

# The North/South Education and Training Standards Committee for

## Youth Work (NSETS)

### Final Terms of Reference

Approved December 2018

#### Introduction

The Terms of Reference (TOR) have been drawn up by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in consultation with the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI), the Education Authority (EA) and the Joint Chairs of the NSETS.

#### 1 Title

- 1.1 The North/South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work will be known by the acronym NSETS.

#### 2. Background

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 and Youth Affairs) in recognition of the need for an All-Ireland framework for the professional endorsement of youth work education and training which would ensure and support best practice and facilitate professional mobility and exchange on both a north/south and an east/west basis. NSETS is a member of the Joint ETS Forum that includes the ETS in each of England, Scotland and Wales.

#### 3 Purpose

- 3.1 NSETS is responsible for the professional endorsement of under graduate and post graduate youth work education programmes in higher education institutions on the island of Ireland.
- 3.2 Professional endorsement represents a non-statutory formal recognition by the youth work sector itself that given qualifications, awards or programmes have reached certain minimum standards or met prescribed criteria. It is to be distinguished from academic validation which will continue to be a matter for the relevant educational institutions and authorities, north and south.

#### 4 Functions

- 4.1 NSETS will work to ensure and promote quality standards in under graduate and post graduate education and training of youth workers through an endorsement process based on a rigorous assessment of all aspects of programme context, content and delivery.
- 4.2 In conferring its endorsement on programmes of professional formation the NSETS seeks to promote the highest standards of professional education and training and expects that

graduate practitioners will be equipped with the essential philosophy, skills, knowledge and aptitudes that are necessary in the contemporary world of youth work.

- 4.3 NSETS will be responsible for the preparation, dissemination and review of criteria, guidelines and procedures for endorsement and accreditation.

## 5 Membership

- 5.1 In accepting nominations for appointment to NSETS the DCYA and DENI (with advice from YCNI) seek to bring a wide range of interests and experience in youth work education and training.
- 5.2 Membership shall be for a term of three years (unless terminated before that time), following which, members may be eligible for re-appointment for a second three year term. An appropriate succession plan should be put in place to ensure business continuance. Each of the joint Chairs will have their performance reviewed annually by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland for the Northern Chair in line with YCNI Board requirements and DCYA for the Southern Chair.
- 5.3 The NSETS Committee will consist of 16 nominated members, 8 members to represent each jurisdiction. The Committee members from each jurisdiction will nominate, for approval by the relevant Department, a chairperson to assume the responsibility of Joint Chair of NSETS.
- 5.4 Members are expected to play a full and active part in the work of NSETS, including endorsement visits to institutions, when required. Members failing to attend three meetings in succession may be replaced (within the same category) at the discretion of the Joint Chairs.
- 5.5 A member unable to attend a meeting may nominate an alternate for that meeting provided that the alternate is from the same general category of membership (see 5.6).
- 5.6 Membership of NSETS, by category, is as follows:

North	No. of Reps	South	No. of Reps
Voluntary Sector Employers	1	Higher Education	2
Youth Council for NI	2	National Youth Council of Ireland	1
Higher Education	1	Youth Work Employers	2
Education Authority	2	Youth Work Practitioners	2
Youth Work Training Board	1	Education and Training Boards	1
Union Representation	1	Ireland Association	

- 5.7 The Departments will attend NSETS Committee meetings in an ex officio capacity.
- 5.8 The NSETS Development Officer will be in attendance at meetings of NSETS.

## 6 Accountability

6.1 NSETS is accountable to both Departments; a formal biennial report of the Committee's work and endorsement role should be submitted to both departments at the end of the relevant calendar year. This report will be published on the NSETS website.

6.2 The Joint Chairs will normally be the main point of contact between NSETS and the Departments in respect of the accountability of NSETS.

## **7 Review**

7.1 A review of the Terms of Reference will be carried out by the Departments as appropriate. The TOR may be amended or supplemented as required before the periodic review in discussion with NSETS Joint Chairs.

## **8 Working Methods**

8.1 The NSETS Committee will approve the membership of Endorsement Panels appointed to assess each application for endorsement/ re endorsement. The Endorsement Panels will be chaired by a member of NSETS. NSETS may co-opt others on to Endorsement Panels in accordance with the agreed policy and procedures.

## **9 Meetings**

9.1 There will be a minimum of two NSETS Committee meetings per year.

9.2 A quorum shall consist of no fewer than six members (excluding ex-officio members), with at least three members from each jurisdiction, and must include one of the Joint Chairs.

9.3 NSETS will strive to reach decisions by consensus. In the unlikely event of a vote, a simple majority will prevail. In the event of a tie the matter will be re-tabled at the next meeting.

9.4 The location of the meetings will reflect the all-Ireland composition of NSETS based on best Value for Money.

## **10 Secretariat**

10.1 The secretariat for the work of the NSETS will be resourced by both Departments on a rotational basis as agreed by the DENI and the DCYA.

## **11 Conflict of Interest**

11.1 NSETS members are responsible for notifying the Secretariat of any potential conflicts of interest which will be recorded on a formal register. At the outset of each meeting, members will be reminded that they are required to declare specific conflicts of interest as they move through the agenda. Where a conflict of interest arises, the Chair will determine appropriate action to be taken.

## **12 Sharing of Information and Resources**

12.1 The Departments and the Committee are committed to open government and to meeting their responsibilities under respective Freedom of Information legislation. In addition, both parties shall comply with the requirements of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

