

FORUS TRAINING

Quality Assurance Manual

Item	Detail
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Approved by	QAAGC
File Reference	P1 S1 Forus Training Quality Assurance Manual
Replaces	Core QAM V8 (Aug 2025), BL QAM V2 (Mar 2023), FO QAM V1 (Jun 2025)
Guideline Alignment	QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016; QQI Statutory QA Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes 2023; PHECC Quality Review Framework Standard (STN020) and PHECC Responder Certification Policy (POL055)

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Document Amendment History

Date	Version	Summary of Amendments
2006	V1	Originally drafted
2007-2020	V1.1-V3	FETAC agreement, CAS updates, QQI re-engagement, re-ordered to Core QA Guidelines 2016
2022	V4-V5	Post-panel amendments; QAAGC updated to include risk management; blended learning references removed as directed
2023	V6	Supporting documents referenced and linked
Dec 2024	V7	Mission statement refined to include pre-hospital emergency care training
Aug 2025	V8	Updated organisation chart with named staff
Jun 2026	V9	Consolidated Core QAM V8, Blended Learning QAM V2, and Fully Online QAM V1 into a single manual governing quality assurance across all three modes of delivery. BLSC and OLSC references removed (both disbanded; functions absorbed by QAAGC). QA Officer role description updated to reflect combined operational and strategic function. Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist role consolidated into single named post. DLE/VLE/LMS terminology standardised throughout. Registrar role added to governance structure. ABC acronym standardised as 'Active Blended Connected'. Approved by QAAGC following QQI extension of scope to include Fully Online (Synchronous + Asynchronous, National) delivery (June 2026).
Aug 2026	V10	Chapter 21 added to provide clarity on adherence to PHECC Standards.

Glossary of Key Terms

The following key terms are used throughout this manual. Additional acronyms are listed in Appendix 1.

Term	Definition
Active Blended Connected (ABC)	A rapid, visual, and collaborative learning design method used at Forus Training to map learning activity types across synchronous, asynchronous, and on-site delivery. Guides decisions on the appropriateness of blended and online modes for new programme development.
ADDIE	Instructional design framework: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation. Used alongside ABC for online and blended programme development.
Asynchronous Learning	Learning that does not occur in real time; learners engage with content, activities, and quizzes at their own pace via the LMS.
Blended Learning	A type of programme where teaching, learning and assessment occur using a mix of on-site and online learning, with the online components taking place synchronously, asynchronously, or in combination (QQI, 2023, building on Garrison and Kanuka, 2004). Blended learning programmes always include an on-site element.
Component (Module) Session Framer	A planning tool used by Forus Training to map the learner experience across all modes of learning. Once finalised, it forms the Programme and Assessment Pack.
Digital Learning Environment (DLE)	The complete digital ecosystem used to support teaching, learning, and administration at Forus Training. Comprises the LMS (Administrate), supporting platforms (Zoom, Google Workspace, ClickUp, HubSpot, Phorest), and the learner-facing portal my.forustraining.ie.
eLearning / eTeaching	Learning or teaching delivered through electronic technology, e.g. LMS sessions (eLearning) or virtual tutorial sessions (eTeaching).
Evergreen Content	Content that will not lose relevancy over time and can be reused without modification.
on-site	Teaching and learning where Trainers and Learners physically meet at a training venue.
Flipped Classroom	A pedagogical model where Learners engage with LMS content before attending a synchronous session, enabling class time to focus on discussion, clarification, and activity.
Fully Online Learning	A mode of education where teaching, learning, and assessment occur online-synchronously, asynchronously, or in combination-with no on-site instruction required.
Learning Management System (LMS)	The core platform used by Forus Training to deliver, manage, and track educational courses and training programmes. The LMS in use is Administrate, accessible via my.forustraining.ie.
Learning Mode(s)	Modes in use at Forus Training: on-site; Blended (on-site + virtual synchronous and/or asynchronous); Fully Online (synchronous + asynchronous, no on-site requirement).
Spotlight Learner	A learner who may require additional assistance or support. This term is preferred over 'at risk learner' to reduce unconscious bias.
Student Information System (SIS)	Administrate is also used as the SIS, tracking and recording learner progress, registration, scores, attendance, and academic records.

Synchronous Learning	Learning that occurs in real time; Trainers and Learners participate simultaneously, e.g. via Zoom virtual tutorial sessions.
Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)	The use of digital tools and infrastructure to improve learning environments in both classroom and remote settings.
Timely Content	Content that may change due to legislative, best practice, or procedural updates; flagged for review before being reused.
UDL	Universal Design for Learning. A framework used by Forus Training to ensure accessible, inclusive design of all learning materials and activities.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	Used interchangeably with DLE to describe the wider digital ecosystem; the LMS (Administrative) is the core component of the VLE/DLE.

Contents Overview

This manual is organised across five parts, aligned with QQI's 2023 Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes and the QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016.

Part	Title
Part 1	Governance, Management and Quality Culture
Part 2	Organisational Context (Strategy, Infrastructure, Staff, Partnerships)
Part 3	Programme Context (Development, Curriculum, Assessment, Evaluation)
Part 4	Learner Experience Context (Thinking About Study, Support, Equality, Outcomes)
Part 5	Cross-Cutting Systems (Data, Public Information, External Parties, Self-Evaluation)
Appendices	Acronyms Policy Register Document Index

Background and Context

Forus Training was established in the year 2000 as REDE Computer Training Ltd., trading as Forus Training, and is an independent training company headquartered in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. The organisation is led by its founder and Managing Director, Lisa O'Connell. Forus Training delivers training nationally across a range of accredited and non-accredited programmes in areas including early years education and care, health and social care, business, commercial cleaning, caretaking, horticulture, and pre-hospital emergency care.

Forus Training values its status as a provider of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) awards. The organisation is committed to providing the maximum access to persons of all ages and backgrounds and to achieving quality and excellence in all aspects of its work. Awards offered range from NFQ Level 3 to Level 6 across Major, Minor, and Special Purpose Award classes.

Forus Training achieved QQI Re-engagement approval in June 2022. Blended Learning was approved as a mode of delivery in April 2023 (PAEC, 25 April 2023). In June 2026, QQI approved an extension of scope to include Fully Online (Synchronous + Asynchronous, National) delivery, subject to four conditions of approval.

This Quality Assurance Manual consolidates three previously separate manuals-the Core QAM (V8, August 2025), the Blended Learning QAM (V2, March 2023), and the Fully Online Learning QAM (V1, June 2025)-into a single, coherent document governing quality assurance across all three modes of delivery.

PART 1

Governance, Management and Quality Culture

Chapter 1: Governance and Management of Quality

1.1 Governance

Forus Training is committed to a governance process that is faithful to the provision of further education and training and reflective of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (and 2019 amendment). Forus Training's governance is structured to ensure separation of powers between academic and commercial decision-making, protecting academic integrity from commercial influence.

Governance is built on eight principles: Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus Orientation, Equitable and Inclusive practice, Effectiveness and Efficacy, Accountability, and Participation. These principles apply equally across all modes of delivery: on-site, blended, and fully online.

1.1.1 Committee Structure

The Forus Training governance structure comprises two core committees-the Commercial Governance Committee (CGC) and the Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC)-supported by development, review, and sub-committees. The structure is designed to prevent the same personnel from holding repeated membership across committees and to maintain clear separation between academic and commercial decision-making.

Quorum requirements vary by committee, reflecting the different governance functions each body performs. For the QAAGC, quorum requires a minimum of three voting members with the Independent FET Advisor present; should the Advisor be unable to attend, a suitably qualified deputy, approved in advance by the QAAGC Chair, may attend in their place, and this must be noted in the minutes. For the PDAC, quorum requires a minimum of three voting members including the Head of Certification as Chair; the Independent FET Advisor attends in an advisory capacity and their absence does not prevent the committee from proceeding. For all ad hoc sub-committees - including the Organisational Review, Programme Development, Programme Review and Evaluation, Disciplinary, General Appeals, Academic Appeal, and Complaints Sub-Committees - quorum requires a minimum of three voting members as specified in the relevant Terms of Reference; the presence of an external or independent member is required where stated in those Terms of Reference. For the CGC, quorum requires a minimum of three voting members as specified in P1 S6. Decisions are ordinarily made unanimously across all committees. Where diverse opinion arises, the Chair calls a vote. The Independent FET Advisor's support is required to carry any motion at the QAAGC. The Chairperson holds a casting vote in the event of a tie. Interim decisions between meetings may be taken as Chair's action and must be reported to the next committee meeting.

Committee Key

Acronym	Full title	Purpose
CGC	Commercial Governance Committee	Maintains corporate structure, financial sustainability, HR compliance, and commercial governance. Chaired by an Industry Non-FE Executive.
QAAGC	Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council	Primary academic governance body. Holds ultimate authority for academic decision-making, QA oversight, programme approval, and review across all delivery modes. Chaired by the Independent FET Advisor.
PDAC	Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee	Monitors ongoing programme delivery and assessment quality. Reviews trainer and learner feedback, internal verification, and external authentication findings.
Org. Review	Organisational Review Sub-Committee	Ad hoc (5-year maximum cycle). Conducts full organisational self-evaluation; produces Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan.
Prog. Dev.	Programme Development Sub-Committee	Ad hoc. Develops new programmes to validation stage; determines staffing, delivery mode, assessment, and monitoring arrangements.
Prog. Review	Programme Review and Evaluation Sub-Committee	Ad hoc. Monitors and manages programme review; gathers evaluation data; develops programme improvement plans.

Acronym	Full title	Purpose
Disciplinary	Disciplinary Sub-Committee	Ad hoc. Manages cases of alleged staff or trainer misconduct in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
Gen. Appeals	General Appeals Sub-Committee	Ad hoc. Hears general appeals from learners and staff outside the academic integrity or assessment results process.
Acad. Appeal	Academic Appeal Sub-Committee	Ad hoc. Manages learner appeals against assessment outcomes under the Recheck, Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
Complaints	Complaints Sub-Committee	Ad hoc. Manages formal complaints from learners in accordance with the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Committee Membership Matrix

CHAIR = chairs the committee. Member = member. - = no role. Teal shading indicates the Chair of that committee.

Role	CGC	QAAGC	PDAC	Org.Review	Prog.Dev.	Prog.Review	Disciplinary	Gen.Appals	Acad.Appeal	Complaints
Independent FET Advisor (Chair, QAAGC)	-	CHAIR	Member	CHAIR	-	-	CHAIR	CHAIR	-	-
2nd Independent FET Advisor	-	-	-	CHAIR	-	-	-	-	-	-
Industry Non-FE Executive	CHAIR	Member	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Representative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Member	-	-
Subject Matter Expert	-	-	-	-	Member	CHAIR	-	-	CHAIR	-
Industry (Employer Representative)	-	-	-	-	Member	Member	-	-	-	-
Trainer Representative	-	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member	-	Member	-	Member
Learner Representative	-	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member	-	-	-	-
QA Officer	-	Member	Member	Member	-	Member	-	-	-	CHAIR
Prog. Dev. & Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist	-	-	Member	-	CHAIR	-	-	-	-	-
Head of Certification	-	Member	CHAIR	-	-	Member	-	-	-	-
Academic Manager	-	Member	Member	Member	-	Member	Member	-	Member	-
Registrar	-	-	Member	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Head of Operations (HR only)	Member	-	-	-	-	-	Member	-	-	-
Managing Director	Member	-	-	-	-	-	Member	-	-	Member
Programme Leader	-	-	-	-	Member	Member	Member	-	Member	-
Course Coordinator	Member	-	-	-	-	-	Member	-	-	-
Accounts Manager	Member	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Staff Organogram

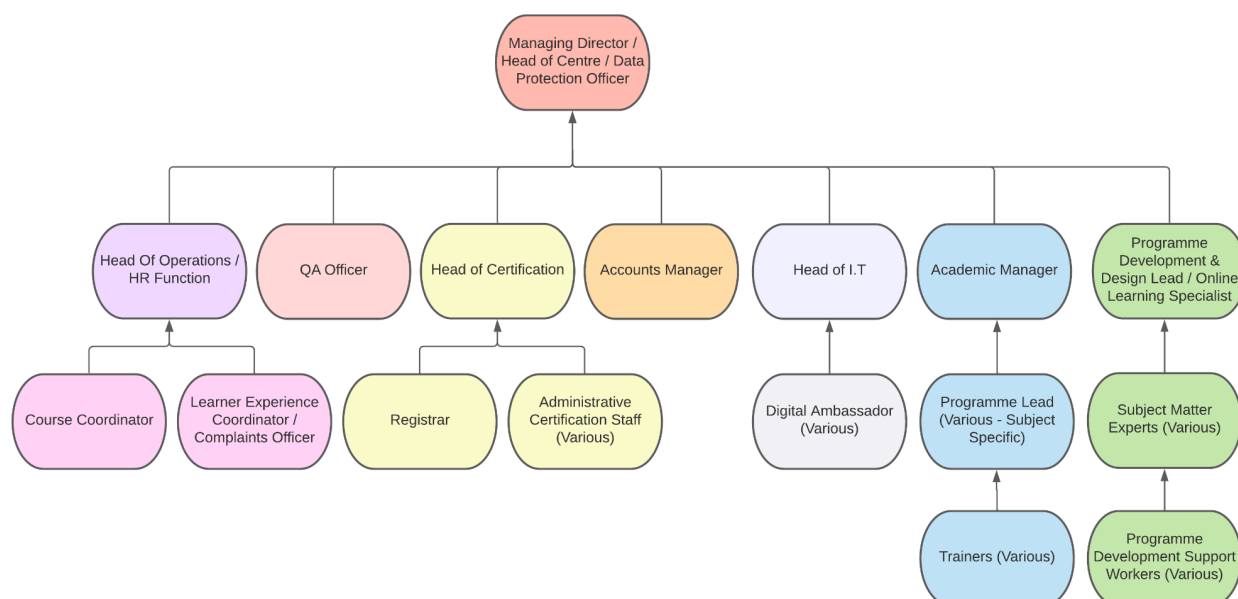


Figure 1: Forus Training Staff Organogram

1.1.2 Terms of Reference: Commercial Governance Committee (CGC) - P1 S6

Purpose	Maintain corporate structure and sustainability; support and manage a resource base sufficient to sustain the organisation's programmes, research, and related services.
Chair	Industry Non-FE Executive
Membership	Accounts Manager, Managing Director, Course Coordinator, Head of Operations (HR function).
Meeting Frequency	Quarterly
Key Responsibilities	Legal entity maintenance; financial risk management; financial sustainability and business case for programmes (including blended and fully online); HR regulatory compliance; fee and costing of programmes; complaints (at commercial level).

1.1.3 Terms of Reference: Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC) - P1 S4 C1

The QAAGC is the primary academic governance body of Forus Training. It holds ultimate authority for academic decision-making and provides independent oversight of all academic affairs, including teaching, learning, assessment, quality assurance, and programme development across all modes of delivery (on-site, blended, and fully online).

Purpose	Monitor and review QA and academic affairs across all modes of provision.
Chair	Independent FET (Further Education and Training) Advisor - an external, independent individual who presides over all QAAGC meetings, ensures professional and orderly conduct, promotes a culture of openness and debate, and brings impartial expertise to academic decision-making.
Membership	QA Officer (acts as link between PDAC and QAAGC); Industry Non-FE Executive; Trainer Representative (programme-dependent); Learner Representative (programme-dependent); Head of Certification; Academic Manager; Registrar.

Quorum	Minimum 3 voting members plus the Independent FET Advisor.
Meeting Frequency	Minimum 2 per calendar year, scheduled after the two busiest certification cycles. Additional meetings convened as required for programme validation, extension of scope, or urgent academic matters.
Duties - Ongoing	Develop policies and strategies for training and education; HR management and oversight; risk management; incidents and complaints oversight (including specific to blended and online delivery); monitor learner outcomes, progression and retention; review learner, trainer, and industry feedback; ensure consistency of academic standards including under collaborative agreements; compliance with Further Education & Training Act 2012, QQI Act 2012, Safety Health & Welfare Act, Equality Act, GDPR.
Duties - QA Systems	Ensure policies align with QQI guidelines; oversight of PEL arrangements and collaborative agreements; review and document control of QA documentation; audit reports; monitor adherence to QA policies; dissemination of QA updates; review and approve updates to any aspect of the QA system.
Duties - Programmes	Identify potential new programmes; determine resource requirements; oversight of programme development; programme approval and re-validation; meeting with QQI panels; oversight of blended and fully online programme development and validation.
Duties - Digital Provision	Approval of new digital tools and platforms for blended and online delivery; oversight of the Digital Learning Environment (DLE/VLE); ensuring online provision does not disadvantage learners; review of data analytics and engagement monitoring for online learners.
Duties - Monitoring & Review	Formally assess and approve reports for awarding bodies; review external authentication reports; review annual programme review reports; manage ad hoc appeals review panel; monitoring of assessment deadlines.
Duties - External Regulatory Changes	Standing agenda item to review updates from QQI, PHECC, and other accrediting bodies; QA Officer summarises updates at each meeting; mandatory review cycle initiated if course content is affected.
Duties - Disciplinary Oversight	Manage cases of alleged academic misconduct and impropriety.

1.1.4 Development and Review Committees

Three types of ad hoc development and review sub-committees operate under the QAAGC:

Type 1: P1 S4 - Organisational Review Sub-Committee

Purpose	Implement the organisational review process; evaluate governance and QA effectiveness; develop improvement plans.
Chair	Independent FET Advisor (Second Independent FET Advisor if available)
Membership	Trainer Representative, Learner Representative, QA Officer, Academic Manager.
Frequency	Cyclical (5-year basis); as necessary.
Output	Self-evaluation report including recommendations; improvement plan with SMART goals.

Type 2: P1 S4 - Programme Development Sub-Committee

Purpose	Develop programme(s) to validation stage; determine staffing, delivery, assessment, and monitoring arrangements.
Chair	Subject Matter Expert
Membership	Industry (Employer Representative), Trainer Representative, Learner Representative, Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist, Programme Leader.
Frequency	As necessary (ad hoc).
Key Outputs	Programme Development Tools 1-11; validation application documents; CAS Programme Descriptor.

Type 3: P1 S4 - Programme Review and Evaluation Sub-Committee

Purpose	Monitor and manage programme review; gather evaluation data; develop programme improvement plans.
Chair	Subject Matter Expert
Membership	Industry (Employer Representative), Trainer Representative, Learner Representative, QA Officer, Head of Certification, Academic Manager, Programme Leader.
Frequency	25% of programmes per year on a 4-year cycle (periodic); as required.

1.1.5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee (PDAC) - P1 S5

Purpose	Management and monitoring of the validity, reliability, and transparency of programmes delivered by Forus Training.
Chair	Head of Certification
Membership	Independent FET Advisor, QA Officer, Academic Manager, Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist, Registrar, Trainer Representative (programme-dependent), Learner Representative (programme-dependent).
Meeting Frequency	3 times per calendar year (after the busiest certification cycles in February and August).
Key Responsibilities	Monitor teaching, learning, attendance, and assessment methods; review learner outcomes, progression, and retention; review external authentication reports; convene the Results Approval Panel (RAP); review cases of plagiarism and appeals where appropriate; review grade changes and assessment result trends.

1.1.6 Supporting Sub-Committees

Sub-Committee	Chair	Purpose
Disciplinary Sub-Committee (P1 S4 C2a)	Independent FET Advisor	Hear unresolved cases of alleged misconduct and academic impropriety (staff/trainers).
General Appeals Sub-Committee (P1 S4 C2b)	Independent FET Advisor	Review appeals on agreed procedure (non-grade related).

Academic Appeal Sub-Committee (P1 S5 C1)	Academic Subject Matter Expert	Review final appeals of examination/assessment grades.
Complaints Sub-Committee (P1 S5 C2)	QA Officer	Consider complaints per P9 S13 Complaints Policy and Procedure.

1.1.7 Administration of Committee Meetings

The QA Officer schedules all QA, development, and review activities (including self-evaluation) for the forthcoming year at the end of each calendar year and acts as Secretary to all committees. In advance of each meeting, agendas are presented and circulated with a minimum of two weeks' notice. Members may raise additional items for the agenda via the Secretary. All committee proceedings are minuted by the Secretary and minutes are circulated for approval at the following meeting.

1.1.8 Inter-Committee Communication and Integrated Governance

To ensure integrated governance, a formal briefing from the Managing Director is a standing agenda item at each QAAGC meeting to report on relevant developments from the CGC, and vice versa. To facilitate informed discussion, the Academic Manager or QA Officer identifies relevant cross-committee topics in advance of each meeting to ensure they are formally tabled on the agenda. This ensures that academic governance and commercial sustainability remain aligned, preventing siloed decision-making

1.2 Risk Management

Forus Training's general approach is to minimise exposure to risk while recognising that in pursuit of its mission it may choose to accept an increased degree of risk. The approach is governed by [P1 S8 Risk Management Policy](#) and the [P1 S9 Risk Register](#).

Risk management involves annual risk assessment (January), risk scoring, identification of controls, appointment of risk owners, and decision-making informed by the process. The QAAGC has responsibility for risk management oversight. The [P1 S9 Risk Register](#) acts as a dashboard, and the Workable Improvement Notice (WIN) system connects risk identification to corrective action by individuals.

The risk register has been updated to account for the specific challenges of blended and fully online delivery, including: access to online materials; learner engagement tracking; learner identity verification; academic integrity in online assessment; trainer digital competency; IT infrastructure reliability; escalation to QAAGC in the event of data breaches or extended system outages.

1.3 Management of Quality Assurance

Ensuring a coherent QA system requires the contribution of all staff, Trainers, and Learners. Staff and Trainers are empowered to collaborate with Learners and stakeholders to co-produce a quality environment. Forus Training uses the Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) methodology as a framework for continuous improvement across all quality processes.

1.3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Key staffing roles and their QA responsibilities are outlined below. Full job descriptions are available at P5 S4 C2 - Job Descriptions - Roles and Responsibilities.

Managing Director / Head of Centre (1 WTE)

Responsible for all aspects of the organisation functioning effectively as a quality-led training organisation. Oversees introduction and facilitation of blended and fully online learning. Ensures appropriate resource allocation for all modes of delivery.

Ensures formal communication flow between the Commercial Governance Committee (CGC) and the Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC) by presenting quarterly CGC summaries to

the QAAGC and ensuring academic developments are considered in commercial planning. This ensures the organisation remains informed and cohesive across both streams.

Academic Manager (1 WTE)

Responsible for curriculum areas and cross-course learner provision; implements and influences academic policy in line with QQI-approved QA criteria; ensures effective delivery, support, and assessment of programmes across all modes; ensures integration of all planned learning experiences; ensures teaching staff are appropriately qualified for the mode of delivery.

Holds executive responsibility for the strategic management of academic affairs; acts as the primary liaison between the QAAGC and the Commercial Governance Committee to ensure alignment between academic and commercial strategic objectives.

Independent FET (Further Education and Training) Advisor

External, independent role defined in [P1 S1 C7 Externality Policy and Procedure](#). Presides over QAAGC meetings; demonstrates responsibility for reflective and effective communication; promotes a culture of openness and professional debate. Brings impartial, expert external perspective to all academic governance. Term of office: three years; may serve two consecutive terms. The current Independent FET Advisor holds specialist expertise in educational technology and digital learning, as described further in Section 3.1. The Externality Policy (P1 S1 C7) governs the term of office, renewal, and succession arrangements for this role, ensuring continuity of both independent oversight and digital learning expertise at governance level.

Registrar (1 WTE)

Responsible for the management and oversight of learner registration, enrolment, and records. Attends the PDAC and reports on learner registration data. Coordinates with the Head of Certification on results processing and certification.

Quality Assurance Officer (1 WTE)

The QA Officer holds a combined operational coordination and strategic leadership function in quality assurance. This role is responsible for:

- Developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing QA procedures across all modes of delivery, including fully online provision.
- Ensuring all QA-related documentation is current, version-controlled, and accessible to staff and Trainers.
- Analysis of academic data (KPIs), including exam results, grade distribution, attendance, and learner engagement metrics from the LMS.
- Scheduling, coordinating, and attending academic quality assurance governance committees; acting as Secretary to QAAGC.
- Assisting the Head of Certification in coordinating IV, EA, and RAP arrangements.
- Owning and maintaining the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
- Continuously monitoring and evaluating current QA practices; identifying areas for improvement and implementing updates in response to new technologies, pedagogical strategies, and regulatory requirements.
- Facilitating regular staff training and professional development on QA matters.
- Gathering feedback from stakeholders and analysing learner outcomes to ensure fully online learning environments are effective, accessible, and equitable.
- Collaborating with the QAAGC, IT services, and external partners to create a cohesive QA strategy aligned with Forus Training's goals.

- Monitoring PHECC faculty certification currency, maintaining the PHECC affiliate faculty register, and coordinating External Verification (EV) arrangements for PHECC-recognised provision (see Chapter 21).

Head of Certification (1 WTE)

Acts as primary point of contact between Forus Training and external awarding bodies. Ensures oversight of programme and learner assessment evidence; manages the QQI QBS system including uploading learner results, authenticity checks, and verification. Encompasses the examination secretary function. For online programmes, ensures identity verification and assessment integrity systems are in place.

Acts as the sole certifying authority for PHECC course outcomes: ensures Internal Verification is completed for every PHECC course, and that only the Head of Certification issues PHECC certificates (see Sections 21.6 and 21.8).

Certification Administrator (1 WTE)

Carries out administrative duties for all aspects of assessment entries and results. Assists Trainers and Learners with assessment queries. Reports to the Head of Certification.

Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist (1 WTE)

This is a single combined role, currently held by Seán Bray. Responsibilities span programme development and online learning specialisation:

- Management of new programme development across all modes.
- Planning and implementation of learning technology within the organisation.
- Administrative LMS support and software licensing.
- Coordination and oversight of online learning resource development.
- Advising on online pedagogical best practices; facilitating workshops and training for Trainers on technology integration.
- Providing professional development to enhance digital skills and pedagogies.
- Responsible for making programme information accessible to the public; marketing courses and managing social media platforms.
- Completed the Professional Diploma in Digital Learning Design with the Digital Learning Institute.

Head of IT

Responsible for preparation, integration, and security of systems to support all modes of learning. Ensures systems are introduced in a planned and methodical manner. Responsible for IT security, data protection, and cybersecurity across all platforms.

Digital Ambassador

Provides support to Trainers and Learners on digital systems and resources. Runs clinic-style digital support sessions (including Saturday Zoom sessions). Creates support materials and video resources for frequently asked questions. Available Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:30pm and Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm.

Course Advisor / Learner Experience Coordinator (1 WTE)

Acts as both Course Advisor and Learner Support Officer. Responsible for adherence to QA in how information is advertised to the public; communicates with prospective learners; advises on policy, procedures, and payment options. Assists learners in identifying funding sources and accessing support services.

Head of Operations - HR Function Only (1 WTE)

Oversees service delivery and HR compliance. Ensures compliance with HR regulations and legislation. Reports to the Managing Director.

Course Coordinator (1 WTE)

Responsible for day-to-day coordination of programmes; programme planning and support; learner registration; assisting with programme monitoring and review; complaints handling (where appropriate); and record keeping.

Programme Leader / Faculty Lead

Assigned to each QQI programme. Manages and coordinates the programme from development to certification in line with Forus Training QA policies. Engages with IV and EA processes; participates in committees; contributes to self-evaluation reports. For online programmes, ensures academic integrity of content, resources, and assessment.

Programme Trainers / Faculty

Deliver teaching and assessment in line with Forus Training QA guidelines. Integrate current research into delivery; provide pastoral care and feedback to learners; participate in programme boards and committees. Minimum qualification: one NFQ level above the level being taught. For online delivery, Trainers must complete Forus Training's 'Training Online' course before delivering an online programme.

External Authenticator (EA)

Independent expert providing authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment. Moderates representative samples of assessment material; provides recommendations for continuous improvement. Appointed by the Head of Certification, subject to ratification by QAAGC. Term of appointment: three years; renewable.

1.3.2 Quality Improvement

The QA Officer develops procedures to promote continuous improvement, including Preventive Action, Nonconforming Service, and Corrective Action procedures. Non-conformances are logged in the Quality Improvement Plan (P2 S3a) and linked to the Risk Register. Workable Improvement Notices (WINs) are issued for specific corrective actions relating to staff, Trainers, or learners.

→ [P2 S3 C6: Nonconformity and Corrective Action Service Policy](#)

→ [P5 S10: Workable Improvement Procedure](#)

1.4 Embedding a Quality Culture

1.4.1 Mission Statement

It is our mission to engage with learners on their continued educational journey through a holistic, learner-centred approach. We deliver high-quality, tailored, and relevant training programmes that empower individuals to achieve their personal, professional, and career goals. Our commitment extends to all areas of education and training, including pre-hospital emergency care courses such as First Aid Response (FAR) and Cardiac First Response Community (CFRC). We act with integrity, champion equality, and prioritise learner progression. Through a supportive learning environment and a culture of continuous improvement, we ensure that our programmes meet the highest standards of quality and relevance.

1.4.2 Values

Supportive -

We empower learners with the guidance, encouragement, and resources needed to succeed, no matter their starting point or goals.

Knowledgeable -

Our expert Trainers bring a wealth of experience and deep understanding across all areas of training, ensuring practical, real-world relevance.

Welcoming -

We create an inclusive environment where learners feel valued, respected, and confident in their abilities to learn and grow.

Flexible -

Our training solutions accommodate the diverse needs of learners, blending in-person, online, and hybrid methods to fit seamlessly into their lives.

Preparedness -

From personal development to life-saving skills, our programmes equip learners to respond effectively to real-world challenges.

Open and Fair -

Transparency, fairness, and accountability guide our interactions with learners, staff, and stakeholders, ensuring trust and mutual respect.

Chapter 2: Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

2.1 Documented Policies and Procedures

Forus Training maintains a comprehensive quality management system (QMS) to ensure that the services provided are consistent with all stakeholder requirements, national standards, and applicable legislation. All policies and procedures reflect a consistent format using a standard template, consistent terminology, and reporting structures.

Policies are documented, version-controlled, and published on the Forus Training Management Information System (MIS). Documentation is audited annually (February) using the P2 Internal Audit / Evaluation Form - Quality Documentation. The QAAGC holds accountability and oversight for all QA documentation.

The QA Officer ensures that updates approved by the QAAGC are reflected in all documents. A document control system maintains version numbers, update dates, and archive folders for previous revisions.

→ [P2 S1 C3: Development and Control of QA Documentation - Procedure and Guidance](#)

→ [P2 S3 C1: Quality Policy](#)

→ [P2 S3 C4: Internal Audit Policy and Procedure](#)

2.2 A Comprehensive, Integrated QA System

All staff and Trainers translate policy and procedure into daily practice. The QMS is integrated with Forus Training's MIS (Administrative) so that communication templates, forms, and workflow prompts are directly linked to the relevant policies. Staff are enabled to access all policies, procedures, and associated templates through the online shared drive.

The Programme Knowledge Base (P10) is a version-controlled repository of all programme-specific materials: scheme of work templates, QQI component specifications, validated assessment instruments, trainer materials, and learner materials. For blended and fully online programmes, the Knowledge Base includes Component (Module) Session Framers, LMS content specifications, and all associated digital assets.

Except where Chapter 21 states a PHECC-specific requirement, every policy, procedure and quality process described in this Manual applies equally to Forus Training's PHECC-recognised provision.

→ [P10: Programme Knowledge Base](#)

PART 2

Organisational Context

Chapter 3: Strategy, Management and Implementation

3.1 Strategic Approach to Blended and Fully Online Provision

Forus Training's commitment to blended and fully online learning is embedded in its Academic Strategy (P1 S4 Academic Strategy Policy). The decision to offer online learning has been strategic, well-funded (in excess of €1 million), and supported by a comprehensive development plan-not driven solely by individual enthusiasm.

Forus Training's capacity to design, deliver, and continuously improve blended and fully online programmes is supported by certified digital learning expertise at two levels. At the institutional level, the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist holds the Professional Diploma in Digital Learning Design (Digital Learning Institute), providing in-house certified expertise in instructional design, digital pedagogy, and online learning development. At the governance level, the Independent FET Advisor who chairs the QAAGC is an educational technology specialist, bringing certified expertise in digital and online learning directly into Forus Training's primary academic governance body. The QAAGC Chair's role encompasses both independent academic oversight and strategic educational technology expertise, ensuring that all decisions relating to blended and fully online programme development, approval, and review are informed by current specialist knowledge. This arrangement is formalised through a service level agreement and the Chair's term of office, renewal, and succession are governed by [P1 S1 C7 Externality Policy and Procedure](#), ensuring continuity of digital learning expertise at governance level.

Forus Training's evolution has been from 'technology enhanced' to 'technology enabled' provision. The organisation has achieved QQI approval for Blended Learning (April 2023) and Fully Online Learning (June 2026). Delivery of blended learning always includes an on-site element, consistent with QQI's 2023 Statutory QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes.

The Academic Strategy is aligned with a published Strategic Plan, which outlines Forus Training's commitment to expanding online learning, specifying goals for increasing learner engagement and improving learning outcomes through technology. The plan has been adapted to reflect both the Blended and Fully Online strategies, with mapped strategic objectives and KPIs.

Forus Training uses the Active Blended Connected (ABC) Learning Design Method as its primary framework for determining the appropriateness of fully online modes for new programme development. ABC provides a visual, collaborative, and rapid approach that supports informed decision-making about delivery modes. All programme development teams use the Fully Online Suitability Checklist (ABC) prior to validation proposals.

→ [P1 S4: Academic Strategy Policy](#)

3.2 Governance of Blended and Fully Online Provision

The QAAGC is the sole governing committee for all academic matters at Forus Training, including blended and fully online provision. The Blended Learning Steering Committee (BLSC) and the Online Learning Steering Committee (OLSC), which previously supported the development and pilot phases of these delivery modes, have both been disbanded. Their functions-oversight of blended and fully online programme development, piloting of new technologies, implementation of best practice, and policy update coordination-have been fully absorbed by the QAAGC.

Online learning expertise is embedded within QAAGC membership through the participation of the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist, who chairs the Programme Development Sub-Committee for online programme development.

The Programme Development Sub-Committee and the Programme Review and Evaluation Sub-Committee support the QAAGC in the development and review of programmes. Both are chaired in all cases by a

Subject Matter Expert, ensuring independence in the review of programmes that internal staff have been involved in developing. For online programmes, the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist is a standing member of both sub-committees and provides specialist input on digital pedagogy, LMS performance, and the quality of online learning resources, with all substantive quality judgements remaining with the Subject Matter Expert chair.

3.3 Decision-Making Principles for Programme Mode Selection

Programme proposals for online delivery require approval from both the QAAGC and the Commercial Governance Committee before proceeding to development. The QAAGC considers academic capacity, fit-for-purpose recruitment and admission arrangements, academic integrity in a remote context, and compliance of IV/EA/RAP processes with online delivery principles. The CGC considers viability, sustainability, costing models (including IT support, resource development, and staff training), and budget for development hours.

Market research is integral to online programme development. Forus Training analyses sector trends, employment market demands, learner surveys, employer feedback, competitor offerings, and financial projections to determine viability. Market research processes are documented in the programme development scoper tool (P6 S1 Tool 1 - Scoper) as part of the validation application.

→ [P6 S1: Programme and Service Development Policy](#)

Chapter 4: Policies, Regulations and Administrative Processes

4.1 Policy Framework

Forus Training maintains a comprehensive range of policies, procedures, and administrative processes to support quality assurance across all modes of delivery. All policies have been reviewed and updated to reflect blended and fully online delivery. Key policies governing online provision include:

Policy Reference	Policy Name	Scope
P9 S6	Blended and Online Learning Policy	All modes
P9 S9 C1	Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners Policy	All modes
P9 S9 C11	Security of Assessment Policy and Procedure	All modes; extended for online submissions
P9 S9 C8	Examinations Policy	on-site exams; online proctoring for FO programmes
P9 S8 C1	Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure	All modes; NAIN-aligned (see note below)
P9 S18	Recheck, Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure	All modes; accommodates remote learners
P9 S13	Complaints Policy and Procedure	All modes; accommodates remote learners
P4 S1.1	Data Protection (GDPR) Policy	All modes; extended for online data collection
P4	Identity Verification Policy	Fully online programmes
P3	Fees Policy and Procedure for Fully Online Learning Programmes	Fully online programmes
P2 S10	Communications Policy and Procedure	All modes; includes response time standards for online learners
P2 S2 C1	Equality Policy	All modes
P2 S2 C2	Dignity and Respect Policy	All modes; online conduct standards included
P2 S2 C3	Learner Code of Conduct	All modes; online etiquette included
P5 S6 C1	Trainer Handbook	All modes; online delivery requirements included

4.2 Administrative Processes for Online Learners

Forus Training has created systems and processes to ensure timely, efficient, and supportive interactions with learners across all modes. Key administrative arrangements include:

- Dedicated support channels: phone, email (hello@forustraining.ie), live chat (HubSpot on website), FAQ resources.
- Response standards: emails to the Forus Training office acknowledged within 24 hours; Trainer responses to draft submissions within 72 hours.
- CRM (Administrate/HubSpot) used to manage and personalise interactions with learners.

- Automated reminders for tutorial bookings, exam dates, and payment deadlines via Administrate and Phorest.
- Online registration and secure fee payment via Paythen.co; multiple payment options including instalments.
- Learner verification and identity confirmation process before LMS access is granted.

4.3 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Forus Training is responsible for compliance with all applicable legal and statutory obligations, including but not limited to:

Legal / Regulatory Area	Arrangements
QQI Act 2012 (as amended)	Full compliance with QA requirements; programme validation; PEL arrangements.
Data Protection / GDPR	P4 S1.1 Data Protection Policy; consent mechanisms; secure storage; regular staff training; data breach procedures; DPO oversight.
Child Protection	P9 S9 C13 Garda Vetting Policy; age verification mechanisms for online programmes; reporting procedures.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	P2 S2 C1 Equality Policy; accessible materials; UDL frameworks; reasonable accommodation.
Intellectual Property and Copyright	P6 Copyright Images and Fair Use; OER evaluation procedures; guidance for Trainers.
Health and Safety	Safety Statement; venue checklists; screen time and ergonomics guidance for online learners.
Professional / Statutory Body Requirements	PHECC accreditation requirements for applicable programmes; QQI programme validation conditions. PHECC recognition, Quality Review Framework Standard (STN020) and Responder Certification Policy (POL055) requirements for PHECC-accredited programmes (see Chapter 21); QQI programme validation conditions.

Chapter 5: Finances, Infrastructure and Resources

5.1 Investment and Budgetary Allocation

Forus Training has invested in excess of €1 million in digital infrastructure, staffing, and systems to support blended and fully online learning. A 5-Year Budget Plan for Fully Online Provision (2026-2030) has been developed and approved by the Commercial Governance Committee. Budgetary allocation for systems and staffing is set out in the Academic Strategy and reviewed annually by the Commercial Governance Committee.

Development costs for individual modules are budgeted at €10,000 per module. Staff workload models for online delivery explicitly account for synchronous engagement (1-2 hours/week/module), asynchronous engagement (2-3 hours/week/module), professional development (10-15 hours/term), and course maintenance (1-2 hours/week/course).

5.2 Digital Learning Environment (DLE)

The Digital Learning Environment (DLE) at Forus Training is the complete ecosystem used to support teaching, learning, and administration across blended and fully online programmes. The DLE comprises:

Component	Role in the DLE	Platform / Tool
Learning Management System (LMS)	Core platform for delivery, management, and tracking of educational courses and programmes; acts also as Student Information System (SIS) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool.	Administrate (cloud-based, SCORM-compliant)
Learner Portal	Secure learner-facing portal for identity verification, document submission, assignment upload, and result access.	my.forustraining.ie
Video Conferencing	Synchronous virtual tutorial sessions; Zoom integrates with Administrate for scheduling and attendance reporting. Sessions are recorded for QA monitoring.	Zoom
Content Authoring	Development of narrated presentations, quizzes, and interactive learning objects for LMS.	iSpring Suite and iSpring QuizMaker
Content Management	Version-controlled storage of all course materials, templates, and digital assets; shared collaborative workspace.	Google Workspace (Drive, Slides, Docs)
Project Management	Assignment of development tasks; QC checklists for content stages.	ClickUp
Plagiarism Checking	Automated originality reports on learner submissions.	Plagiarismcheck.org
Learner Communication / CRM	Prospective and enrolled learner communications; live chat; registration management.	HubSpot
Tutorial Booking	Booking of synchronous tutorial sessions.	Phorest app
Fee Payment	Secure online fee payment; instalment plans.	Paythen.co
Email / Collaboration	Staff and learner communications.	Gmail / Google Workspace
Contingency LMS	Backup LMS in the event of Administrate failure.	iSpring LMS

Note: Previous documentation referred to the LMS interchangeably as Administrate, VLE, DLE, or SIS. For clarity and consistency, this manual uses the following terminology throughout: (1) LMS refers specifically to

Administrate as the core platform; (2) VLE and DLE are used interchangeably to describe the wider digital learning ecosystem; (3) SIS refers to Administrate's learner records and tracking functionality.

5.3 Reliability, Security, and Contingency Arrangements

All platforms and services procured for online delivery are subject to evaluation criteria including: two-factor authentication; tracking and traceability; compatibility with Administrate via REST API; privacy/GDPR compliance; antivirus and threat reporting; backup procedures; and service level agreements providing 24/7 support.

Administrate provides 365-day support. The system status page shows uptime history and has proven to be routinely available. In the event of Administrate failure, all content is backed up on Google Workspace, which operates as both cloud-based and hardware-based storage. iSpring LMS serves as a contingency platform. Zoom provides 24/7 support with urgent ticket response within one hour.

Forus Training is recognised as an educational institution by Google, providing access to Google Workspace for Education as an additional contingency for communications, collaboration, and content storage.

Cybersecurity measures include: multi-factor authentication; access control and identity management; regular backup of data; encryption of stored assessment materials; cybersecurity awareness training for all staff (annually); and P4 S1 Information Systems Security Policy covering network security, device management, and disaster recovery.

→ [P4 S1.4: Disaster Recovery Plan](#)

→ [P4 S1.7: Data Breach Policy and Procedure](#)

5.4 Intellectual Property, Licensing, and OERs

All software in use is properly licensed. Service level agreements are in place with all key platform providers. Forus Training has developed guidance for Trainers on copyright and fair use (P6 Copyright Images and Fair Use). Open Educational Resources (OERs) are evaluated for quality, accuracy, and appropriateness before use (P6 Evaluate Open Resources Form).

5.5 Library Resources

Forus Training provides learners with access to relevant academic and professional resources via the LMS, including links to external databases, textbooks, and open educational resources relevant to each programme area. The Academic Writing Handbook and Referencing Handbook (developed by FESS for the FET sector) are made available to all learners via the LMS.

Chapter 6: Staff Training, Professional Development and Institutional Support

6.1 Recruitment and Appointment

The Academic Manager ensures that all staff involved in teaching on blended and/or online learning programmes are appropriately qualified. Minimum requirements for newly appointed Trainers include: a third-level degree (minimum) in a relevant discipline; a QQI Level 6 Training and Development qualification (or equivalent); minimum two years relevant industry experience; and digital competencies appropriate to the mode of delivery.

Digital competencies required for blended and online Trainers include: proficiency with the LMS (Administrative); use of Google Drive, Google Slides, ClickUp, voice recording, narration, and quiz development; use of Zoom for virtual sessions; and understanding of pedagogical approaches including flipped learning, ABC design, and UDL.

→ [P5 Human Resources Policy](#): *Staff Recruitment, Induction and Development Policy*

6.2 Induction

All new staff and Trainers must complete a Welcome Induction at Forus Training prior to delivering any programme. The induction covers: Forus Training's background, aims, ethos, and organisational structure; Trainer responsibilities and communication lines; academic and administrative procedures; QA policies; and the use of the LMS, DLE, and relevant digital platforms.

For blended and online delivery, Trainers are additionally required to complete Forus Training's in-house 'Training Online' course before delivering any blended or online programme. This course covers: the ABC Learning Design Method; Universal Design for Learning (UDL); the Community of Inquiry Framework; the 5 Stages of Teaching and Learning Online; use of Zoom, LMS, and ClickUp; and online assessment and academic integrity requirements.

6.3 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Forus Training takes a planned, strategic approach to CPD for all staff involved in blended and fully online delivery. At the start of each academic year, the Academic Manager and QA Officer identify and communicate structured CPD opportunities relevant to digital teaching competency, pedagogical practice, and subject matter expertise. Staff are informed of these opportunities in advance and participation is recorded in each staff member's CPD log, maintained using P5 S19 Staff / Trainer CPD Activity Report. The QA Officer monitors CPD participation and reports to the QAAGC, which reviews CPD activity as a standing item at each meeting.

All staff and Trainers are required to attend a minimum of three days' CPD annually, encompassing both pedagogical practice and subject matter expertise. CPD activity specifically supporting blended and online delivery includes: completion of Forus Training's in-house 'Training Online' course (mandatory before first online delivery); the AHEAD UDL Teaching and Learning Badge, completed online via the AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) website, required for the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist, the Academic Manager, and all Programme Leaders; and the AHEAD UDL Beyond the Classroom Badge, required for the Course Coordinator and Course Advisor / Learner Experience Coordinator, ensuring that UDL principles are applied consistently across both teaching and learner-facing administrative contexts; the Professional Diploma in Digital Learning Design with the Digital Learning Institute (completed by the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist); peer review and mentoring; formal qualifications; the annual Forus Training Trainer Training Day; and engagement with external communities of practice including the Irish Learning Technology Association

and relevant sector conferences. The Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist engages with the Digital Learning Institute community of practice to ensure Forus Training's online provision reflects current best practice.

For faculty delivering PHECC-recognised courses, CPD additionally includes maintenance of PHECC instructor certification on PHECC's defined recertification cycle (currently every two years). The QA Officer monitors PHECC certification expiry dates as part of the CPD log and ensures no faculty member is scheduled to deliver or assess a PHECC course on an expired certification.

→ [P5 S9: Staff Learning and Development Policy](#)

6.4 Performance Management and Appraisal

Trainers are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. The Academic Manager meets regularly with Trainers to discuss progress and performance. For blended and online delivery, the Academic Manager reviews a sample of recorded virtual tutorial sessions (aiming for 1 in every 10) and evaluates these against the Blended Learning Programme Rubric.

Where performance concerns arise, the Workable Improvement Notice (WIN) process is followed. Repeated non-compliance may result in disciplinary action under P5 S10. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee (P1 S4 C2a) handles unresolved misconduct cases.

→ [P5 S10: Workable Improvement Procedure and WIN Notices](#)

Chapter 7: Strategic Collaborations and Partnerships

7.1 Collaboration Policy and Process

Forus Training engages in collaborative provision as a first provider, as reflected in its approved scope of provision. All collaborative arrangements are risk assessed to ensure learners are advantaged. Partner organisations must fully understand the complexities of blended and online Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL). Due diligence is conducted at proposal stage, with QA Officer oversight of additional responsibilities for learners in a collaborative context.

All collaborative arrangements are governed by a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and comply with P1 S7 Educational Collaborative Arrangements - Governance Framework and Code of Practice. Formal agreements address roles, responsibilities, quality assurance, intellectual property, and learner protection.

All collaborative arrangements require approval and oversight by the QAAGC. The QAAGC ensures that online learning expertise is considered in any collaborative arrangement involving blended or fully online delivery.

→ **P1 S7:** *Educational Collaborative Arrangements - Governance Framework and Code of Practice*

7.2 Learners Outside of Ireland

Forus Training's current approved scope for fully online provision extends to National delivery only. Learners resident outside the Republic of Ireland are not currently accepted on QQI-accredited programmes. Blended learning programmes require learners to be available for in-person appointments in Ireland. Should Forus Training seek to extend to transnational delivery in the future, a further extension of scope application to QQI would be required, with documentation of due diligence, legal, and risk management arrangements.

PART 3

Programme Context

Chapter 8: Programme Development and Approval

8.1 Programme Development Process

Forus Training's programme development process is governed by P6 S1 Programme and Service Development Policy. All programmes are validated by QQI as Trainer-led. For blended and fully online programmes, the process is adapted to account for the specific requirements of online delivery modes, including a structured suitability assessment using the ABC method and the Fully Online Suitability Checklist.

The development process involves four stages:

Stage 1: Exploratory Stage (2-4 months) - Requires sitting of QAAGC

Step 1: Identification of potential new programmes - through community links, learner and trainer feedback, sector intelligence, and employer connections. For online programmes, this includes formal market research and demand analysis.

Step 2: Proposal presented to QAAGC using P6 S1 Tool 1 - Scoper. Includes: programme rationale; target market; ABC suitability assessment (for online programmes); market research documentation.

Step 3: QAAGC approves or declines the proposal. CGC approves budgetary costs. Both committees must support the proposal to proceed.

Stage 2: Programme Development Stage (3-6 months)

An ad hoc Programme Development Sub-Committee is convened. The committee develops the programme using Tools 2-11 (Programme Framer, Delivery Framer, Programme Structure Deviser, Assessment Scheduler, Learner Support Identifier, Programme Module Objective Developer, Content Developer, Learning Strand Mapper, Outcome and Content Mapper, Assessment and Outcomes Mapper).

For blended and online programmes, the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist takes a central role. The Component (Module) Session Framer is completed for each module, mapping the learner experience across all learning modes (on-site, synchronous virtual, asynchronous LMS). Assessment instruments (formative and summative) are developed in line with P6 S5 Development of Assessment Instruments.

All resources and media supporting online learning are subject to Subject Matter Expert (SME) review at three draft stages. This process is managed through ClickUp.

Stage 3: External Assessment (3-4 months - QQI dependent)

The validation application is submitted to QQI including: programme descriptor; self-evaluation against QQI criteria; evidence of PEL arrangements; and relevant fee. QQI conducts a desk review and convenes an expert panel. Forus Training responds to the panel report. QQI PAEC makes the formal validation decision.

Stage 4: Report Publication and Post-Validation

Following validation, the expert panel report is published on the QQI website and on www.forustraining.ie. Conditions and recommendations are addressed through the QIP.

→ [P6 S1: Programme and Service Development Policy](#)

→ [P6 S5: Development of Assessment Instruments - Formative and Summative](#)

8.2 Learner Admission, Progression, and Recognition

Forus Training operates an open registration policy for learners who fulfil programme requirements. Delivery options include: public programmes; funded/contracted programmes; in-house programmes; collaborative programmes; blended delivery; and fully online delivery.

Online applications for online learning programmes are assessed by suitably qualified staff. Applicants normally receive a response within 5-10 working days. Learner identity verification is required before LMS access is granted (P4 Identity Verification Policy).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and APEL are handled on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Certification in line with P9 S2 C1 RPL and Exemptions Policy. ATP (Access, Transfer, Progression) pathways are clearly communicated at the point of inquiry.

For fully online programmes, learners complete an online application, select a payment option, and receive automated email confirmation with LMS login details and instructions for booking virtual tutorial sessions via the Phorest app.

→ [P9 S2: Learner Recruitment and Registration Policy](#)

→ [P9 S2 C1: Recognition of Prior Learning and Exemptions Policy](#)

8.3 Programme Monitoring and Review

All QQI-validated programmes are subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic programmatic review (25% per year on a 4-year cycle). The review process is coordinated by the QA Officer and overseen by the QAAGC.

Ongoing monitoring uses: learner reaction forms (end of course); mid-course comment cards; course satisfaction surveys; trainer end-of-programme reports; internal verification reports; external authentication reports; peer review reports; and, for online programmes, LMS analytics (session access, quiz completion rates, engagement patterns, progression rates).

Periodic programmatic review involves formation of a Programme Review Sub-Committee, stakeholder consultation (learners, graduates, trainers, employers), data collection and analysis, report writing, and publication of the Programme Evaluation Report (PER) on www.forustraining.ie.

For blended and online programmes, the review additionally considers: learner satisfaction with online delivery modes; usability of the LMS; quality of synchronous sessions (sampled recorded sessions reviewed by Academic Manager); engagement analytics; accessibility and UDL implementation; and alignment with current best practice in online pedagogy.

→ [P6 S8 C10: Programme Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure](#)

8.4 Protection of Enrolled Learners

In accordance with Part 6 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and Section 65 of that Act, Forus Training has in place appropriate Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) arrangements for all programmes that charge fees and are three months or longer in duration. These arrangements ensure that, in the event of the cessation of a programme before its scheduled completion, enrolled learners are not disadvantaged and have access to a means of completing their studies or receiving a proportionate refund of fees paid.

PEL arrangements apply to Forus Training programmes at the point of validation, at the point of re-validation, and on an ongoing basis for all currently validated programmes that meet the triggering criteria. Forus Training's PEL arrangements are insurance-backed. The QA Officer is responsible for ensuring that the insurance policy is current and that PEL arrangements are in place for each applicable programme, and for communicating the status of these arrangements to the QAAGC at each scheduled meeting. The

QAAGC holds oversight of PEL compliance as part of its standing duties in relation to QA systems, policies, and procedures.

Learners are informed of the PEL arrangements in place for their programme at two points: at the pre-registration stage through programme information available on www.forustraining.ie, and at the induction stage through the Learner Pack and Learner Handbook. For programmes where PEL arrangements do not apply, learners are informed of this fact clearly. The details of current PEL arrangements for each applicable programme are maintained by the QA Officer and are available on request. Full details of Forus Training's PEL policy and procedures are set out in the PEL Policy and Procedure document, which is reviewed by the QAAGC on an annual basis and updated as required to reflect any changes to the programme portfolio or applicable legislation.

Chapter 9: Learning and Curriculum Design

9.1 Learner-Centred Curriculum

All programme design at Forus Training is learner-centred. Outcomes-led design supports consistent learner progression through clearly structured learning pathways. Programmes are designed with the intended mode of delivery in mind from the outset, ensuring the mode serves the pedagogy rather than driving it.

Programme design principles include: learner-centred development; subject-led rather than technology-led approaches; technology in the service of pedagogy; quality evaluation of Open Educational Resources (OERs); and interactive learning experiences.

9.2 Instructional Design Approach

Forus Training uses the Active Blended Connected (ABC) Learning Design Method as its primary instructional design framework. ABC provides a visual map of learning activity types (acquisition, collaboration, discussion, investigation, practice, production) across synchronous, asynchronous, and on-site learning modes. The Component (Module) Session Framer translates the ABC design into a detailed module plan, forming the basis of the Programme and Assessment Pack.

The ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) model is used alongside ABC for systematic programme development and continuous improvement.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is integrated across all programme design to ensure materials are accessible and inclusive for all learners, including those with disabilities or additional learning needs. Forus Training requires designated staff to complete AHEAD UDL badges appropriate to their role. The Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist, the Academic Manager, and all Programme Leaders are required to complete the AHEAD UDL Teaching and Learning Badge, ensuring that UDL principles are embedded in programme design and delivery. The Course Coordinator and Course Advisor / Learner Experience Coordinator are required to complete the AHEAD UDL Beyond the Classroom Badge, ensuring that UDL principles extend to learner communications, information provision, and support interactions. All badges are completed online via the AHEAD website. Completion is recorded in each staff member's CPD log and monitored by the QA Officer.

9.3 Delivery Modes and Learning Activities

Forus Training designs programmes across three modes of delivery:

Mode	Description	Key Activities
on-site	Trainers and Learners physically meet at a training venue. Always required as a	In-person instruction, skills demonstrations, examinations, work experience.

	component of Blended Learning programmes.	
Blended Learning	Integration of on-site and online elements. Blended learning always includes an on-site component; the precise proportion of on-site to online delivery is determined through the validated programme descriptor and managed by the QAAGC via the P6 S1 development process. Online elements include synchronous virtual tutorials (Zoom) and asynchronous LMS content.	on-site sessions, Zoom virtual tutorials, LMS narrated presentations, formative quizzes, discussion forums, work experience.
Fully Online (Synchronous + Asynchronous, National)	All teaching, learning, and assessment occurs online. No on-site instruction required. Synchronous live tutorials via Zoom combined with asynchronous LMS content.	Zoom live tutorials, LMS sessions, formative quizzes, discussion forums, asynchronous submission of assignments, online proctored examinations where applicable.

Virtual tutorial sessions (synchronous) are always recorded. Recordings are stored securely and reviewed by the Academic Manager for QA purposes. All learners are informed that sessions are recorded at the point of induction.

All synchronous virtual sessions are delivered through Zoom, which is integrated with Administrate for scheduling, attendance reporting, and link distribution. Sessions are designed using the flipped classroom model: learners engage with LMS content before attending synchronous sessions, enabling class time to focus on discussion, clarification, and activity.

Discussion forums on the LMS provide asynchronous peer-to-peer engagement, Trainer-moderated activity completion, and learner support. Trainers act as e-moderators within the forums.

The proportion of on-site, synchronous online, and asynchronous online delivery for each programme is set out in the validated programme descriptor and communicated to learners before registration through the programme page on www.forustraining.ie, in any brochures or promotional material and through interactions with the Learner Experience Coordinator.

9.4 Accessible Digital Resources

Forus Training uses iSpring Suite to develop programme content for the LMS. iSpring is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA. All narrated presentations are accompanied by a full transcript (created using HappyScribe). Fonts and colours meet high-contrast accessibility standards. Digital materials are compatible with screen readers (JAWS, VoiceOver, NVDA).

The Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist has ongoing responsibility for implementing alt text for images, keyboard navigation, and descriptive links across all online materials.

9.5 LMS Minimum Standards and Quality Assurance of Resources

All online materials are developed to comply with the LMS/DLE Minimum Standards established by Forus Training (see Section 5.2). Quality checks are carried out using ClickUp checklists at each stage of resource development. The SME is responsible for ensuring content and images are accurate. The Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist conducts an initial quality check of all materials prior to upload, verifying compliance with LMS minimum standards, accessibility requirements, and instructional design principles. All online learning resources are subject to final approval by the QAAGC before being made available to learners.

The Blended Learning Programme Rubric (Appendix 3 of the superseded Blended Learning QAM, now integrated into this manual's policy register at P6 S7) provides objective quality criteria for virtual tutorials, assessment, LMS content, culture of learning, academic ownership, and learner agency.

→ [P6 S1 Programme and Service Development Policy](#)

9.6 Work Experience

Work experience is a component of a number of Forus Training's validated programmes, including Early Childhood Care and Education (Levels 5 and 6), Healthcare Support, Nursing Studies, Horticulture, Special Needs Assisting, and other programmes where work-based learning is required by the QQI component specification. Work experience allows learners to apply the knowledge and skills developed through their programme in a real vocational setting, and is integral to the achievement of the relevant learning outcomes.

Host Organisation Approval

Host organisations are sourced through two routes: learners may propose a placement organisation themselves, or the Course Coordinator draws on Forus Training's maintained bank of approved host organisations. In both cases, host organisations are subject to approval by the Course Coordinator before a placement commences. Approval takes account of the suitability of the setting for the relevant programme learning outcomes, health and safety standards, and the capacity of the organisation to support the learner appropriately during placement. Host organisations receive an information letter from the learner, accompanied by P9 S9 C15 Work Experience Information for Host Organisations, which sets out the requirements of the placement. A signed P9 S9 C15 Work Experience Arrangements Form is obtained from the host organisation before the learner commences placement.

Garda Vetting

For programmes where the work placement involves working with children or vulnerable adults - including Early Childhood Care and Education, Special Needs Assisting, and Healthcare Support - learners are required to hold current Garda vetting clearance before commencing their placement. Vetting is coordinated by the Course Coordinator in accordance with P9 S9 C13 Garda Vetting Policy. Learners are informed of this requirement at the point of registration and must provide evidence of clearance before a placement is approved.

Supervision and Support

The Programme Lead is the primary point of contact for the learner throughout the placement period. Prior to commencement, the Programme Lead meets with the learner to discuss the placement requirements, the assessment tasks to be completed, and the expectations of the host organisation. During the placement, the Programme Lead conducts a minimum of one in-person site visit and at least one further phone or video check-in to monitor progress, discuss any issues arising, and liaise with the workplace supervisor. A record of all contact with the learner during placement is maintained by the Programme Lead. The Programme Lead completes a P9 S9 C12 Work Experience Trainer Site Visit Form during the in-person visit.

Learner Responsibilities

Learners are required to maintain an attendance log for the duration of their work experience using P9 S9 C12 Work Experience Attendance Log. On completion of the placement, the workplace supervisor completes a Supervisor's Report assessing the learner's performance and competence in the tasks assigned. This report is communicated securely to the Head of Certification and forms part of the learner's summative assessment evidence for the relevant component.

Quality Assurance of Work Experience

The overall quality of work experience arrangements is reviewed as part of the periodic programme review process, in line with P6 S8 C10 Programme Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure. The Head of Certification ensures the integrity of assessment outcomes arising from work-based components. Any issues arising during a placement are reported by the Programme Lead to the Head of Certification, and where necessary escalated to the QAAGC. Insurance arrangements covering learners on placement are confirmed by the Course Coordinator before each placement commences and are recorded on the learner's file.

Chapter 10: Learning Materials and Resources

10.1 Media Production and Digital Tools

Forus Training has invested in a media production infrastructure to support online learning. Tools in use include: iSpring Suite for narrated presentations; Google Slides for content development; Canva for graphic design; HappyScribe for audio transcription; and ClickUp for project management and quality assurance workflows.

The Programme Development Team (comprising the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist, Programme Leaders, and Subject Matter Experts) is responsible for the development and quality assurance of all online learning resources. The Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist performs the instructional design quality check function, with final approval of all resources resting with the QAAGC.

10.2 Content Management and Version Control

All course materials are developed and stored on Google Workspace (Google Drive). A version-controlled system is maintained, with prior versions archived. Content is tagged as 'Evergreen' (can be reused without modification) or 'Timely' (requires review before reuse due to legislative or best practice changes).

The centralised approach to content development ensures consistency across modules and relieves pressure from Trainers who may have limited experience with content creation technology. Templates for slide decks are designed with Administrate in mind to ensure LMS compatibility.

10.3 OER Quality Evaluation

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are subject to quality evaluation before use. The P6 Evaluate Open Resources Form is used to assess: relevance to learning outcomes; accuracy and currency; copyright and licensing; accessibility; and technical compatibility with the LMS.

10.4 Testing and Review of Digital Materials

New or evolving digital technologies are evaluated by the QAAGC (with input from the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist and the Head of IT) before adoption. Evaluation criteria include: integration with existing technology; ease of use; accessibility to learners; pedagogical value; life expectancy; and hardware/software specifications.

Following initial use, all digital materials are reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring process and formally evaluated during periodic programmatic review.

Chapter 11: Assessment and Feedback Practices

11.1 Principles of Assessment

Assessment at Forus Training is underpinned by the QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines (revised 2018). Key principles are: learners are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement; assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes; assessment promotes effective teaching and learning; assessment procedures are credible; assessment methods are reviewed and renewed; and learners are well-informed about how and why they are assessed.

11.2 Assessment Design

Assessment strategies are developed by the Programme Development Sub-Committee at programme design stage and reviewed on an ongoing basis. All assessments must: align with the QQI Component Specification and MIMLOs/MIPLOs; include both formative and summative elements; be subject to SME review; be approved by the QAAGC.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is integral to all Forus Training programmes across all modes. For blended and online programmes, formative assessment includes:

- Automated LMS quizzes at the end of each learning outcome, providing immediate automated feedback. Quizzes can be retaken multiple times for self-assessment.
- Discussion forum contributions and peer feedback.
- Draft submission review by Trainers, with personalised feedback provided within 72 hours.
- Mid-course comment cards (on-site) or digital check-in mechanisms (online).

Summative Feedback

Following summative assessment, Learners receive feedback that confirms the outcome of their assessment against the approved marking rubric and, where applicable, identifies the specific criteria met or not met. Summative feedback differs from formative feedback in that its primary purpose is to confirm achievement of the module or programme learning outcomes for certification purposes, rather than to support ongoing development within the module. Summative feedback is provided in writing, using the marking rubric and any accompanying assessor comments, and is communicated to the Learner within the timeframe set out in Section 11.5 (Submission, Marking, and Feedback). Where a Learner does not achieve a passing grade, the feedback provided identifies the specific area or areas of the assessment that did not meet the required standard, supporting the Learner's understanding of the outcome and informing any subsequent repeat or reassessment attempt under Section 11.5. Summative assessment results and feedback are subject to internal verification before being communicated to the Learner, and are reviewed at certification stage by the Results Approval Panel.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are developed in line with the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. Summative components include:

- Portfolio / project assignments: submitted via my.forustraining.ie with signed Learner Declaration and Authorship Statement. Plagiarism check (Plagiarismcheck.org) is run on all submissions.
- Skills demonstrations: conducted in person or, where the programme descriptor permits, recorded as video evidence (in line with P9 S9 C12).

- Written examinations: conducted in-person at Forus Training examination centres. For fully online programmes where examinations are required, online proctoring is used in accordance with P9 S9 C8 Online Exam Proctoring Policy.

Skills Demonstrations - Video Evidence Policy

Where a validated programme descriptor permits the use of video-recorded evidence in place of direct observation for a skills demonstration component, Forus Training applies the following procedure to ensure the validity, authenticity, and consistency of assessment.

Video evidence is only accepted as a summative assessment artefact where this is explicitly permitted in the validated programme descriptor and approved assessment brief for that component. Where direct observation by a qualified assessor is required by the QQI component specification, video evidence alone does not satisfy this requirement and in-person assessment is arranged.

Where video evidence is permitted, the following conditions apply. The recording must capture the learner performing the assessed task in full, in the required setting, within the timeframe specified in the assessment brief. The learner must complete and sign a P9 S9 C11 Learner Declaration and Authorship Statement confirming the recording is their own unassisted work. The Trainer assesses the recorded evidence against the approved marking rubric in the same manner as they would assess a live skills demonstration. The Head of Certification applies a plagiarism and authenticity check on submission and maintains a record of the recording alongside the completed marking documentation. Video evidence is subject to internal verification and external authentication in the same manner as all other summative assessment evidence. Recordings are stored securely on a backed-up server with access restricted to the Trainer, Head of Certification, Internal Verifier, and External Authenticator for the duration required under the data retention policy.

Any concerns about the authenticity of a video submission are reported to the Head of Certification and managed under P9 S8 C1 Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure.

11.3 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is promoted at every stage of the learner journey. Learners are informed of Forus Training's Academic Integrity Policy at induction, in the Learner Handbook, and during virtual tutorial sessions. Plagiarism is detected using Plagiarismcheck.org. Trainers receive mandatory training on detecting academic misconduct (integrated into the 'Training Online' induction programme).

→ [P9 S8 C1: Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#)

11.4 Quality Assurance of Assessment

The QAAGC and PDAC jointly govern assessment quality. The PDAC (chaired by the Head of Certification) manages and monitors the validity, reliability, and transparency of assessment. The QAAGC ratifies all assessment decisions made by the PDAC.

Internal verification (IV) is conducted by the Head of Certification. External authentication (EA) is conducted by an independently appointed External Authenticator. All results are processed through the Results Approval Panel (RAP) before submission to QQI.

The Results Approval Panel (RAP) consists of: QA Officer, Academic Manager, Head of Certification, and Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist. The RAP reviews EA feedback and raises any matters to the QAAGC.

Internal verification is conducted by the Head of Certification using a 100% sampling strategy, meaning all learner assessment evidence submitted within a certification cycle is subject to IV before results are presented to the Results Approval Panel. This approach ensures that every piece of assessed work has been checked for consistency, accuracy, and procedural compliance before submission to QQI.

The IV process addresses the following checks across all submitted assessment: that assessment briefs and marking schemes are approved and fit for purpose; that all learner evidence is present and complete; that markings are consistent with the approved rubric and that grades have been calculated correctly; that Learner Declaration and Authorship Statements are signed and on file; that there are no data entry errors in award codes, learner names, or result entries; and that grading is consistent across assessors where more than one assessor has marked the same module.

Findings arising from IV are documented using P9 S15 Internal Verification Report and are presented to the Results Approval Panel (RAP) at each certification cycle. Where the IV process identifies errors, omissions, or inconsistencies, these are rectified before results are submitted to QQI. Recurring issues identified through IV are escalated to the PDAC and recorded in the Quality Improvement Plan. IV KPIs are reported to the QAAGC and reviewed as part of the annual audit of learner supports and teaching (October).

11.5 Submission, Marking, and Feedback

Assessment submission deadlines are communicated to learners in the assessment brief and in Forus Training's published Key Dates document. Learner evidence can be submitted via: upload to my.forustraining.ie; registered post; or by hand at Forus Training's Castle House office.

Marking is completed in accordance with approved rubrics and marking schemes. Cross-moderation is carried out for borderline and failed grades. Feedback is returned to learners with marked work; KPIs are monitored for timely marking, feedback provision, and result communication. Results are communicated within one week of the EA visit by secure email.

Where a learner does not achieve a passing grade on a summative component, the repeat and reassessment arrangements set out in the validated programme descriptor apply. Learners are informed of these arrangements at induction and in the Learner Handbook, including the conditions under which resubmission is permitted, the maximum number of attempts allowed, and any effect on achievable grade outcomes. Applications for repeat assessment are managed by the Head of Certification in accordance with P9 S9 C4 and P9 S18. Compassionate consideration for extensions or additional attempts on medical or personal grounds is available under P9 S7 C6 Compassionate Consideration Policy.

→ [P9 S9: Quality Assuring Assessment Handbook](#)

→ [P9 S16: External Authentication Policy](#)

→ [P9 S17: Results Approval Panel - Policy and Terms of Reference](#)

→ [P9 S18: Recheck, Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#)

Chapter 12: Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

12.1 Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Forus Training is committed to a culture of continuous improvement in which asking 'why?' is encouraged and ongoing internal monitoring is supported on a planned basis. External audits and reviews by accreditation bodies are welcomed as opportunities for growth.

The primary instruments for continuous improvement are: the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP, P2 S3a); the Workable Improvement Notice (WIN) system; internal audits; self-evaluation; external authentication feedback; learner and trainer feedback; and QAAGC oversight.

12.2 Learning Analytics for Online Programmes

The Programme Development Team uses LMS analytics to monitor engagement, retention, completion, and curriculum effectiveness for blended and online programmes. The following data sets are collected and reviewed:

Metric	Source	Frequency	Reviewed By
Session access / login rates	Administrative LMS	Weekly (flagged by Trainer)	Trainer, Academic Manager
LMS content completion rates	Administrative LMS	Per module	Trainer, Academic Manager
Formative quiz scores and attempt rates	Administrative LMS / iSpring	Per module	Trainer, Head of Certification
Attendance at synchronous sessions	Zoom / Administrative	Per session	Trainer, Course Coordinator
Discussion forum participation	Administrative LMS	Weekly	Trainer
Spotlight learner identification	Combined (LMS access + Trainer report)	Ongoing	Academic Manager, Trainer
Retention, progression, and completion rates	Administrative / Head of Certification	Per cohort	QAAGC, PDAC
Learner satisfaction (reaction forms)	P9 S9 Reaction Form	End of programme	QAAGC
Assessment results and grade distribution	Head of Certification	Per certification cycle	QAAGC, PDAC, RAP

Learners identified as 'Spotlight Learners' (those requiring additional assistance) are proactively supported through: one-to-one virtual sessions with their Trainer; referral to the Digital Ambassador for technical support; and, where appropriate, an accommodation plan developed in consultation with the Course Coordinator.

12.3 Programme Evaluation Cycle

Results from monitoring activity, learner feedback, EA reports, and analytics are compiled at the end of each cohort/programme and presented to the PDAC. Aggregated findings are escalated to the QAAGC for review

and approval. Programme improvement plans are developed by the Programme Review Sub-Committee and ratified by the QAAGC.

Pilot initiatives for new online tools or pedagogical innovations are overseen by the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist in consultation with the Head of IT. Results are evaluated and reported to the QAAGC before broader adoption.

→ [P6 S8 C10: Programme Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure](#)

PART 4

Learner Experience Context

Chapter 13: Thinking About Study

13.1 Information for Prospective Learners

Forus Training provides comprehensive, accurate, and current information to help prospective learners make informed decisions about study. Information is available through: the Forus Training website (www.forustraining.ie); social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, X); email; phone; and HubSpot live chat on the website.

For each programme, the website sets out: programme description and content; NFQ level and QQI award details; entry requirements; English language requirements; IT skills and equipment specifications (for online programmes); reasonable accommodation arrangements; assessment methods; delivery mode (on-site, blended, or fully online); schedule information; and how to apply.

Before committing to a blended or fully online programme, prospective learners are supported to assess their own readiness to engage with online study. The Forus Training website sets out the minimum technical requirements for each programme, including device specifications, internet speed, and required software. Prospective learners are directed to test their internet connection speed at www.speedtest.net before registering to confirm their connection is sufficient for synchronous video sessions. The Course Advisor discusses readiness with each prospective learner at the point of enquiry, covering digital confidence, availability for synchronous sessions, capacity for independent asynchronous study, and any support needs that may require reasonable accommodation arrangements. Where a prospective learner has concerns about their digital skills or equipment, they are directed to the Digital Ambassador and to the free 'Learning Online' course, which is available before programme commencement and covers the digital skills required to participate effectively. This pre-registration readiness discussion is documented by the Course Advisor and retained on the learner's file. The proportion of on-site, synchronous online, and asynchronous online delivery for each programme, including any mandatory attendance requirements for live sessions and in-person elements, is communicated to prospective learners through the programme page on www.forustraining.ie, in any brochures or promotional material, and through the Course Advisor discussion at the point of enquiry.

13.2 Information Events for Prospective Learners

Prospective learners for online programmes are invited to a Zoom webinar information session, during which a Course Advisor outlines the programme, clarifies the delivery format and expectations, and facilitates a dedicated Q&A session. Learners can also contact Forus Training directly via phone or email for one-to-one guidance.

13.3 Learner Identity Validation and Enrolment

Learners seeking registration on any Forus Training course are required to provide appropriate identification to establish their identity. For online programmes, identity is verified through the my.forustraining.ie portal before LMS access is granted. The P4 Identity Verification Policy governs this process.

GDPR-compliant tools and platforms are used throughout the registration and enrolment process. Learner consent for data collection and processing is obtained at registration and is documented in the Induction Sign-Off Form.

→ [P4: Identity Verification Policy](#)

→ [P9 S2: Learner Recruitment and Registration Policy](#)

13.4 Learner Induction

All learners receive a comprehensive induction before commencing their programme. For online programmes, the induction is delivered virtually and includes:

- QQI overview: grading criteria and award standards.
- Forus Training learner charter and responsibilities.
- Explanation of delivery mode (blended or fully online) and expectations.
- How to access and navigate the LMS.
- Assessment information: brief, deadlines, submission procedures, academic integrity.
- Repeat and reassessment arrangements: the conditions under which a learner may resubmit a failed component, the maximum number of attempts permitted, any implications for grade outcomes on resubmission, and the process for applying for a repeat in accordance with P9 S9 C4 Late Submission of Coursework Policy and P9 S18 Recheck, Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- Information on available support services.
- Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL) arrangements where applicable.
- Data protection and privacy rights.
- Appeals, complaints, and extensions procedures.
- Technical requirements and Digital Ambassador support details.

Learners sign and return the P9 S6 Induction Sign-Off Form confirming understanding and agreement to terms and conditions.

A short free online course, 'Learning Online,' is provided to all new online learners. This covers academic writing, study skills, Harvard referencing, and tips for successful online learning.

Chapter 14: Learning Support and Development

14.1 Support Structures

Forus Training ensures every learner is supported from the point of first expression of interest throughout their learning journey. Support is available through multiple channels:

Support Type	How Accessed	Availability
Administrative queries	Phone (044 934 9400), email (hello@forustraining.ie), HubSpot live chat	Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:30pm; Sat 9:00am-5:00pm
Trainer academic support	Email (response within 72 hours for draft submissions); by appointment for one-to-one virtual session	Per timetable; by appointment
Digital / technical support (Digital Ambassador)	Phone, Zoom virtual meeting, Saturday digital clinic	Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:30pm; Sat 9:00am-5:00pm
Learner Support Officer / Course Advisor	Phone, email, or live chat	Business hours
Head of Certification	Certification queries; compassionate consideration applications	Business hours
LMS self-help resources	Tutorial videos on Forus Training website; LMS FAQs; 'Learning Online' course	24/7

14.2 Digital and Technical Support

The Digital Ambassador provides dedicated technical support for learners engaging with the DLE/VLE. Support covers: Administrative LMS access and navigation; my.forustraining.ie portal; Zoom access and settings; Microsoft Office; email troubleshooting; file organisation; and general IT queries. The Digital Ambassador is experienced in all Forus Training systems and is available during the hours listed above. Saturday digital clinics are held via Zoom on a scheduled basis.

14.3 Adaptive Learning Support

Forus Training commits to digital-first access for all learners, ensuring equivalency in support between online and on-site cohorts. All learning resources are designed with UDL principles to accommodate diverse learning needs. Where learners require additional support, Forus Training works to identify appropriate resources and adjustments.

14.4 Spotlight Learners

Forus Training uses the term 'Spotlight Learner' to describe learners who may require additional assistance-this term is preferred over 'at risk learner' to reduce unconscious bias and emphasise the learner's potential to succeed with appropriate support. Spotlight learners are identified through: LMS analytics (non-engagement flags); Trainer observation during synchronous sessions; Trainer end-of-programme reports; and direct learner contact.

When a Spotlight Learner is identified, the Trainer alerts the Academic Manager and Course Coordinator. A tailored support plan is put in place, which may include: additional one-to-one virtual sessions with the Trainer; referral to the Digital Ambassador for technical support; compassionate consideration for assessment extensions; and referral to external support services where appropriate.

14.5 Drop-In Clinics

Learner drop-in clinics are available via Zoom at scheduled times. These clinics allow learners to ask questions on course content, assessment, or administrative matters in a low-pressure environment. Details are communicated to learners at induction and are available on the Forus Training website.

Chapter 15: Equality of Opportunity

15.1 Equitable Provision

Forus Training is committed to equality of opportunity for all learners. This is underpinned by P2 S2 C1 Equality Policy and P2 S2 C2 Dignity and Respect Policy. The organisation ensures that blended and fully online delivery does not disadvantage any learner, and actively designs programmes to be accessible to all.

Factors that may affect equality in online provision are proactively addressed, including: digital literacy levels; access to technology and internet connectivity; literacy; English language proficiency; and additional needs.

→ [P2 S2 C1: Equality Policy](#)

→ [P2 S2 C2: Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

15.2 Reasonable Accommodation

Learners with verified disabilities or specific learning difficulties may be given compassionate consideration and reasonable accommodation to enable successful programme completion. Accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis and must be supported with medical documentation. Accommodations for online programmes may include: additional time for assessments; accessible assessment formats; extended submission windows; and tailored technical support.

The Course Coordinator is the primary point of contact for reasonable accommodation requests. The Head of Certification administers assessment accommodations.

→ [P9 S9 C6: Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#)

→ [P9 S7 C6: Compassionate Consideration Policy](#)

15.3 UDL and Accessibility

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is embedded across all programme design and delivery at Forus Training. Multiple means of representation (narrated presentations, transcripts, text), engagement (quizzes, discussion forums, synchronous interaction), and expression (written assignment, skills demonstration, portfolio) are provided to accommodate diverse learner needs.

All digital content complies with WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards. Ongoing implementation of alt text, keyboard navigation, screen reader compatibility, and descriptive links is overseen by the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist.

15.4 Safe Online Learning Environment

Forus Training promotes dignity, courtesy, and respect in all online interactions. Clear online conduct expectations are set out in the P2 S2 C3 Learner Code of Conduct and in the online session regulations communicated during induction. Any breach of conduct is addressed as a disciplinary matter under the relevant policy.

An Online Moderator function is exercised by the Trainer during all synchronous sessions. Trainers are responsible for ensuring that all learners engage respectfully and in accordance with Forus Training's conduct standards, and have the authority to intervene where conduct falls below the expected standard.

Forus Training requires that learners attending live synchronous sessions are in a suitable location that is reasonably free from excessive background noise and distraction, and that their camera remains on for the duration of the session. This requirement supports active engagement, allows the Trainer to monitor participation and understanding, and maintains the social and interactive dimensions of the learning

experience. Learners are informed of this requirement at induction and it is set out in the Learner Handbook and the Learner Induction Sign-Off Form.

Virtual backgrounds or physical backgrounds visible on camera must not contain images or content that is offensive, inappropriate, discriminatory, or likely to cause distress to other participants. Where a learner has a genuine reason for being unable to comply with the camera requirement - for example, a disability, a safeguarding concern, or inadequate equipment - they should notify the Course Coordinator in advance so that a reasonable accommodation can be agreed. Any persistent or deliberate breach of the camera policy or background standards is addressed under P2 S2 C3 Learner Code of Conduct.

→ [P1 S2: Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

→ [P9 S6 C6: Learner Welfare Policy](#)

→ [P2 S2 C3: Learner Code Of Conduct](#)

→ [Learner Handbook](#)

15.5 Online Learner Responsibilities

Learners in blended and fully online programmes accept specific responsibilities:

- Attend synchronous tutorial sessions at the agreed times.
- Access and complete asynchronous LMS content as required (completion is mandatory).
- Be connected via an appropriate device with sound and camera for synchronous sessions.
- Communicate effectively and respond to Trainer/staff contact.
- Manage time and self-motivation for independent asynchronous learning.
- Maintain academic integrity in all submitted work.
- Notify Forus Training of any technical difficulties or personal circumstances that may affect engagement.

Chapter 16: Learner Experience and Outcomes

16.1 Monitoring Learner Engagement and Fostering Success

Forus Training monitors learner engagement and responds to learner needs throughout the programme. LMS analytics are used to identify Spotlight Learners who may not be engaging with the course. The Trainer monitors formative assessment performance, synchronous attendance, and discussion forum participation to support all learners in achieving their learning goals.

Learner success is fostered through: regular formative feedback; accessible support channels; a learner-centred teaching approach; the 'Learning Online' introductory course; and a culture of encouragement and inclusion.

16.2 Learner Representation in Governance

Learner representation is proactively embedded in Forus Training's governance structures. Learner representatives are elected by their class group and invited to attend QAAGC meetings, PDAC meetings, and relevant sub-committee meetings. Learner Representation Policy governs this process.

→ [P9 S6 C8: Learner Representation Policy](#)

16.3 Learner Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Learner feedback is gathered through: end-of-programme reaction forms (P9 S9 Reaction Form); mid-course comment cards; end-of-programme surveys; QAAGC learner representation; Google Reviews; and informal Trainer interactions.

All learner feedback is reviewed by the QA Officer and presented to the QAAGC. Aggregated findings and proposed improvement actions are incorporated into the Quality Improvement Plan. Programme changes arising from feedback are implemented by the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist in line with the QAAGC-approved improvement plan.

Programme Evaluation Reports are published on www.forustraining.ie, sharing outcomes with learners and stakeholders.

16.4 Complaints, Appeals, and Employability

Learners are informed of the complaints and appeals procedures at induction and in the Learner Handbook. All procedures are accessible to online learners through the website and LMS.

Complaints are addressed at programme level (within 15 working days at local level, within 30 working days for formal review). Appeals of assessment results follow the Recheck, Review and Appeals process (P9 S18). Learners are supported through the process by the Course Coordinator.

Graduate Destination and Employability Surveys

Forus Training is committed to understanding the impact of its programmes on learners' career trajectories and to using this information to inform continuous improvement. Learners who complete a programme are invited to participate in a graduate destination survey, which gathers information on their employment status, progression to further education or training, and the relevance of their Forus Training award to their current role or career goals. The survey is issued by the QA Officer following certification and responses are collated and analysed on an annual basis.

Employers and host organisations who have engaged with Forus Training learners through work placement or employment are invited to provide feedback on the standard of preparation and competence of

graduates. This feedback is gathered through a structured employer survey coordinated by the Course Coordinator and is reviewed alongside graduate destination data as part of the annual programme-level self-evaluation process.

The aggregated findings of graduate destination and employer feedback surveys are presented to the PDAC and ratified by the QAAGC. Where findings indicate that programme content, delivery, or assessment requires updating to better reflect the needs of the labour market or sector, this is actioned through the programme review process and recorded in the Quality Improvement Plan. Summary findings are shared with learners and published as part of the Programme Evaluation Report on www.forustraining.ie.

→ [P9 S13: Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)

→ [P9 S18: Recheck, Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#)

PART 5

Cross-Cutting Systems

Chapter 17: Information and Data Management

17.1 Information Systems

Forus Training's information and data systems are intrinsic resources that ensure reliable, timely information is available for decision-making. The primary information management system is Administrate, which serves as LMS, SIS, and CRM for the organisation. The system is cloud-based, hosted on a secure server, reports daily to staff, and integrates in real-time with the Forus Training website.

The QAAGC gives oversight to reviewing, maintaining, and continuously enhancing knowledge-based systems. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are monitored and reported to the appropriate committees at each meeting.

The following KPIs are tracked as a minimum:

KPI	Responsible Role	Committee Oversight
Completion rate (%)	Head of Certification	QAAGC, PDAC
Number of registered learners	Head of Certification / Registrar	QAAGC, PDAC, CGC
Progression rate (%)	Head of Certification	QAAGC, PDAC
Learner reaction form results	Head of Centre / Academic Manager	PDAC, Programme Leaders
Assessment results and grade distribution	Head of Certification	QAAGC, PDAC, RAP
Pass / Fail / Withdrawal / Non-submission rates	Head of Certification	QAAGC, PDAC, RAP
APEL statistics	Head of Certification	QAAGC
Appeals, rechecks, and extensions	Head of Certification	QAAGC
Number of WIN notices (staff/trainer)	QA Officer	QAAGC
Staff CPD days attended	QA Officer	PDAC
LMS engagement rates (online programmes)	Programme Development Lead / Trainer	QAAGC, PDAC
IT system uptime and failed backups	Head of IT	QAAGC

17.2 Learner Records

Administrate maintains secure learner records for current use and historical review. Records include: registration details; identity verification documentation; attendance records; assessment results; formative assessment scores and LMS progress; complaints and appeals; and certification records.

The QA Officer ensures data is securely stored. The Head of Certification generates reports for internal quality management and for the QQI database as required by legislation. User access is role-based to prevent inappropriate internal data access.

17.3 Data Protection and GDPR

The Managing Director holds the role of Data Protection Officer (DPO) and is responsible for data protection oversight across the organisation, including compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR (EU) 2016/679. The DPO ensures that data protection obligations are met, staff are trained, data breaches are reported in accordance with P4 S1.7, and that the organisation's Privacy Notice remains current and accurate.

Key data protection arrangements include: consent obtained for all data collection; secure encrypted storage; data minimisation; defined retention periods in accordance with P4 S1 12 Data Retention Policy; data breach procedures; annual GDPR training for all staff; and a Privacy Notice on the Forus Training website.

→ [P4 S1.1: Data Protection \(GDPR\) Policy](#)

→ [P4 S1.5: Privacy Notice](#)

→ [P4 S1.7: Data Breach Policy and Procedure](#)

→ [P4 S1.12: Data Retention - Control of Records Policy and Procedure](#)

Chapter 18: Public Information and Communication

18.1 Public Information

Forus Training is committed to providing accurate, accessible, and current information to all stakeholders. The P8 Information to Learners Policy governs all public-facing communications. Programme information is available on www.forustraining.ie, in printed materials, and through social media channels.

All programme pages include: award details; delivery mode; technical requirements (where applicable); entry requirements; assessment methods; fees; and how to apply. The QA Manual is available for download from the website and is linked directly to this consolidated document.

18.2 Learner Information

Learners receive comprehensive programme information at each stage: pre-registration (website, Course Advisor); at registration (welcome email, terms and conditions); at induction (Learner Handbook, Learner Pack, Induction Sign-Off Form); during the programme (assessment briefs, feedback, results); and post-completion (certification, progression pathways).

The P8 Information to Learners Policy ensures that all potential and existing learners receive accurate, applicable, and relevant programme-related information in a timely and professional manner, in compliance with Section 67 of the QQI Act 2012.

→ [P8: Information to Learners Policy](#)

→ [P9 S7: Learner Attendance Policy](#)

18.3 Publication of QA Evaluation Reports

Programme Evaluation Reports (PERs) are published on www.forustraining.ie following ratification by the QAAGC. QQI panel reports from validation and re-engagement processes are published on the QQI website.

Chapter 19: Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

19.1 Externality and National/International Benchmarking

The principle of externality is embedded throughout Forus Training's QA system. External persons contributing to governance and quality assurance include: the Independent FET Advisor (QAAGC Chair); 2nd Independent FET Advisor (Organisational Review); Industry Non-FE Executive (CGC Chair, QAAGC member); External Consultants; Subject Matter Experts; Industry/Employer Representatives; External Authenticators; and QQI Expert Panels.

Forus Training benchmarks its programmes and practices against national and international standards, referencing the NFQ, EQF, IQAVET, and EQAVET. Sector-specific benchmarking includes reference to HSE, CORU, HIQA, Department of Health, PHECC, and Early Childhood Ireland publications.

19.2 External Authenticators

External Authenticators (EAs) provide independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment. EAs are nominated by the Head of Certification, approved by the PDAC, and ratified by the QAAGC. Appointments are for three years, renewable. EAs are provided with a comprehensive induction pack including programme documentation, assessment strategies, rubrics, and previous EA reports.

As a matter of internal policy, Forus Training requires EA moderation of all learner assessment evidence graded at 45% and above. This threshold reflects Forus Training's commitment to ensuring that all work at or approaching pass standard is independently verified, and exceeds the representative sampling minimum required by QQI. All grades below this threshold are also subject to cross-moderation by the Trainer and Head of Certification before results are presented to the RAP. EA reports are reviewed by the RAP and PDAC, and recommendations are communicated to Trainers. All EA recommendations are implemented by relevant personnel under the Head of Certification's management.

PHECC-recognised course delivery is additionally subject to independent External Verification (EV), a role and process distinct from the External Authenticator arrangements described above. EV appointment criteria, frequency and reporting are set out in Section 21.7.

→ [P9 S16: External Authentication Policy](#)

19.3 Community of Practice and Sector Engagement

Forus Training staff engage with wider communities of practice through: the Irish Institute of Training and Development (IITD) membership; annual UK conference attendance; Erasmus study visits (e.g. Reggio Emilia, Italy); sector conferences (Future Health Summit, As I Am); and attendance at Administrative events (Scotland, UK).

Forus Training fosters internal communities of practice among its teaching and support staff to promote the sharing of good practice, peer learning, and continuous improvement in blended and fully online delivery. Trainers who deliver the same module meet regularly to discuss delivery approaches, share resources, identify areas for improvement, and ensure consistency of learner experience across cohorts. These conversations are supported by dedicated communication channels maintained between trainer groups. Programme Leaders meet on a regular basis to share pedagogical insights, raise emerging issues, and collectively develop responses to changes in learner needs or sector developments. These meetings are coordinated by the Academic Manager and relevant outputs are reported to the PDAC and QAAGC where they inform programme improvement decisions. Participation in communities of practice is encouraged as part of each staff member's CPD activity and is recorded accordingly.

The Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist engages with the Digital Learning Institute and relevant online learning communities of practice to ensure Forus Training's online provision reflects current best practice.

Chapter 20: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

20.1 Internal Review and Self-Evaluation

Forus Training operates a two-level approach to self-evaluation: annual programme-level self-evaluation and periodic organisational self-evaluation. Both levels are coordinated by the QA Officer and overseen by the QAAGC, and together form a continuous improvement cycle that keeps quality assurance responsive and evidence-based throughout the year.

Annual Programme-Level Self-Evaluation

All Forus Training programmes are subject to self-evaluation on an annual basis. This evaluation draws on the full range of monitoring data gathered throughout the year, including learner reaction forms, trainer end-of-programme reports, internal verification findings, external authentication reports, LMS engagement analytics for online programmes, assessment results and grade distribution, completion and retention rates, and complaints and appeals data. The QA Officer collates this data and coordinates the preparation of an annual self-evaluation report for each programme area. The report identifies strengths, areas requiring improvement, and recommended actions. It is presented to the PDAC and ratified by the QAAGC. A Programme Improvement Plan is developed in response to the report's recommendations and progress against this plan is tracked through the Quality Improvement Plan (P2 S3a). Annual self-evaluation reports are published on www.forustraining.ie in line with Forus Training's obligations under Section 30 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

Each annual self-evaluation incorporates the views of learners, gathered through reaction forms, surveys, and learner representative input at committee level. The requirement for an independent person is fulfilled through multiple sources: the External Authenticator, who provides an independent, expert assessment of assessment standards and learner achievement for each programme and whose report is a primary input into the annual self-evaluation; Subject Matter Experts who participate in the Programme Review and Evaluation Sub-Committee and contribute an independent sectoral perspective on programme quality and relevance; and the Independent FET Advisor who chairs the QAAGC, whose specialism in digital and online learning ensures that independent expertise informs the ratification of self-evaluation findings and recommended improvement actions. Together these sources ensure that the annual self-evaluation is not a solely internal exercise but is informed by independent expert perspectives at the levels of assessment quality, programme content, and academic governance.

Periodic Organisational Self-Evaluation

In addition to annual programme-level evaluation, Forus Training conducts a full organisational self-evaluation on a cyclical basis, with a maximum interval of five years between evaluations. This review examines the effectiveness of the governance structure, the quality management system, and the overall provision of education and training across the organisation. The Organisational Review Sub-Committee (Type 1) is established for each organisational review cycle, with membership determined by the QAAGC in line with the Externality and Learner Representation policies. The process involves stakeholder consultation, document review, data analysis, and engagement with an independent external evaluator capable of benchmarking Forus Training's provision against similar providers. The outputs are a Self-Evaluation Report and an Improvement Plan, both of which are submitted to QQI and published on www.forustraining.ie.

20.2 Annual Internal Audit Schedule

An annual schedule of internal audits is conducted by the QA Officer using standardised audit tools. Audit areas and scheduled months are:

Audit Area	Scheduled Month	KPI Target	Oversight Committee
Risk Management (P1 S9)	January	Score of 5 or lower on risk matrix	QAAGC
Financial (P1 S6)	March	Liquidity ratios; financial sustainability	CGC
Quality Documentation (P2)	February	90% audit score	QAAGC
Programmes of Education (P6)	June-August	25% of programmes reviewed per year	QAAGC
Human Resources (P5)	May	No unresolved WIN notices	QAAGC / Head of Centre
Coordination of Programmes (P7)	August	No H&S incidents; satisfaction with public information $\geq 4/5$	PDAC
Learner Supports and Teaching (P9)	October	Per learner outcome KPI targets	QAAGC, PDAC
Information Systems (P4)	April	0 failed backups; GDPR training completed	QAAGC
Digital Learning Environment	February (alongside quality doc audit)	LMS uptime; content standards compliance	QAAGC

20.3 Engagement with External Quality Assurance

Forus Training engages with QQI's external quality assurance processes, including: annual provider report submissions; monitoring visits; programme validation panels; and extension of scope evaluations.

Annual Provider Report

The Annual Provider Report (APR) is submitted to QQI each year in accordance with QQI's monitoring requirements. The APR provides QQI with a structured account of Forus Training's quality assurance activity, programme performance, and self-evaluation findings over the preceding year. It draws on data and reports already gathered through Forus Training's internal monitoring systems, including learner registration and completion rates, assessment outcomes and grade distribution, internal verification and external authentication findings, complaints and appeals records, and the outcomes of annual programme-level self-evaluation.

The QA Officer is responsible for coordinating the preparation of the APR, drawing on data provided by the Head of Certification, the Academic Manager, and the Programme Development and Design Lead / Online Learning Specialist. A draft APR is presented to the QAAGC for review and approval before submission to QQI. The QAAGC satisfies itself that the report accurately represents Forus Training's QA activity for the period and that any areas identified for improvement are reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan. Following QAAGC approval, the APR is submitted to QQI within the timeframe specified by QQI for that reporting cycle.

QQI panel reports and provider responses are published on the QQI website and on www.forustraining.ie.

Forus Training's QA practices are benchmarked against international standards through QQI's engagement with EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training), the European reference

framework for quality assurance in vocational education and training and the primary international benchmark applicable to FET providers in Ireland. Forus Training also takes account of IQAVET as the national reference point for EQAVET.

→ [P1 S1 C5: Self-Evaluation and Review Policy and Procedure](#)

→ [P2 S3 C4: Internal Audit Policy and Procedure](#)

Chapter 21: PHECC Quality Review Framework Compliance

21.1 PHECC Recognition Status and Scope

Forus Training is recognised by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) as an Approved Training Institution (ATI) under S.I. 109 of 2000 (as amended by S.I. 109 of 2004) to deliver Cardiac First Response Community (CFRC), First Aid Response (FAR)] at Responder level. Forus Training's approved PHECC scope is recorded in Appendix 3b.

This chapter documents how Forus Training's quality management system meets the six Standards of PHECC's Quality Review Framework Standard (STN020), assessed using PHECC's GUI047 guidance, in addition to the QQI-focused provisions set out elsewhere in this Manual. Except where this chapter states otherwise, all general policies referenced throughout this Manual (governance, equality, GDPR, complaints, appeals, risk management, self-evaluation) apply equally to PHECC-recognised provision.

21.2 PHECC Governance Roles

- Course Director is the nominated post responsible for review and approval of PHECC course content and for oversight of PHECC-related quality matters at Forus Training. Content approval is performed independently of the person(s) who developed the content, consistent with Section 2.2.
- The Course Director, in collaboration with the QA Officer, holds day-to-day responsibility for PHECC compliance, including maintaining the affiliate faculty register, and monitoring instructor certification currency.
- The Head of Certification coordinates External Verification arrangements (see 21.3-21.7).
- The QAAGC retains oversight of PHECC compliance as part of its standing review of external regulatory changes (Section 1.1.3).

21.3 Affiliate Faculty

Affiliate faculty are PHECC-certified instructors, tutors or facilitators who deliver PHECC courses on Forus Training's behalf externally to Forus Training's direct employment. Forus Training maintains an up-to-date register of all affiliate faculty alongside its core Trainer list (Section 1.1.1).

- A signed contract or service level agreement is in place with every affiliate faculty member before they deliver a PHECC course, setting out their responsibilities and Forus Training's oversight of, and responsibility for, course delivery and quality.
- Affiliate faculty may advertise a PHECC course only where they clearly identify Forus Training as the Recognised Institution / Approved Training Institution they are affiliated with.
- Affiliate faculty are prohibited from independently issuing or awarding PHECC certificates (see Section 21.8).
- Forus Training ensures all affiliate faculty are adequately indemnified by Forus Training, or holds and retains evidence that affiliate faculty carry their own Employers Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.

→ [Official Affiliate Trainer Faculty Member Service Level Agreement PHECC Forus Training](#)

→ [P1 Managing PHECC Affiliate Agreements](#)

21.4 PHECC Faculty Certification, Vetting and Currency

In addition to the minimum qualification requirements set out in Section 6.1, all faculty (employed and affiliate) delivering PHECC courses hold current PHECC instructor certification appropriate to the course level, in accordance with the PHECC Teaching Faculty Framework.

- PHECC instructor certification and recertification dates are recorded in each faculty member's CPD log (Section 6.3) and monitored by the QA Officer. No faculty member is scheduled to deliver or assess a PHECC course on an expired certification.
- Garda vetting is obtained, in accordance with the Garda Vetting Policy (P9 S9 C13), for faculty as required.

21.5 Course Content, Delivery Locations and Equipment

PHECC course content (lesson plans, session plans, presentations) is developed and delivered in line with the relevant PHECC Education and Training Standard and PHECC-issued course material. Content is reviewed following any PHECC Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) update, and records of content development, edits and versions are retained in line with Section 10.2.

- All premises used for PHECC course delivery are assessed against a documented suitability checklist before use; assessment records are retained (Section P7 S20 Learning Environment Policy).
- Forus Training maintains an inventory of training equipment used to deliver PHECC courses, including manikins, AED trainers and associated consumables; serviceability is documented and monitored on a defined schedule, and learner/faculty feedback on equipment suitability is sought and recorded after each delivery of a course.

→[Procedure for Maintaining Equipment Inventory for PHECC Courses](#)

→[PHECC Health and Safety Checklist](#)

21.6 Internal Verification of PHECC Courses

Internal Verification (IV) is conducted after every PHECC course delivered, in accordance with the PHECC Responder Certification Policy (POL055). At minimum, IV confirms: that correct assessment procedures and techniques were applied; that a complete portfolio of evidence exists for every student presented for assessment; that student evidence matches the assessment requirements of the course; that signed student attendance and assessment result records are on file; and that student and faculty feedback has been collected.

- Head of Certification performs IV for PHECC courses. Findings are logged, and any deficiency is addressed via the Workable Improvement Notice process (P5 S10) before certificates are issued.

21.7 External Verification

Forus Training engages an External Verifier (EV) - independent of Forus Training, free of conflict of interest, and meeting PHECC's subject-matter expertise, assessment experience and quality-assurance competency criteria - to provide independent oversight of PHECC course delivery. The EV role is distinct from the External Authenticator (EA) engaged for QQI programmes under Section 19.2.

- For Responder-level courses, External Verification is performed at short regular intervals (at least every two months) and covers a minimum of 10% of courses delivered per annum, randomly selected by the External Verifier.
- Each EV visit produces a course evaluation report, retained by Forus Training, confirming that a random sample of courses has been externally verified, that the Internal Verification process was conducted correctly, and identifying any deficiencies or improvement actions. EV reports also review implementation of PPPG relevant to PHECC provision, including affiliate faculty contracts, induction, and certification/recertification (every two years).
- EV reports are presented to the QAAGC, and improvement actions are tracked through the Quality Improvement Plan (P2 S3a).

21.8 Certification and Results Issuance (PHECC)

Only the Head of Certification issues PHECC course certificates on behalf of Forus Training. Individual instructors, including affiliate faculty, are prohibited from independently issuing or awarding PHECC certificates. Forus Training issues certificates only for courses delivered in its own name, by its own faculty or by affiliate faculty operating under a signed agreement in accordance with Section 21.3.

21.9 PHECC Reporting, Records and Public Information

PHECC QRF assessment outcomes, External Verification findings, and key PHECC-related student-facing policies (including academic appeals, Recognition of Prior Learning, assessment and feedback, complaints, participation and attendance, the student charter, student support, interruptions and withdrawal, and safeguarding/vulnerable adults) are made available to the public without request via www.forustraining.ie, consistent with Chapter 18.

- KPIs specific to PHECC-recognised provision (course pass/fail rates, EV findings closed, instructor recertification compliance, Garda vetting compliance, equipment/manikin servicing compliance) are tracked alongside the KPIs in Section 17.1 and reviewed by the QAAGC.

Appendix 1: Acronyms

Acronym	Full Term
ABC	Active Blended Connected (Learning Design Method)
ADDIE	Analysis; Design; Development; Implementation; Evaluation
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
APR	Annual Provider Report
ATI	Approved Training Institution (PHECC)
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression
CAS	Common Award System
CFRC	Cardiac First Response Community
CGC	Commercial Governance Committee
CPC	Code of Professional Conduct
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DLE	Digital Learning Environment
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EA	External Authenticator
ELC	Early Learning and Care
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EV	External Verifier / External Verification (PHECC)
FAR	First Aid Response
FET	Further Education and Training
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HIQA	Health Information and Quality Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
IITD	Irish Institute of Training and Development
IQAVET	Irish Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
IV	Internal Verifier / Verification
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LMS	Learning Management System
MIS	Management Information System

MIMLO	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcome
MIPLO	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcome
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAIN	National Academic Integrity Network
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NQEMT	National Qualification for Emergency Medical Technology
OER	Open Educational Resource
PAEC	Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (QQI)
PDAC	Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee
PEL	Protection for Enrolled Learners
PER	Programme Evaluation Report
PHECC	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council
POL055	PHECC Responder Certification Policy
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAGC	Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council
QBS	QQI Business System
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
QMS	Quality Management System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QRF	Quality Review Framework (PHECC Standard STN020)
RAP	Results Approval Panel
RI	Recognised Institution (PHECC)
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCORM	Sharable Content Object Reference Model
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
TESG	Training and Employment Support Grant
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WIN	Workable Improvement Notice
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent

Appendix 2: Policy Register

The following table lists key policies and procedures within Forus Training's QMS. All documents are available on the Forus Training MIS (my.forustraining.ie). Full document index available at P10 Programme Knowledge Base.

Policy Reference	Document Name
P1 S1 C5	Self-Evaluation and Review Policy and Procedure
P1 S1 C7	Externality Policy and Procedure
P1 S2	Anti-Bullying Policy
P1 S4	Academic Strategy Policy
P1 S6	Commercial Governance Committee - Terms of Reference
P1 S7	Memorandum of Understanding (Collaborative Agreement)
P1 S8	Risk Management Policy
P1 S9	Risk Register
P2 S2 C1	Equality Policy
P2 S2 C2	Dignity and Respect Policy
P2 S2 C3	Learner Code of Conduct
P2 S3 C1	Quality Policy
P2 S3 C4	Internal Audit Policy and Procedure
P2 S3 C6	Nonconformity and Corrective Action Service Policy
P2 S3a	Quality Improvement Plan
P2 S4 C2	Control of Records Policy and Procedure
P2 S10	Communications Policy and Procedure
P3	Fees Policy and Procedure for Fully Online Learning Programmes
P4	Identity Verification Policy
P4 S1.1	Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
P4 S1.4	Disaster Recovery Plan
P4 S1.5	Privacy Notice
P4 S1.7	Data Breach Policy and Procedure
P4 S1.12	Data Retention - Control of Records Policy and Procedure
P5	Human Resources Policy
P5 S1	Staff Recruitment, Induction and Development Policy
P5 S6 C1	Trainer Handbook
P5 S8	Employee Handbook
P5 S9	Staff Learning and Development Policy
P5 S10 C1	Trainer Code of Conduct

P5 S10	Workable Improvement Procedure
P6 Copyright	Copyright, Images and Fair Use
P6 S1	Programme and Service Development Policy
P6 S5	Development of Assessment Instruments - Formative and Summative
P6 S7	Designing Learning Experiences and Materials Procedure
P6 S8 C10	Programme Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure
P7 S20	Learning Environment Policy
P8	Information to Learners Policy
P9 S2	Learner Recruitment and Registration Policy
P9 S2 C1	Recognition of Prior Learning and Exemptions Policy
P9 S6	Blended and Online Learning Policy
P9 S6 C6	Learner Welfare Policy
P9 S6 C8	Learner Representation Policy
P9 S7 C6	Compassionate Consideration Policy
P9 S8 C1	Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure (NAIN-aligned, 2025)
P9 S9	Quality Assuring Assessment Handbook
P9 S9 C1	Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners Policy
P9 S9 C4	Late Submission of Coursework Policy
P9 S9 C6	Reasonable Accommodation Policy
P9 S9 C8	Examinations Policy (includes Online Proctoring)
P9 S9 C11	Security of Assessment Policy and Procedure
P9 S13	Complaints Policy and Procedure
P9 S16	External Authentication Policy
P9 S18	Recheck, Review and Appeals Policy and Procedure
P10	Programme Knowledge Base

Appendix 3a: Approved Scope of Provision

Sector	NFQ Level (From)	NFQ Level (To)	Award Classes	Programme Discipline Areas	Mode(s) of Delivery and Assessment	Approval Date
FET	3	6	Major, SPA, Minor	Arts and humanities; business and administration; business, administration and law; construction; engineering; health; manufacturing; personal services; security services; welfare;	Face to face; blended learning; fully online learning (synchronous and asynchronous - national only); part-time; collaborative provision as first provider	09 June 2022 (initial); 25 April 2023 (blended learning); June 2026 (fully online)

Appendix 3b: PHECC Scope of Recognition

Recognition Status	PHECC Courses	Level	Modes of Delivery	Recognition /Approval Date
Approved Training Institution (ATI)	Cardiac First Response Community (CFRC), First Aid Response (FAR)	Responder	Face to Face	21 January 2026