

FACT SHEET 12

THIRD-PARTY ARRANGEMENTS

Introduction

The Quality Standards for HEIs (2019) requires HEIs to quality assure any services that are provided on its behalf via a third-party arrangement¹. The relevant standards are listed below.

2.1 e	The HEI should...ensure that any services related to programmes leading to a qualification (such as agents recruiting students or other organisations delivering education and training) undertaken partially or wholly on its behalf through a third party meet the Quality Standards for HEIs.
3.2	The HEI ensures that where services are provided on its behalf by a third party, the provision of those services is the subject of a written agreement that includes at a minimum: Allocation of clear roles and responsibilities Student access to facilities and resources That the third party will cooperate with the FHEC for the purpose of external reviews and the provision of data and information That the third party will adhere to any conditions applied as a result of unacceptable practice identified A process for responding to allegations and complaints of the third party A process for appealing a third party's decisions, including assessment decisions.
8.2	Accurate and relevant information for applicants is accessible and made publicly available to enable informed decisions, and includes: Any arrangements in place with third parties for the provision of the programmes and services
13.7	An HEI that issues testamurs or academic transcripts: e. Accurately identifies any third parties involved in the provision of education, training and assessment services.

The intent of these Quality Standards is that when an HEI uses a third party to deliver a service related to a qualification, such as delivering education, training and assessment services, that the HEI is responsible for this provision. It is the HEI that has the accredited FQF qualification on the register and is approved to provide this accredited FQF qualification.

Third party arrangements are often called franchising or twinning arrangements. Third party arrangements vary, and each one maybe takes a different approach or focus on a specific area of service.

¹ This fact sheet does not relate to the use of a third-party that informally collects evidence for a HEI assessor as part of an assessment of a learner.

The Quality Standard 2.1e firmly places the responsibility of the provision of services on the HEI. The HEI is responsible for the provision of the services, and the learners are enrolled with the HEI and the testamur issued is that of the HEI.

The HEI and the third party need to be clear about the arrangements. The Quality Standard 3.2 provides the basis for the relationship between the HEI and the third party.

The written agreement is where the HEI outlines the nature of the relationship with the third party and includes some critical requirements which are specified in the Standard. The written agreement should also include:

- Dates of the agreement, and disputes and exit clauses
- How the HEI will monitor the agreement
- How the HEI will monitor the services provided to ensure that the third party's practices meet Quality Standard 2.1e.

A current written agreement must be in place with each third party at all times.

To demonstrate systematic management and internal quality assurance of third-party arrangements, the HEI should consider:

- A register of agreements
- Minutes of meetings with third parties
- Evidence of monitoring strategies being implemented, e.g., analysis of feedback from students and third-party educators, quality auditing reports, auditing reports of student files.
- Evidence of actions taken as the result of monitoring strategies.

Quality Standard 8.2 (i) indicates that learners (and potential learners) are to be fully aware of these third-party arrangements. Therefore, marketing material needs to clearly state any involvement by third parties, what services are being delivered on the HEI's behalf, and the duration and extent of the agreement.

As learners are enrolled with the HEI, they are issued FQF documentation (testamurs and academic transcripts) by the HEI. Quality Standard 13.7 and FHEC Directive #1. Quality Standard 13.7e indicates that the testamur and academic transcripts issued to completing learners need to identify the third party.

The documentation issued needs to make clear if the third party provided all or part of education, training and assessment services on behalf of the HEI. An HEI determines the changes that need to be made to their documentation but should include a statement of whether the qualification was wholly or in part provided through a third party. The HEI may also include the logo of the third party.

Related documents

- Fact Sheet 1: Assessment system
- FHEC Directive 1: Issuing FQF documentation

References

Fiji Higher Education Commission 2019. Quality Standards for Fiji Higher Education, Fiji Higher Education Commission, Fiji.

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