should, as far as possible, be congruent with the educational processes that practitioners are being trained to use in community settings, while recognising the formal and assessed nature of an honours degree. In particular, the professional commitment to reflective practice, professional autonomy and responsibility means that programmes leading to professional qualifications should be characterised by a rigorous attention to the development of reflexive practitioners, who are able to develop practice out of theorisation and to theorise their practice in a reflective practice cycle. The design of each programme leading to a professional qualification should offer a balanced approach to the practitioner's development in the following three areas:

- Professional knowledge and understanding,
- Professional skills and abilities,
- Professional values and personal commitment.

These three aspects of professionalism should be used as a basis for the development of portfolios of reflective practice. It must be emphasised that the aptitudes, attributes and personal qualities identified above do not form an exhaustive list – professionalism is a journey, not a destination. NSETS will be looking to institutions to ensure not only that applicants with the right personal qualities are admitted to the programme but also that they are then provided (through the student experience) with suitable opportunities to develop further towards the goal of professionalism.

Practice Placements

NSETS places a lot of emphasis on practice placements. Indeed, NSETS views the practice placement experience as the cornerstone of the professional formation process. Placements allow students to integrate what they have learned in classes and tutorials into their professional practice. Through continual reflection, students should move from a state of 'unconscious incompetence'², to 'conscious incompetence' and then to 'conscious competence' as

graduate practitioners. This can only be achieved however by the provision of high quality practice placement situations and properly trained and supported practice placement teachers. Students should expect to experience the day to day working routine of a professional practitioner while on placement. NSETS takes the view that this can be most effectively achieved when students match the working hours of their practice teacher. It follows also that practice placements should be sufficient in length to allow students to learn the 'craft' of youth work. Similarly, in order for a practice teacher to make an assessment that is both valid and reliable they must have an opportunity to observe the student over a sufficient period of time. NSETS expects that all institutions will have in place a process to ensure the quality of placement provision and mechanisms to deal swiftly with concerns voiced by students where this is not the case. NSETS will also expect to see details in placement handbooks of dedicated staff to whom students can refer throughout their placements.

In particular NSETS values the important role played by practice teachers. These individuals have a major role to play in the professional formation process and so it is incumbent on all institutions to ensure that they have the requisite qualifications, training and experience to support students. Given that approximately 40-50% of student time on professional formation courses in youth work is devoted to practice placements in which the practice teacher is required to mentor and assess the student, NSETS would encourage all institutions to accord practice teachers appropriate status and recognition as members of the staff team.

In its drive to ensure high quality student experiences NSETS will expect to see details of the recruitment and selection of placement practice teachers. NSETS understands that placement opportunities may be difficult to access at times but that does not mean that standards should be allowed to drop as a means to an end. All institutions, therefore, should actively seek to ensure a sufficient pool of appropriate practice placement opportunities and teachers aligned to the requirements of their student cohort.

NSETS will expect to see details of the annual induction of all practice teachers outlining such matters as the role and responsibilities of the practice teacher, assessment rubrics, the process of providing supervision and support and report writing. Additionally, NSETS will want to see details of arrangements to bring practice teachers together so that they can share their practice in order to benchmark standards.

As key members of the institutional staff team it is logical to expect that practice teachers should be afforded sufficient opportunities for regular performance reviews. If there are any aspects of a practice teacher's performance that are in need of modification they need to be advised of this formally as a matter of natural justice and supported by the institution to meet an agreed standard. Similarly when practice teachers demonstrate best practice this should be recorded formally and communicated not just to the practice teacher but also to their peers as part of any benchmarking process.

2. Based on the 'Conscious Competence' learning model developed at Gordon Training International by Noel Burch in the 1970s. Several elements, including helping someone 'know what they don't know' or recognise a blind spot, can be compared to some elements of a Johari window (Luft J. & Inham h. (1950). *The Johari Window, a Graphic Model of Interpersonal Awareness*), although Johari deals with self-awareness while the four stages of competence deals with learning stages.

Vetting and Barring

Institutions have a duty to ensure that students do not have a criminal record which would prevent them from working with children or vulnerable young adults. A check via the relevant government agencies is one part of fulfilling that duty and NSETS will expect confirmation that arrangements to carry this out are in place.

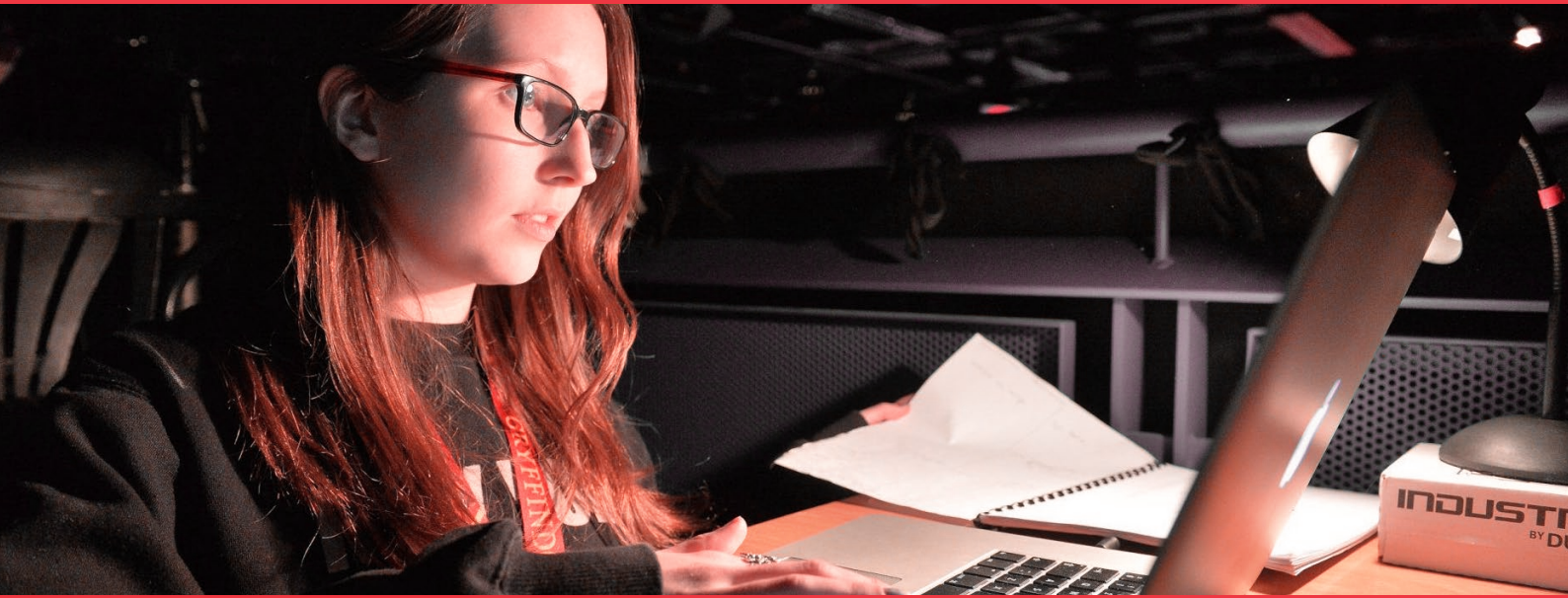
Personal Suitability

Further to the points above NSETS expects that any recruitment for professional formation programmes is balanced between an appropriate level of academic achievement and the possession of a working knowledge of and commitment to youth work and young people. Applications to youth work programmes frequently come from mature students who do not possess a traditional academic CV but who have a proven track record in youth work. With appropriate support, these applicants should be able to achieve and qualify as professional youth workers.

The following qualities, therefore, should play a major role in the assessment of personal suitability:

- recognising the importance of integrity in all personal and social interactions and respecting the human rights of young people;
- accepting principles of ethical conduct in youth work;
- commitment to an ethos of continuous professional development (the professional worker as reflective practitioner);
- commitment to working collaboratively.

Good recruitment practice would suggest that all applicants should be interviewed before being accepted onto a course in order to establish their personal suitability.



SECTION

2

The Process
of Endorsement

THE NSETS PROFESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

Introduction

This section outlines the process of professional endorsement for new and existing programmes and for modifications to existing programmes. It also includes guidance on writing and submitting a proposal for professional endorsement and an explanation of the principles and process of annual monitoring by NSETS. The term 'programme provider' is used to refer to the institution presenting a programme for professional endorsement.

The specific criteria and evidence requirements for professional endorsement of qualifications in youth work are set out in Section 3 of this document.

Overview of the Endorsement Process

The endorsement process is designed to be as developmental as possible. The approach to endorsement involves the Development Officer from NSETS who steers the process, but most importantly it involves fellow youth work practitioners from the sector and from academic learning who ensure that quality programmes of youth work are endorsed and developed to secure excellent professional formation, providing graduates with the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to work effectively with young people. The process is broadly the same for new endorsements and for subsequent applications from the same institution (at five-year intervals). Both require a programme provider to produce a submission, written to the criteria set out in Section 3 of this document and containing supportive evidence as required. The submission is then scrutinised by an endorsement panel, with sector and academic representation, to identify lines of enquiry for the final stage, an onsite visit. During this visit these lines of enquiry will be explored through interviews with management, staff, practice teachers and students. The Endorsement Panel may reach a conclusion based on its findings and discussions which is communicated to the institution at the end of the onsite visit. A report is then written in which the Panel makes a recommendation to the NSETS Committee.

The NSETS Committee then agrees (or not) to approve the recommendation of the Endorsement Panel. Professional endorsement is then conferred on the programme of study subject to receipt of a satisfactory response to any conditions and/or recommendations that may have been set. The endorsement process for new programmes is set out in two stages. Stage 1 is for new programmes only. All programmes (new ones and existing ones that are seeking to be endorsed again) need to go through Stage 2. The stages of the process are detailed later in this section.

Roles and Responsibilities Within the Endorsement Process

There are a number of roles that individuals may play in the process of endorsement:

Development Officer (DO)

An NSETS Development Officer (DO) will oversee all endorsement schedules and processes. The DO is the main point of contact for enquiries and will negotiate schedules with the programme provider and oversee progress through the stages of endorsement and payments. The DO will also act as a support to each submission for endorsement. This is an important role in relation to both the programme provider and NSETS.

The main functions of the DO are to:

- advise institutions considering or developing a submission for professional endorsement;
- liaise with institutions on arrangements for the visit of the Endorsement Panel;
- guide the Endorsement Panel in the scrutiny of submissions and to service the visit(s) made to the programme provider; and
- assist the NSETS Committee to carry out its endorsement responsibilities.

Programme providers are reminded that the Development Officer is accountable to the NSETS Committee for the adherence to the requirements for professional endorsement. The Development Officer will also have a strong commitment to the development of good practice in education and training in youth work, and will assist programme providers to understand how to adhere to the requirements in proposing and preparing a submission. However, it is the responsibility of the NSETS Endorsement Panel in the first instance, and finally the NSETS Committee, rather than the Development Officer, to judge the adequacy of the proposed programme.

The NSETS Endorsement Panel

Supported by the NSETS Development Officer, the Endorsement Panel consists of practitioners from the youth work sector, representatives of other institutions with professionally endorsed programmes and a member of the NSETS Committee as Chair. Its role is to consider the submission before and during an onsite visit and establish whether or not the programme meets the requirements for professional endorsement.

The North/South Education and Training Standards Committee

The NSETS Committee considers and ratifies (or not) the recommendation of the Endorsement Panel. The NSETS Committee notifies the JNC of those programmes that are conferred with professional endorsement for inclusion in the JNC report for Youth and Community Workers.

The Schedule for Endorsement

Negotiation

Experience has shown that the development of a new programme, especially in an institution not previously offering youth work, can be a fairly lengthy process. Both new programmes and existing programmes need to negotiate a schedule for endorsement with the Development Officer and agree a series of dates for each step to be completed in order for the endorsement process to progress to a satisfactory conclusion. The NSETS Development Officer will discuss and agree a schedule with new programmes during Stage 1. NSETS will remind existing endorsed programmes, 18 months ahead of the expiry date, of the need to re-submit and outline a schedule to the institution. The NSETS Development Officer will advise on the arrangements for a new submission and agree a schedule to ensure that NSETS has the resource capacity to manage the workload, allowing for the total number of professionally endorsed programmes, so that the re-endorsement is secured within six months of the renewal date.

Delays and Changes to the Schedule

It is expected that all submissions will be made in accordance with the agreed schedule. Failure to do so may result in significant delays until such time as the Development officer and/or NSETS Endorsement Panel can re-schedule. This may impact on an existing programme provider's ability to advertise their programme as NSETS-endorsed beyond the original period of endorsement, or of a new programme provider's ability to realise their anticipated programme start date. Where difficulties are being experienced it is the programme providers's responsibility to raise this for discussion with the NSETS Development Officer at the earliest possible opportunity. Where difficulties arise that put endorsement within the agreed schedule in jeopardy, it is the programme provider's responsibility to advise students enrolled or enrolling on the programme that NSETS endorsement (and therefore JNC recognition) has not been secured and cannot be guaranteed. It is also possible that delays and alterations to schedules may result in surcharges being payable in order to cover additional administrative and Development Officer time.

Payment of Fees

NSETS fees operate on a cost recovery model, whereby fees from the programmes for endorsement are expected to cover the operational running costs of NSETS. Programmes seeking endorsement will be informed in advance of the fee, which will be broken down into five equal yearly amounts. On commencement of the endorsement process the HEI will be issued a year one invoice, followed by annual invoices for the remaining four years during the endorsement period. Continued endorsement will be conditional on the payment of fees.

Marketing of Programmes

No marketing documentation for any proposed programme may cite 'JNC recognised' or 'NSETS Endorsed' in advance of formal endorsement being conferred. Once professional endorsement has been conferred in writing, the following form of words is to be used: **NSETS Endorsed (JNC Recognised)**

Links to the Sector

Institutions with new programmes are strongly advised to enter into consultation and partnership working with employers and representatives from the local and regional sector at a very early date. Formal structures for input from the sector into the management and development of the programme, as outlined in Section 3, should be established at the earliest point possible. Experience has shown that close collaboration secured from an early stage will lead to greater success in the professional endorsement process and also continuing critical evaluation and review of the programme appropriate to contemporary needs within the youth work sector. This collaboration is also likely to lead to a greater number and range of fieldwork placements as well as wider continuing support for the programme by employers in the form of applications for places by employees and recruitment of graduates.

The Stages of the NSETS Professional Endorsement Process

New programmes are considered in two stages.

Stage 1

The institution makes preliminary enquiries to NSETS, resulting in initial consultation, a visit and advice (online if necessary or appropriate) from the NSETS Development Officer.

The institution provides a written formal registration of interest confirming their decision to proceed (or not). This is the point at which a schedule for the work necessary to complete the professional endorsement is negotiated. The institution is then required to provide evidence to demonstrate that:

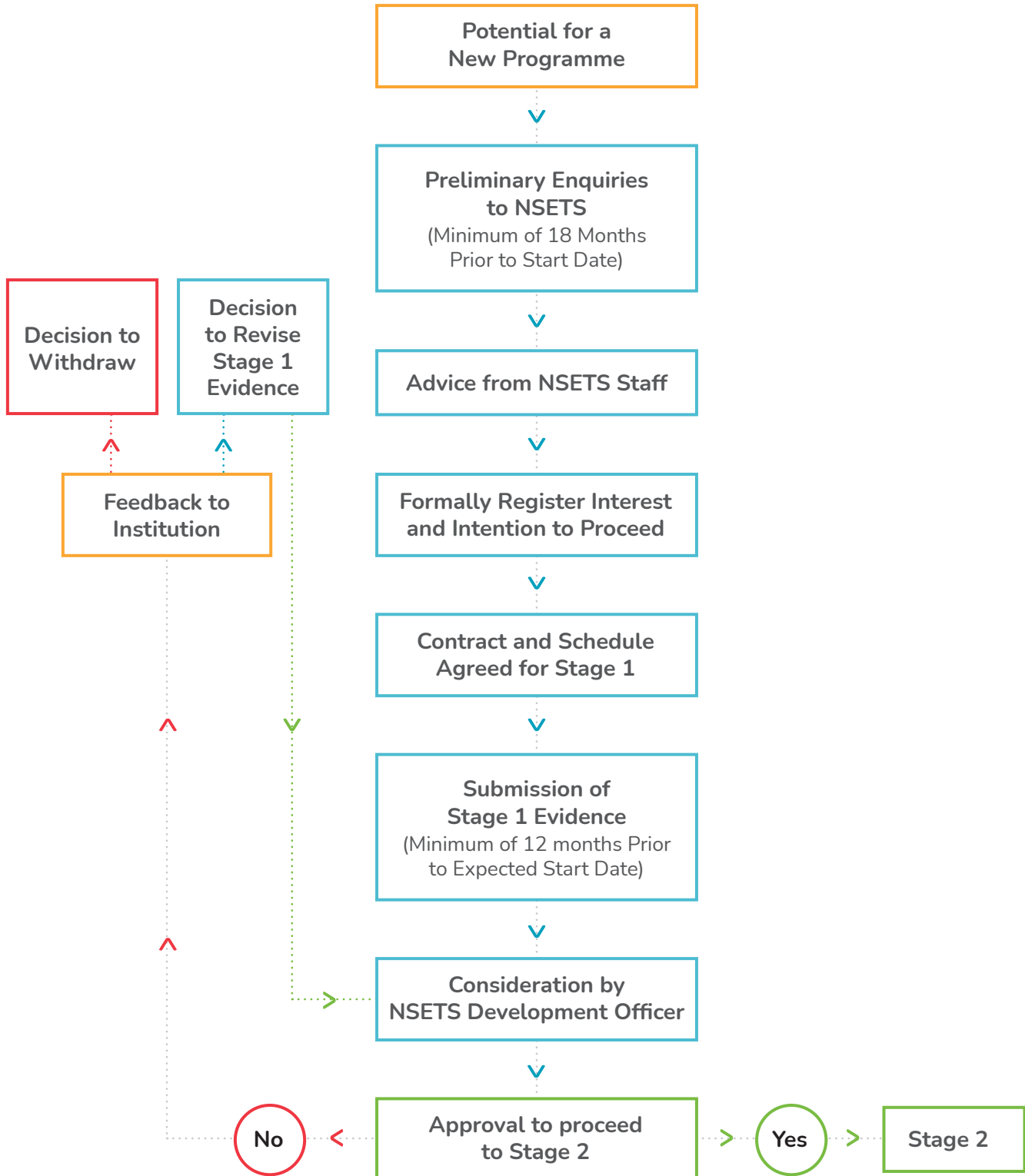
1. there is a current and potential pool of suitable recruits to sustain the proposal;
2. key youth work employers, other potential employers and training agencies support the proposal as a means of meeting employment needs (in normal circumstances evidence to be sought from local and regional sources);
3. the institution is committed to the proposal and will give an assurance of resource allocation pertaining to:
 - > staffing;
 - > accommodation and teaching resources; and
 - > set up costs to establish the programme;
4. consultation has taken place to assess the nature and availability of suitable youth work placements in the locality and region;

5. collaboration with representatives of the sector has been secured and actual working relationships have commenced; and
6. research clearly demonstrates, where appropriate, the validity of having two or more higher education courses in the same or close geographic location.

Submission of this evidence must be accompanied by a covering letter from a senior member of staff, for example, Head of School or Dean, demonstrating the institution's commitment and support to the submission documentation

It is the responsibility of the institution to read very carefully and follow precisely the requirements for endorsement. The NSETS Development Officer will consider the range of evidence provided and on the basis of this advise whether the institution should proceed to the second stage of the professional endorsement process. If at this time the institution is unsuccessful a full explanation will be offered including feedback on where improvements could have been made.

Stage 1 Diagram

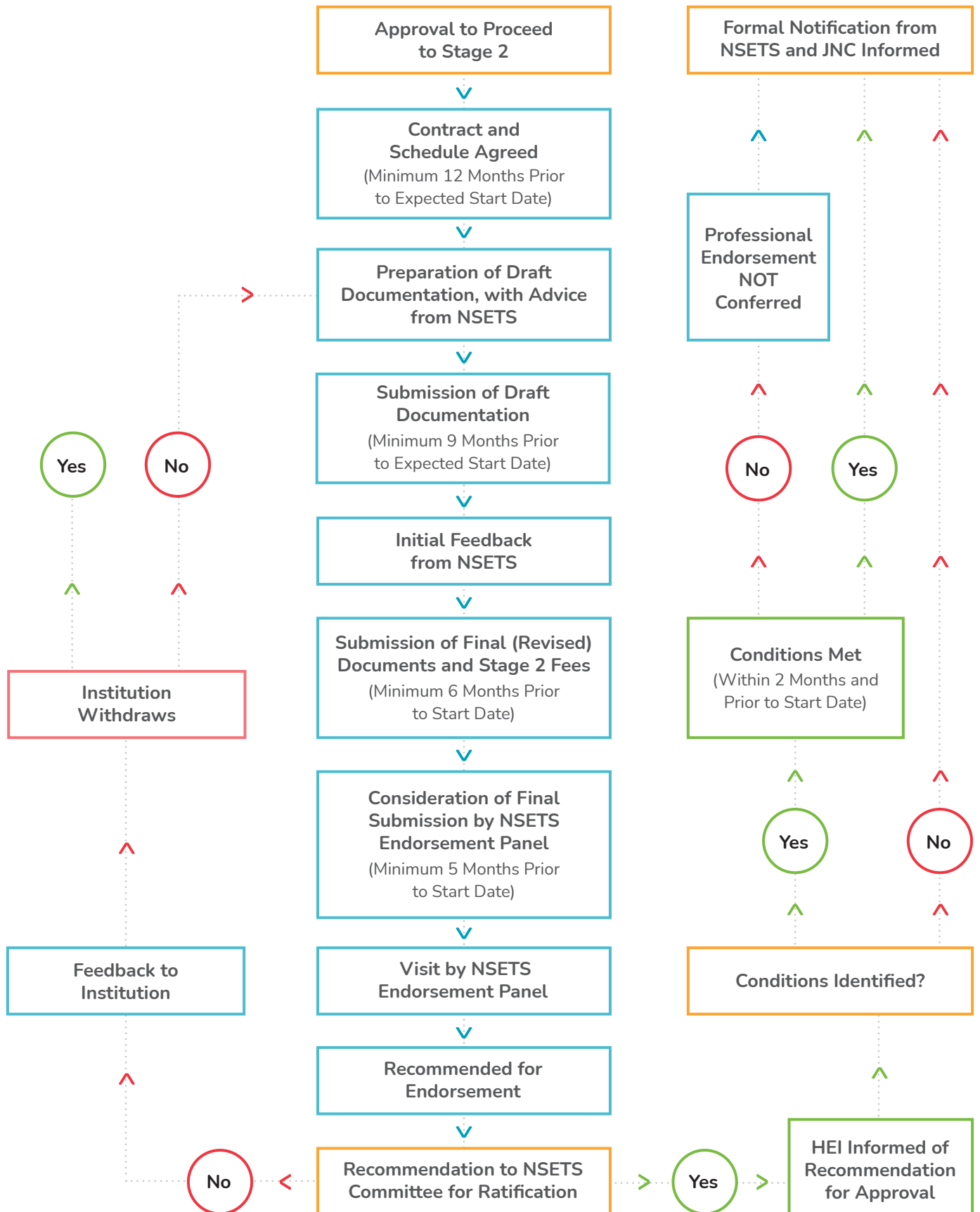


Stage 2

The institution is responsible for preparation of a submission that fulfils the requirements as set out in Section 3 of this document. Steps in the schedule for this part of the endorsement process are:

- Planning and preparing a draft submission, with support and advice from NSETS.
- Consideration of a draft submission by NSETS and feedback to the institution.
- Revision of the draft submission (if required) by the institution.
- Consideration of the final submission by the Endorsement Panel of the NSETS Committee before and throughout the Endorsement Panel visit to the institution. Invoice will be issued for fees.
- The recommendations of the Endorsement Panel are considered at the next meeting of the NSETS Committee in the form of a formal report. The NSETS Committee decides to ratify (or not) the recommendations of the Endorsement Panel. Receipt of a satisfactory response to any conditions made will be necessary before professionally endorsed status can be conferred by the NSETS.
- Formal notification of professionally endorsed status sent to the institution by the NSETS Committee.
- Notification of the professional endorsement by NSETS to be sent to the JNC Secretariat for inclusion of the programme within the JNC report.

Stage 2 Diagram



Existing Programmes

Institutions with existing endorsed programmes should contact the NSETS Secretariat 12 months ahead of the expiry date (this date is advised in the letter of endorsement) to discuss a schedule for a new submission. The NSETS has a five-year rolling programme for professional endorsement into which the schedule for a new submission will be fitted. It would be helpful for the NSETS to be informed of internal or external academic endorsement events/reviews to ensure synchronisation, wherever possible. The NSETS Secretariat will advise on the arrangements for the new submission and in particular agree a schedule for the submission to ensure that the formal proposal is submitted six months ahead of the renewal date. The quinquennial review of endorsed programmes will follow broadly the same procedures as those adopted for new programmes in that the documentation will be arranged according to the main headings of the NSETS' requirements.

Institutions will be required to demonstrate that the programme remains well resourced, has the support of local employers and continues to recruit suitably qualified entrants. In that respect the evidence provided will be the same as that required at Stage 1 of a new submission but with an additional emphasis on student outcomes. The review will enable institutions to make a fuller re-assessment of their programme than is afforded by the annual monitoring process and to make amendments as necessary. The submission should be set in the context of the annual reviews that will have enabled the NSETS to identify any major concerns with the programme. When considering the next endorsement, the NSETS will consider submissions in conjunction with issues raised by previous endorsement events, the outcomes of annual reviews, the extent to which major changes to the programme are planned, and feedback from local employers. Steps in the process of seeking renewed endorsement are the same as those for Stage 2 of new proposals.

The Consideration of Modifications and/or Developments to Existing Programmes

During the five-year period for which professionally endorsed status is conferred, institutions may wish to change aspects of their programme from that detailed within the original submission. Any changes to submissions must be notified to the NSETS Secretariat in writing. Changes may be deemed 'minor', 'substantial' or 'major'. 'Minor' changes are those which require scrutiny by the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat of the NSETS.

'Substantial' changes are those that require further scrutiny by a member(s) of the original endorsement panel that visited the institution.

'Major' changes are those that require a visit to the institution by one or more representatives of NSETS. There will also be a fee for modifications to programmes appropriate to the workload and expenses incurred by NSETS as a result of the proposed modification. Fee policy and current fees can be obtained from the NSETS Secretariat. NSETS reserves the right to judge the nature and extent of the proposed change to the programme and hence the appropriate fee.

The Visit of the NSETS Endorsement Panel

Submissions for professional endorsement will contain evidence that the proposed programme adheres to the requirements set out in Section 3 of this document. NSETS will use this evidence to inform a process of enquiry into the nature of the programme. This enquiry takes the form of an in-person visit (or virtual/online visit if necessary) by members who will be drawn from suitably qualified and experienced educators, practitioners and managers of the youth work sector in Ireland and beyond and chaired by a member of the NSETS Committee. The Endorsement Panel will be serviced by the NSETS Development Officer who will have supported the development of the submission to the date of the visit. The visit will involve meetings with the institution and representatives of the groups that provide input into, or will benefit from, the programme. NSETS expects the programme providers to secure the participation of all the individuals requested by the NSETS Development Officer. Failure to secure adequate and appropriate representation can adversely affect the endorsement process and may impact on the Endorsement Panel's ability to reach a conclusion. The institution will notify the NSETS Development Officer of the names of individuals who are expected to attend the visit no less than three days before the date of the visit. The individuals expected to attend the visit include:

Senior Management

Normally at least three people comprising of someone with responsibility for:

- institutional and faculty/school financial strategy, capable of giving authoritative advice on the financial commitment to, and security of, the programme;
- managing quality assurance processes at the relevant level and knowledgeable about how these apply to the proposed programme; and
- staff development and training in the unit and in the faculty/school.

Programme Team

- head of the unit within which the proposed programme will be located/delivered;
- leader for the proposed programme;
- practice coordinator;
- all academic staff contributing to the programme;
- a selection of part-time/sessional practice tutors to the proposed programme; and
- representatives of all partner organisations/dispersed centres responsible for delivering the proposed programme (where appropriate).

Representatives from the Sector

A group of 6 to 8 people representing:

- members of the professional sector with formal involvement in the management and development of the programme;
- agencies who have students enrolled on the programme on a full or part time basis;
- employers in the region; and
- placement supervisors/practice teachers - a sample reflecting the range of placement types used, e.g. voluntary, statutory and special-project agencies and small and large organisations.

Students

A group of 8 to 12 students from the existing programme (or similar programmes where the programme is proposed as new provision within the institution) and representing:

- all levels of study;
- full and part time students;
- employer supported and self-financing students;
- male and female students;
- older and younger students;
- ethnic minority students; and
- recent graduates.

The Institution will provide the Endorsement Panel with appropriate facilities for the duration of the professional endorsement visit. The meeting room/s should be large enough to accommodate the Endorsement Panel and representatives of the programme comfortably and arranged in round- table format. The meeting room/s should be undisturbed by noise and institutional staff/students. The NSETS Development Officer will inform the institution in advance should any member of the Endorsement Panel require facilities to assist with mobility or other support.

An Endorsement Panel visit for a new course will take up to two days. NSETS will liaise with the institution in advance regarding the practical requirements of the Panel visit, such as directions, overnight accommodation and the provision of refreshments for the duration of the visit. It is usual for all

individuals representing the proposed programme at the visit to be invited to attend lunch and arrangements should allow for informal discussion between all involved.

If it is deemed necessary by the NSETS Committee that the Panel visit needs to be carried out virtually, arrangements regarding the online process of hosting meetings will be agreed in advance with the Development Officer.

The NSETS Endorsement Panel will reach conclusions on the basis of their visit and scrutiny of the written proposal. Where possible, initial oral feedback on such conclusions will be given to the institution on the last day of the visit, including detail of any conditions and recommendations, but this will be subject to formal confirmation. Written reports are referred to the NSETS Committee for ratification. A final report on the decision by NSETS to confer professional endorsement (or not) will be sent to the institution concerned. The decision that conditions have been met is formally communicated in writing to the institution as soon as possible following the meeting of the NSETS Committee.

If unexpected circumstances arise during the course of the visit that give cause for concern (on either side), discussions may be adjourned for a short period until the matter has been resolved satisfactorily. If the matter cannot be readily resolved then the rest of the visit may need to be postponed pending further discussion between the institution and the NSETS Development Officer. After consultation with the NSETS Development Officer and Panel members, the decision of the Panel Chair will be final. Scrutiny of the submission and visit by the Endorsement Panel may result in one of three outcomes:

1. to endorse the programme unconditionally, with or without recommendations;
2. to impose conditions that must be met before the programme is endorsed; or
3. not to endorse and to require a re-submission of the programme.

Where conditions are stipulated, these should normally be met within two months of the date of the letter stipulating those conditions being sent to the institution by NSETS unless the nature of the conditions makes this impracticable. Where this is the case, a specific time frame will be agreed within which evidence of compliance must be provided.

Institutions should note that the endorsement is not secured until NSETS has received a response to conditions, the Chair of the Endorsement Panel has approved this as satisfactory, and payment of any outstanding fees has been made. The Chair's decision will be notified to the NSETS Committee.

NSETS does not confer retrospective endorsement on programmes. In those instances where responses are late or are unsatisfactory, the starting date for endorsement may be delayed. On discontinuation of a programme, professionally endorsed status is valid for all students who have enrolled and commenced study within the five-year period following the last professionally endorsed event, and provided satisfactory annual monitoring results have been obtained for that period, apart from exceptional circumstances.

Writing a Submission for Professional Endorsement

The requirements in Section 3 of this document set out the criteria for professional endorsement and guide institutions on the evidence that should be provided in order to demonstrate adherence to them. Because the writing and inspection of a submission is a lengthy process further advice to programme providers is given here to ensure that their submission is effective in communicating policy and practice to NSETS in as cohesive a fashion as possible.

Structure

The submission should be as concise as possible, structured as one main document of no more than 100 pages and supplemented with appendices as necessary. NSETS recommends that the submission is organised, structured and presented in the following order, under the 12 criteria headings as set out in Section 3 of this document:

- Organisational Arrangements and Programme overview
- Institutional Commitment, Leadership, Management and Development of the Programme
- Staffing
- Admissions
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Application of Equality and Diversity Principles
- Professional Focus, Coherence and Structure Programme Delivery: Teaching and Learning Methods
- Assessment Methods within the Programme
- Quality Assurance Systems
- Length and Nature of Fieldwork Practice
- Student handbook

Appendices should be used to contain detailed policy documentation, curriculum content, placements, programme overview, periodic reviews and staff CVs etc. Also, practice and student handbooks, which will inevitably contain much material found in the main text, should be appended. It is recommended that guidance is taken from the Development Officer on the submission of evidence and use of templates so as to ensure the document is clear and concise.

In the event that NSETS agrees to a joint academic validation/professional endorsement or a joint process with another ETS Committee, the programme provider must ensure that all the above criteria are addressed either in the main submission document or in a separate document. NSETS will issue a pro forma in which the programme provider will be expected to indicate where in the submission documentation evidence relevant to the criteria listed in Section 3 can be found.

Use of Paperwork Prepared for other Purposes

It can be the case that some aspects of the paperwork designed for other purposes may also be appropriate. For instance, some institutions use material prepared for academic validation as a major part of the submission for professional endorsement. This is acceptable, providing it also clearly meets the NSETS criteria requirements both in content and presentation.

Use of Diagrams and Charts

Endorsement panels find summary charts and diagrams helpful in conveying complex structures and systems. For instance, diagrams and charts lend themselves readily to an illustration of programme structure, timeline, assessment schedules, inter-relationships and progression across elements of the curriculum, staffing and organisational structures.

Fit of Curriculum with the Requirements

NSETS does not prescribe a process of mapping curricula against NOS for Youth Work, QAA Subject Benchmarks or other frameworks. It is, however essential that a submission contains evidence, clearly indicated, that these external frameworks have been used to develop the curriculum content and structure. Programme providers are expected to show this 'fit' within the learning outcomes for each module and each level of the programme. An example of a 'mapping sheet' is included in **Appendix 1** which institutions might find helpful.

Submission of Documentation

NSETS will require both soft/electronic copy and hard copies of the documentation comprising the submission for professional endorsement. It may be necessary to post a submission to each of the Panel Members and to the Development Officer.

The schedule for the professional endorsement process includes a timeline for the submission of documentation. The submission and distribution of documentation is managed by the NSETS Development Officer. Timely submission of documentation at each point in the timeline is essential for the smooth and effective operation of the professional endorsement process.

The minimum requirement for receipt of final submission is at least six weeks prior to the agreed visit of the NSETS Endorsement Panel. NSETS reserves the right to cancel an arranged visit if it does not receive submission material within the agreed timescale and/or considers that there are large gaps in the documentation sent by the institution. Unless requested by an Endorsement Panel or agreed with the NSETS Development Officer, tabled material will not be permitted at an endorsement event. Programme providers are expected to provide all necessary documentation by the agreed submission date.

Quality Assurance Processes

The main responsibility for monitoring and quality assurance of the programme rests with the institution. NSETS will require evidence on an annual basis that such monitoring and quality assurance has been undertaken and the outcomes addressed appropriately. NSETS will use this evidence to assess the continuing quality of the programme within the agreed terms of the endorsement.

If an institution fails to deliver to the standard of the agreed endorsement, including timely and complete return of the required annual report, NSETS can intervene, investigate and take appropriate action. This may include the immediate revoking of the endorsement.

Annual Monitoring Process

All programmes will be monitored annually by NSETS. Completion and return of the NSETS Annual Monitoring Online Survey to the timescale specified is a requirement for continuing endorsement.

NSETS monitors programmes in order to:

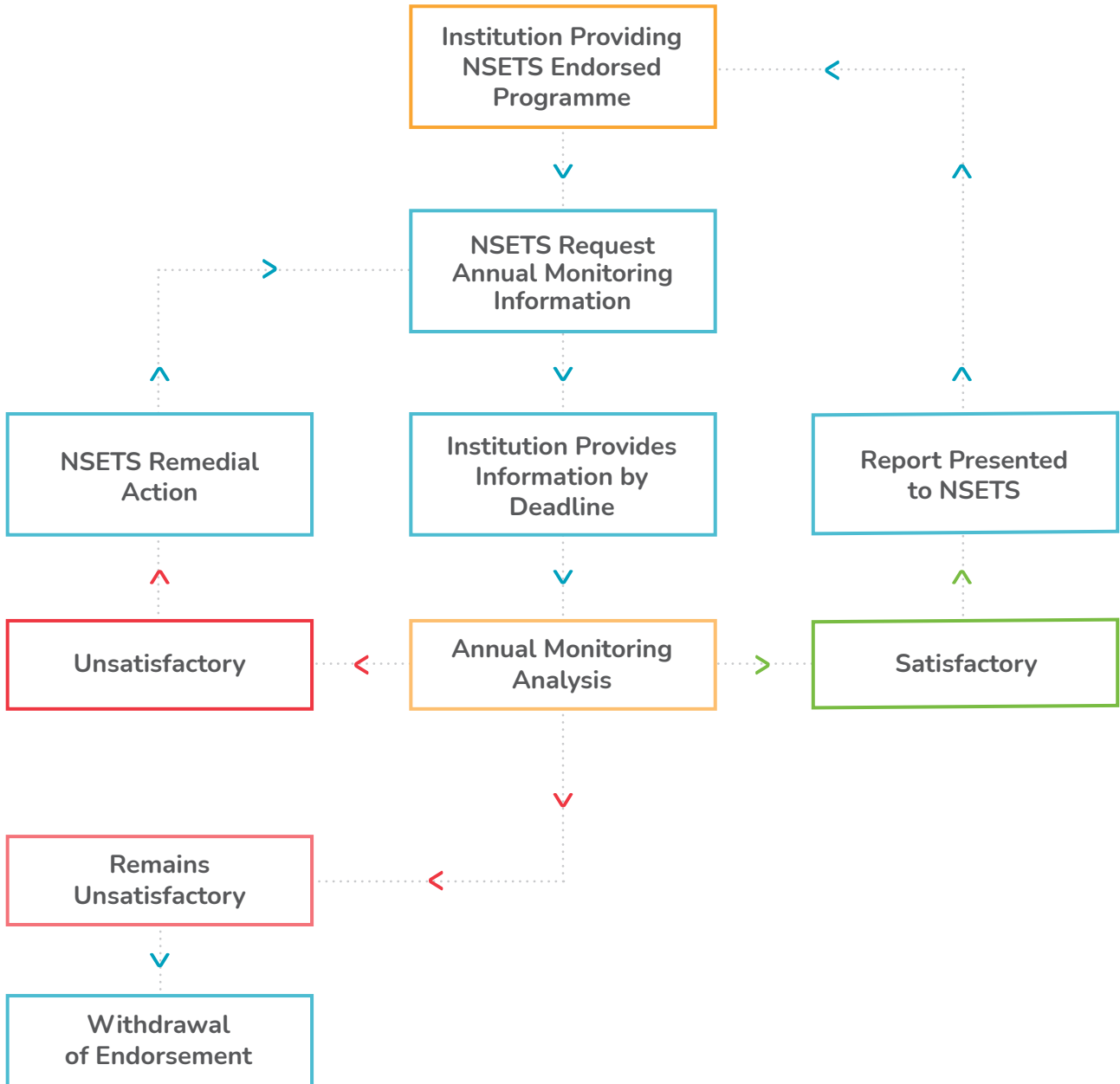
- ensure that the programme is operating in accordance with the criteria for professional endorsement;
- alert NSETS to overall patterns and trends in education and training;
- enable NSETS to monitor changes to endorsed programmes; and
- ensure that the programme is subject to a process of continuous improvement.

To enable NSETS to carry out its monitoring function, institutions are required to report to NSETS annually:

- completed Annual Monitoring Online Survey
- programme quality enhancement processes carried out;
- external examiners' reports (one academic and one sectoral), including the institution's responses to recommendations from the previous year's report and forward plans made to address points raised in the current reports;
- any reports of a formal review of courses (e.g., carried out by the institution itself or external body such as QAA or QQI);
- any other information relevant to the professional nature of the programme.
- details of overall trends in graduates' progression into employment/further education

It is not the intention of NSETS to burden institutions with requirements for additional documentation beyond that which will normally be available for internal purposes. Rigorous reports prepared for internal quality assurance purposes will normally meet NSETS' requirements. In cases of unsatisfactory performance institutions will be instructed on action required by the programme team in response, according to the position of the NSETS Committee regarding the continuing endorsement of the programme.

Annual Monitoring Process Diagram



Withdrawal of Professional Endorsement

If, as a consequence of information arising from annual monitoring (including incomplete or late submissions of the required information), NSETS identifies concerns about the progress of a programme in respect of the agreed terms of, and criteria for, professional endorsement, it will seek, through its Secretariat, to secure a satisfactory outcome with the institution.

Additional monitoring visits may be necessary. Should a satisfactory outcome not be secured, NSETS will implement a formal investigative procedure that may result in withdrawal of professional endorsement or imposition of a further condition that must be satisfied for continuing professional endorsement.

Information for Students and Employers

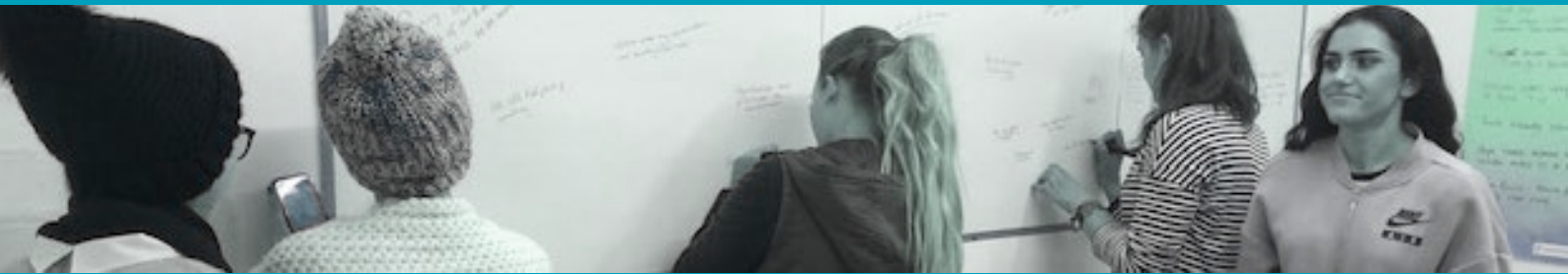
Students and Employers can access up to date information on the endorsed status of a programme on www.youth.ie/nsets or by contacting the NSETS Development Officer on nsets@nyci.ie

Feedback, Complaints and Appeals

In the interests of improving the endorsement process, NSETS welcomes constructive feedback from those with whom it works. Views about the quality and impact of the work are welcomed along with all other relevant suggestions.

From time to time difficulties and misunderstandings can arise. Every effort should be made on both sides to resolve such difficulties in the course of the endorsement process, to seek clarification and to address any misunderstandings at the time.

NSETS is committed to ensuring that all decisions will be made in an open and transparent manner in compliance with best practice and using published criteria. There is an independent appeals process, details of which are available from the NSETS Secretariat.



SECTION

3

NSETS Criteria
and Evidence

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTENT OF SUBMISSIONS

Introduction

There are 12 required aspects to the submission document. In order to guide institutions the criteria for each aspect are supplemented by a description of material that would provide sufficient evidence of adherence to those criteria. In judging submissions, NSETS will evaluate the congruence of the documentation provided by the sponsor with the criteria set out in this section. Material must be submitted in line with the requirements set out in this section and not exceed 30,000 words or 100 pages excluding appendices/supplementary information.

1. Organisational Arrangements and Programme Overview

CRITERIA

Institutions must clearly articulate:

- the identity of the institution(s) to which all matters relating to the programme should be addressed;
- details of partnership arrangements, if any, including the respective responsibilities of all parties to the partnership;
- the status of the institution.

Institutions must ensure that:

- the award is a clearly named professional one, distinguishable from other academic or non- professional programmes. The term “Youth Work” must be in the title of the award;
- on enrolment students will receive formal written notification that their course is professionally endorsed;

The programme must:

- be academically validated at the level of undergraduate honours degree or postgraduate diploma or degree;
- be clearly identified to students as leading to a professionally endorsed qualification in youth work;
- comply with the minimum period for professional endorsement:
 - > three years full time (or part time equivalent) undergraduate programme
 - > one year full time (or part time equivalent) postgraduate programme

Exceptionally, ‘fast track’ systems that reduce the minimum duration specified above must not exceed 45 weeks study per year and will ensure that the workload is not prohibitive of a student maintaining effective employment and securing their health. Such systems must ensure that the fieldwork criteria outlined below are still met.

In dual programmes of education where youth work sits alongside a complementary subject, a minimum of 50% of time throughout the programme (content, delivery, teaching and assessment) must be demonstrably and directly related to youth work. **(See Guidance Note on NSETS website for more information).**

As a programme leading to a professional qualification, institutions will require full attendance (measured at a minimum of 80 per cent) and participation across all modules of the curriculum. The institution’s quality assurance and management arrangements for the programme should ensure adherence to this requirement.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- all relevant contact names and addresses;
- copies of contracts of any partnership arrangements to secure the programme;
- the name/title of the qualification to be awarded;
- the name of the awarding body/bodies - full title, address, status of organisation;
- the name of the academic /endorsement body and/or any other form of validation/endorsement or accreditation secured or sought;
- the academic level of the award;
- the minimum amount of teaching hours dedicated to youth work related content throughout the programme;
- the minimum length of time of study required to achieve the award, including part-time variations, and the normally allowed maximum;
- the methods used to deliver the programme, including electronic or distance learning;
- details of the institution’s practices in the area of joint academic and professional recognition and examples of documentation and certification.

2. Institutional Commitment, Leadership, Management and Development of the Programme

CRITERIA

Institutions must ensure and be able to demonstrate:

- a commitment to the programme at all levels within the institution and sufficient resources to allow for its effective delivery;
- a demand/need for the programme and a sufficient pool of suitable placement opportunities;
- a dedicated structure to oversee the programme;
- a commitment to improve and develop the programme through its period of endorsement;
- a clear system for strategic and operational leadership and management;
- formal representation of local employers (voluntary and statutory youth work services and organisations) in the management of the programme and in the monitoring of course delivery and development;
- student representation in the management process;
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each partner where there are partner organisations involved in the management and delivery of the programme;
- a clearly identifiable physical base for the programme;
- accommodation for the programme that enables a full range of teaching and learning methods to be employed, including up to date ICT;
- resources at a level and quality such that the programme can be delivered effectively;
- range and diversity of resources to meet different learning needs.
- A range of supports for the pastoral care of students

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- a brief introduction outlining relevant background. This should include a short description of the development of the programme and any special features of the institution or the local community. It should refer to any recent consultations, reviews or inspections;
- detailed information about resources for the programme in the form of budgetary evidence and a signed statement from the chief officer of the institution that this commitment will be honoured over the period of endorsement;

- results from market research undertaken to explore the employment needs of the locality and the region, and the occupational prospects of the students;
- information that demonstrates how current and past students have been consulted, the nature of the consultations and the outcomes of said consultations;
- evidence of arrangements between the institution and suitable placement agencies;
- information (e.g. minutes of meetings) that demonstrate that consultation has taken place with appropriate external bodies;
- the organisational structure and programme location within the institution;
- the structure, composition, terms of reference, responsibilities and powers of the programme committee (or equivalent, however named);
- the range and remit of staff roles e.g. programme leader, field work co-ordinator/manager;
- overall staffing, funding and resourcing, future plans and contingencies;
- the staff development programme and how outputs from it enhance the programme of study for students;
- mechanisms for regular structured involvement and consultation by representatives of the sector, practice agencies used and employers' roles with respect to the quality and development of the programme's curriculum, structures and practices;
- examples of changes in the programme made in response to feedback from the sector;
- details of the accommodation available to the programme and whether it has exclusive or shared use;
- a detailed breakdown of all other learning facilities and resources, including the level of resources for all learning facilities, i.e. written materials, information technology, audio visual aids and access for staff and students to libraries;
- accommodation and resources for people with a range of different learning needs with a clear indication of those categories of need for which facilities are not available (strategic planning to develop such facilities should be included in the submission);
- arrangements for childcare, if any.
- details of support services for students such as counselling, financial assistance and other pastoral supports.

3. Staffing

CRITERIA

Institutions must ensure that there is:

- a well-balanced and experienced core staff (a minimum of two staff with an NSETS-recognised professional youth work qualification) dedicated to the programme;
- a wider team of staff contributing to the programme, with a range of relevant/appropriate specialist skills and knowledge, and relevant/appropriate/ recent sectoral experience;
- for each full-time year group (or equivalent cohort), a minimum of one core full-time member of staff with an NSETS-recognised professional youth work qualification;
- one staff member responsible for practice who is professionally qualified (as recognised by NSETS) and experienced;
- a limit on the employment of external sessional teaching staff which should not normally exceed 30 per cent of the full time equivalent quota for the programme;
- an appropriate student-staff ratio, usually no more than 20:1 for degree programmes and 16:1 for postgraduate programmes;
- dedicated administrative support for the programme;
- formal verification of staffing levels in accordance with the above criteria, for each location/site in use should a programme operate from, or begin to operate from, more than one distinct location/site;
- a strategic plan in place with financial resource commitments to address existing or presenting deficiencies in staffing and resourcing.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain detailed information on staffing as follows (summary information should be tabulated; see sample/template in **Appendix 2**):

- core staff: those who dedicate the greater part of their time to the programme. They will be employed full-time in the institution. It is expected that every route in a programme should have at least one designated core member of staff responsible for the management and implementation of the programme (programme leader or equivalent role) with dedicated administrative support;
- core staff will possess an NSETS-recognised professional qualification in youth work (i.e. a JNC qualification) and be knowledgeable about and familiar with current youth work practice, and committed to its promotion and development;

- main support staff who give between 40% and 60% of their work to the programme, making a significant contribution to it;
- occasional staff who normally only contribute to discrete areas of the curriculum on a restricted basis. Staff will be appropriately qualified in the subject area concerned and have some understanding of its link to the context of the occupation;
- contributions by visiting lecturers that are to be incorporated as an integral part of a programme of professional education and training. Such contributions should include input from fieldwork practitioners;
- the staff involved and the range of duties entailed, including research commitments in the area of youth work. Information should be included on:
 - > modules/units for which responsible (inc. level of commitment);
 - > teacher/tutorial role (institution or sector-based);
 - > other roles within the programme;
 - > other responsibilities in other programmes;
 - > an indication of whether staff are core, main support, occasional or visiting;
- all staff, who will be appropriately qualified in the subject area concerned. Where an institution has a staff team which is not able to reflect the range of skills and perspectives required for an effective programme, it must describe the strategy for effective completion of the programme;
- staff/student ratios to ensure that the course can be delivered effectively. The proportion of staff delivering the programme from each of the four categories set out above should be clearly indicated;
- administrative staff - the staff involved, range of duties and dedicated hours;
- curricula vitae of all of the core and main support staff (including practice placements teachers) in a format commensurate with the NSETS requirements;
- information on group size and tutorial provision related to the programme content and mode of delivery. In particular, NSETS will require evidence that the deployment of staff allows for work with individuals and small groups of students;
- evidence that the staffing policy reflects the institution's commitment to equality and diversity (e.g. through implementation of an Equal opportunities Policy);
- the current edition of the staff development programme and any continuing professional development framework;
- a strategic plan with financial details and commitments to address existing or presenting deficiencies in staffing and resourcing.

4. Admissions

CRITERIA

Institutions must set out:

- a clear strategy and evidence of a well-managed system for recruitment and selection;
- a strategy for ensuring steps are taken to recruit non traditional and diverse student cohorts;
- a clear rationale for any target groups linked with the professional focus of the programme;
- a rigorous and robust selection process that must include procedures for the assessment of personal suitability, academic potential and practical youth work experience (see **page 9** for more details on personal suitability);
- procedures and criteria for the interviewing of all shortlisted applicants;
- procedures for providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- as part of the recruitment strategy, a demonstrated commitment to equality, diversity and inclusiveness and a strategy to instigate affirmative action where necessary;
- the size and categories (if any) of the group the institution seeks to recruit - indicating maximum and minimum numbers;
- copies of the prospectus (or equivalent publication);
- any restrictions on application with reference to professional and personal suitability for youth work (see **Section 1**);
- requirements, criteria and procedures for admission, including minimum practical experience and qualifications and the information sought on applicants' criminal records;
- information on safeguarding procedures at the recruitment stage and arrangements for responding to the outcomes of those procedures;
- guidance given to, and composition of, selection panels.

5. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The recognition of Prior learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that has its source in experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences. Learning from experience is different from 'formal learning': it is largely unstructured; it is more personal and more individualised and is often unconsciously gained. It is, however, just as real as learning acquired in a formal academic setting. In addition, it can be more permanent as it is not readily forgotten or lost. RPL is also known in different contexts as the Accreditation of Prior learning (APL) and/or the Accreditation of Prior Experiential learning (APEL).

CRITERIA

However expressed, institutions must verify that:

- they will only accept tangible evidence for RPL such as copies of certificates or transcripts, of a similar level of attainment in a comparable programme of study in an equivalent institutional setting;
- any such RPL system forms part of a larger, institution-wide, procedure; and
- advance to the second level of a programme may only occur where:
 - a. the prior learning to be credited for the first level of the programme includes assessed practice on a professionally endorsed programme such as that at the end of the third level of the programme the student will have completed at least 800 hours with 50 per cent face to face practice with young people; or
 - b. the prior learning to be credited at the first level of the programme includes assessed practice that meets the following criteria:
 - i. practice has been supervised with reports written by both practice teacher and student;
 - ii. practice involved group work;
 - iii. practice took place in a range of contexts;
 - iv. practice involved work on social and personal development;
 - v. learning achieved covers, and has been mapped to, the NOS for Youth Work;
 - vi. evidence of practice and reports are produced;
 - vii. when awarding credit within an RPL system institutions must indicate which sector work elements of their programme are essential for personal and professional development and mandatory for the student's progression.

And in all cases:

- admissions to the beginning of professionally endorsed programmes through RPL is valid, valuable and encouraged;
- RPL will not be used to replace any part of the fieldwork element of the programme;
- the award of advanced standing for RPL is not permitted within the endorsed programmes leading to the award of professional status.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- a definitive statement on RPL and admissions to the programme with advanced standing, and evidence of how it is applied;
- copies of institutional procedure relating to RPL; and
- where applicable, details of bridging requirements in place to cover extenuating circumstances.

6. Application of Equality and Diversity Principles

CRITERIA

Institutions must demonstrate that:

- Their policies and practices on equality and diversity are
 - > compliant with the relevant equality and diversity legislation for the jurisdiction(s) in which the programme is being offered; and
 - > applied appropriately to the programme and within the institution more widely;
- The principles of equality and diversity are enshrined within all aspects of the programme (design, content, delivery, assessment).

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- the institution's current equality and diversity policy statement and evidence of its application;
- explanation and evidence of how the policy has been adopted in practice within the curriculum and content of the programme;
- the institution's policy on widening access and evidence of its application;
- plans for affirmative action or pro-active measures and evidence of their application.

7. Professional Focus, Coherence and Structure

CRITERIA

Institutions must set out:

- a coherent rationale for the programme as one primarily designed for professional youth work formation outlining the sequencing and inclusion of all modules, including fieldwork practice, indicating how this combination and sequence lead to professional formation;
- how theory and practice are inter-related particularly during student assessment procedures;
- the inter-relationships of all elements of the programme to ensure that the rationale is met and the outcomes secured;
- how the programme includes attention to underlying philosophy, principles and values as set out in Section 1 of this document (**see Guidance Note on NSETS website for more information**);
- how the programme's learning outcomes relate to the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work referred to in Section 1 of this document;
- a detailed curriculum which must include reference to key contemporary developments and publications in youth policy and practice in Ireland, both North and South.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- an overview of the programme structure across its lifetime (see template in **Appendix 3**);
- a summary list of all modules in table format (see template in **Appendix 3**);
- full details of all modules, presented as an accompanying document;
- a detailed description of the nature of the programme, its main emphases and orientations, structures and systems;
- demonstration of how the course content meets the requirements as set out in Section 1 regarding the underlying principles and values of youth work;
- demonstration of how the course modules and sequencing meets the requirements of the National occupational Standards for Youth Work (see sample in **Appendix 1**);

Continued on next page

Evidence continued from previous page

- well-balanced and up to date reading lists drawing upon broader theoretical literature and specialist publications, an explanation of how more extensive lists of references are identified for students and an explanation of processes in place to ensure regular review and revision of references and resources drawn on within the programme;
- specific reference to how the youth work curriculum reflects key practice and policy developments in both the North and South of Ireland.

Evidence continued from previous column

- the opportunities for students to influence the learning processes;
- methods employed to ensure that students are confident and competent users of ICT;
- ways in which teaching and learning enhances the development of skills for interpersonal and intervention work with both individuals and groups of young people.

8. Programme Delivery: Teaching and Learning Methods

CRITERIA

Institutions must demonstrate that:

- there are sufficient resources;
- various forms of good practice in teaching and learning are used;
- students' competence in ICT at an appropriate level is ensured;
- students' learning needs are identified and their needs addressed;
- students have access to ICT resources, at appropriate levels and convenient times;
- consultative structures are available to allow students to participate actively in their learning;
- a range of teaching and learning methods can provide for the professional formation of learners;
- use of blended teaching (using both in person and online teaching) is appropriate and students' learning needs are considered;

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain detailed information on:

- the teaching and learning methods employed on the programme;
- sizes of teaching groups, the amount of individual and small group tutorial time;
- support mechanisms for students with learning difficulties;
- the extent and nature of student participation;

9. Assessment Methods within the Programme

CRITERIA

Institutions must ensure that the assessment process has:

- a range of tasks commensurate with the competencies in the most recent set of National Occupational Standards for Youth Work and/or the requirements of the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) or successor framework(s);
- a manageable schedule of assignment tasks;
- measures to ensure fairness and consistency within and between modules and between students;
- a system of compensation (if any) which excludes failures in practice;
- a system in place to address issues of fitness to practice, with specific reference to failures in practice;

Clear guidance on how professional formation will be ensured in the event of student failure in practice;

- a robust external examining process that secures professional competence and comments on how well the programme serves as a basis for professional formation, the strengths and weaknesses of programme aims, process, content and management in this respect, and how well the immediate sector partners are involved in, and satisfied by, the programme;
- at least two external examiners, one of whom must be an academic and the other must:
 - a. be an experienced practitioner with a minimum of 5 years' experience in youth work;
 - b. hold an NSETS-recognised qualification in youth work;
 - c. have an awareness and understanding of youth work education and training.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain a detailed description of the structures and system for assessment, to include:

- A summary table overview of assessments (**see template in Appendix 3**);
- an assessment schedule containing information about:
 - > the nature of assignment(s);
 - > length/amount of work required to complete a module;
 - > range of modes of presentation;
 - > assignment submission dates for each level of the programme;
 - > weighting/contribution to the overall total of credits;
- clearly stated criteria for assessing work of all types;
- arrangements relating to compensation, issues of fitness to practice, late submissions and appeals;
- procedures for securing consistency in assessment standards;
- specific procedures surrounding failure in practice course components;
- the extent, if any, of self and peer assessment;
- the institution's formal arrangements for assessment, i.e. committees, boards;
- procedures for appointing and dismissing external examiners and the key functions of the role;
- procedures for the supervision and assessment of placements;
- procedures to access additional practice support.

10. Quality Assurance Systems

CRITERIA

Institutions must demonstrate:

- institution-wide procedures and systems for effective monitoring and evaluation of the programme;
- effective procedures and systems for reviewing and planning to improve quality and raise standards;
- mechanisms for recording student progression, retention and successful completion as well as student withdrawal across the life of the programme.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- material explaining the institution's systems and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme and its structures, including self-evaluation arrangements which are comprehensive, systematic and based on first-hand evidence and the use of data;
- details of how the institution sets clear priorities and actions to bring about improvement including the allocation of adequate resources to support the priorities, and evidence of how the actions taken have resulted in measurable improvements;
- any internal or external reports of the programme, e.g. from the Quality Assurance Agency, Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) or Quality and Qualifications Ireland;
- clear rules and regulations regarding student attendance and attainment;
- details of how the institution tracks student retention across the life of the programme.

11. Length and Nature of Practice Placements

CRITERIA

Institutions must provide evidence that all programmes comply with the following **minimum** requirements of practice placements:

- 800 hours over the duration of the undergraduate programme
- 400 hours over the duration of the postgraduate programme

The practice arrangements for undergraduate courses will include:

- a minimum of two placements, in separate locations, one of which must be a block placement;
- the minimum acceptable length for the block placement is six consecutive weeks;
- the practice commitment for the block placement is for a minimum of 25 hours a week.

The practice arrangements for postgraduate courses will include:

- a minimum of two placements, in separate locations, one of which must be a block placement;
- the minimum acceptable length for the block placement is *four* consecutive weeks;
- the practice commitment for this block placement is for a minimum of 25 hours a week.

The practice placements should enable the student to demonstrate in different ways a range of competencies as referred to in Section 1 of this document.

Institutions will also be required to demonstrate that:

- all practice arrangements include a structure to monitor face-to-face work with young people over the life of the programme. Students are required to devote at least 50 per cent of their committed practice time to face-to-face work with young people, including direct engagement online;
- students on placement receive an adequate number of tutorial visits (at least two) that are suitable to the placement level, length, context and particular needs of the learner;
- organisations where students are placed adhere to best practice in safeguarding and are compliant with relevant legislation. Special arrangements may be made for overseas placements;
- students are normally supervised by an NSETS-recognised and experienced youth worker; in exceptional circumstances where there are no NSETS endorsed placement supervisors, the programme providers have in place minimum requirements, for example, a specified number of years of professional youth work experience, mandatory supervisor training etc.
- the institution has a well-managed system for organising practice and assuring its quality;
- assessment tools are used that enable judgement of a student's progression and performance in respect of professional competence as defined in Section 1;
- practice teachers are provided with support and training for their roles and receive clear guidance on the use of assessment tools for development and judgement of student performance (for non NSETS endorsed placement supervisors this training will be required);
- measures are adopted for achieving consistency in the assessment process;
- appropriate arrangements are in place in cases of student failure of placement;
- arrangements are in place for input from the programme team and tutors for approving the quality of the practice agency and supervision and supporting the student throughout the placement (**see Guidance Note on NSETS website**);
- arrangements for students in employment-based placements have clearly detailed written agreements;

- practice opportunities are provided in a range of different organisational settings, while taking full cognisance of the face-to-face requirements of the practice;
- practice arrangements are monitored annually;
- equally robust arrangements apply for placements overseas.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain:

- a clear description of the criteria and process used for selecting placement sites, and details of expectations/role of students during placement;
- a summary of practice placement specifications in table format;
- a list of approved placement sites and indication of where there are NSETS endorsed practice teachers (see template in **Appendix 4**);
- a clear specification of practice allocation across the length of the programme;
- details of systems to track face-to-face practice with young people;
- a policy available to students, practice agencies and employers outlining the requirements for all practice placements and how they meet learning outcomes at the different levels of the programme;
- a comprehensive booklet with full details of all practice arrangements (including aims, objectives and learning outcomes for the various practice elements) for students and all those involved in managing, co-ordinating or supervising practice students.

Information must also be provided on:

- assessment methods;
- the roles of all partners and individuals involved in the practice programme;
- administrative arrangements and responsibilities for setting up placements - role of student, tutor and others involved, the latter to include (where applicable) contractual procedures with employers, procedures for conflict resolution, procedures for establishing placement contracts, including any payment;
- arrangements for ensuring that students receive the required visits from a tutor during their placements;

Continued on next page

Evidence continued from previous page

- arrangements for ensuring that tutors visiting students on placements have up to date safeguarding approval;
- briefing procedures, liaison with, support and training offered to the practice agencies and teachers;
- details and guidelines for students' placement reports and other required assignments;
- emergency procedures - personal, professional, financial;
- a rationale for the distribution of time and scheduling of block and/or concurrent practice;
- arrangements for ensuring the appropriate NSETS recognised professional qualification of practice teachers used, with criteria for recruitment, selection and training (including the induction programme for new teachers) of practice teachers, and a budget for overall practice programmes;
- staffing arrangements for establishing and maintaining a pool of suitable placements (a list of placements to be included with the submission), coordinating placements and supervising practice;
- the means by which early intervention can be made to improve the student placement where circumstances demand it;
- how the quality of practice placements is assured on a continual basis, including procedures for profiling locations and keeping them under review to ensure that the development of students' skills and experiences is delivered in suitable settings, and procedures for vetting and/or removing unsuitable locations;
- the latest external examiner or other annual evaluation report on the operation of the practice aspects of the programme.

12. Student Handbook

CRITERIA

Institutions must verify that:

- a current and comprehensive handbook for the programme will be made available to all students at the commencement of each year of the programme.

EVIDENCE

Submissions must contain the current edition of the student handbook. It is expected that this would normally contain:

- a curriculum outline;
- information on assessment procedures, methods and deadlines;
- relevant administrative and managerial information;
- information about sources of formal and informal assistance;
- advice and support for specific groups of students in keeping with equality and diversity principles, equal status legislation and affirmative action programmes;
- information on student rights, including the formal academic appeals procedure;
- any supplementary documentation that is provided annually in relation to the academic level.



Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Example of Mapping NOS against Modules

VALUES											
5.4		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
5.3		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
5.2		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
5.1		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
4.4		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
4.3		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
4.2			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
4.1				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
3.3		✓		✓	✓						✓
3.2			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
3.1			✓	✓	✓						
2.4		✓	✓	✓	✓						
2.3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2.2											
2.1								✓			
1.4		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		
1.3					✓	✓			✓		
1.2					✓	✓			✓		
1.1					✓	✓			✓		
Module Title											
Module Code											

APPENDIX 2

Sample of Staff Role Table

Name of Institution:																			
Programme Title:																			
Staff Name	Core	Full time	Part time	Main Support / Occasional / Visiting	NSETS / JNC Recognised Qualification	Modules	Team Role*	Other Roles / Responsibilities											

*Team Role may include, for example, team leader, year head, placement coordinator. Include as many roles as are relevant.

APPENDIX 3

May be adapted as appropriate.

Overview of Programme Structure

Programme Title:

	Year 1 Modules	Credits	Assessment Method	Semester (Tick as appropriate)			Fieldwork Placement in hours			Other Relevant Activities/Comments
				S1	S2		S1	S2		
Year 1										
Year 2										
Year 3										
Year 4										

APPENDIX 5

Glossary of Acronyms

AP(E)L	Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) learning
CETYCW	Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
HEI	Higher Education Institution
JNC	Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers
LSIS	Learning Skills Improvement Service
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQSF	National Quality Standards Framework
NSETS	North/South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work
NYA	National Youth Agency
NYWAC	National Youth Work Advisory Committee
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior learning
SSC	Sector Skills Council



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