

BARROW

LEARNING

Quality Assurance Manual

Foreword – Managing Director

At Barrow quality is the foundation of everything we do. Our commitment to delivering excellence is embedded across all aspects of our organisation and is driven by a comprehensive and continually evolving Quality Assurance system.

This system provides a structured framework that enables us to monitor performance, identify opportunities for improvement, and respond proactively to the needs of our learners, staff, and stakeholders. Through its implementation, we aim not only to meet expectations, but to consistently exceed them—delivering high-quality programmes, strengthening our reputation in the market, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Our approach to quality supports:

- The delivery of exceptional, learner-focused services
- The ongoing enhancement of organisational processes
- Increased transparency and accountability in our operations
- The development, engagement, and productivity of our staff

This Quality Assurance Manual outlines how Barrow aligns with the 11 core policy areas established by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). It reflects our commitment to maintaining compliance with national standards while also striving for innovation and excellence in further education and training.

Quality at Barrow is not a static goal, but an ongoing journey—one that is shared by all members of our organisation and underpinned by our dedication to continuous improvement.



Norah Ryan

Managing Director

List of Abbreviations

CAO	Central Applications Office
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ETB	Education and Training Board
FET	Further Education and Training
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HELS	Higher Education Links Scheme
HSA	Health and Safety Authority of Ireland
ISO	International Organization for Standardisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MIMLO	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcome
MIPLO	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcome
MIS	Management Information System
NAS	Network-Attached Storage
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PAEC	Programmes and Awards Executive Committee
PEL	Protection for Enrolled Learners
QA	Quality Assurance
QBS	QQI Business System
QMS	Quality Management System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RI	Recognised Institution
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

All references to Barrow in the following document refers to the legal entity that is Barrow Consultancy and Training Ltd.

Any forms mentioned in this document can be obtained upon request from the QA Manager

Version Control

Issue No.	Date	Updated by:	Details of Change
1	17/07/2016	Liz Doran	Initial Release
2	31/01/2020	Vicky Nolan	Full review in preparation for re-engagement. All sections amended.
3	03/07/2020	Vicky Nolan	Removal of names of staff members
4	01/10/2020	Vicky Nolan	Added new data protection, appeals, reasonable accommodation and admissions policies and procedures. Added relevant forms. Updated governance. Re-arranged chapters.
5	14/01/2021	Vicky Nolan	Blended Learning policy updated following PHECC application. Statement added relating to collaborative provision.
6	06/05/2021	Vicky Nolan	Updated number of QQI submission periods, added direct reports, updated information on PEL and work experience requirements
7	18/05/2021	Donna Purcell	Update new blended learning platform and GDPR considerations
8	10/05/2021	Vicky Nolan	Information on FAR skills assessments added
9	12/06/2021	Liz Doran	Update to TOR Team meetings, update to informal appeals procedure,
10	06/09/2021	Liz Doran	Update to Governance TOR re scheduling of meetings. E.g. BOM, programme Review and Team Meetings Update on 2 factor authentication for Moodle Learners
11	21/10/2021	Liz Doran	Update to foreword, Updated org chart and TOR to reflect this. Update to other parties in education. Update to company profile. Replace CEO with MD. Update to public information section. Stated that QA manual is available to all and where. Updated that entry requirements are available on our website.
12	23/03/2022	Donna Purcell	Updated the following sections: Exemptions, Integrity of Assessments, Recording Receipt of Assessments, Cross Moderation, Learner Supports,
13	05/04/2022	Liz Doran	Update to TOR of programme management team (re personnel attending). Addition of BL guidelines where relevant. Update to exemption of communications for those with a degree. Update of TOR of BOM and QAC (responsibilities).

14	03/05/2022	Liz Doran	Update to Chapter 3, Blended Learning in line with QQI Stat QA guidelines for providers of BL programmes (March 2015/QG8 – V1).
15	23/11/2022	Liz Doran	Update of association membership (NALA, Aontas and ENAI)
16	16/08/2023	Leona O' Shea	Updated RPL process for entry criteria and updated role of QA manager on RAP
17	07/09/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated internal verification process
18	08/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated membership of BOM
19	08/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated organisational structure
20	08/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated QA manual to reflect new Organisational structure
21	11/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated internal verification process
22	11/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated the frequency of RAP Meetings to co-inside with Barrow's certification submission to QQI
23	13/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated results appeals process
24	13/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated EA assessments to include remote Assessments
25	18/12/2023	Leona O'Shea	Updated all roles and responsibilities of individual staff and management
26	05/1/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated Barrow Training's new address
27	05/01/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated exemptions for assessments

28	18/01/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated RPL process
29	18/01/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated the Work Practice section to include ELC processes
30	18/01/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated assessment malpractice reporting process
31	22/01/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated frequency of BOM, QA committee and Internal Quality Panel meetings
32	24/01/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated Internal Quality Panel agenda to include allocations and programme management
33	01/02/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated membership and educational partners list to include NIS, NUIG and SETU
34	01/02/2024	Leona O'Shea	Updated our LMS provider to Moodle
35	06/02/2024	Leona O'Shea	Full review of all sections in the manual
36	12/06/2024	Leona O'Shea	Review of roles and responsibilities within the governance structure, ensuring clear definition of the various entities.
37	23/07/2024	Leona O'Shea	Comprehensive review of governance documentation and QA policies to ensure proper application of governance in policy implementation.
38	23/08/2024	Leona O'Shea	Update to RPL Appeals Process
39	30/03/2026	Siobhan Mc Nally	Update following Panel review re extension of scope of provision

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About the Organisation

a) Company Profile

Founded in 2008 by Marian Manning, Barrow Consultancy and Training Ltd. is a private training provider that provides a portfolio of FET programmes nationwide.

In 2021 Norah Ryan assumed the role of owner and Managing Director. The BOM also consists of Chair, Vice Chair, two Non-Executive Directors specialising in Cyber Security & Data Protection, and Contingency Planning & Staff Welfare.

Barrow is a QQI accredited training centre based in Co. Carlow that specialises in professional training in the following areas:

- Healthcare and Healthcare Management
- Childcare
- Personal and Professional Development
- Health and Safety

Barrow designs programmes for companies and organisations that need to develop their employees' knowledge, skills, and competence.

Courses are also designed with the individual in mind, whether seeking employment or looking to advance careers in the workplace.

The company was born out of a sense of entrepreneurship owing to the founder's awareness of the Health Act 2007 and the establishment of Health Information and Quality Authority which led to the urgent demand for professional and quality focused Healthcare Training programmes in Ireland. Barrow agreed its Quality Assurance Agreement with QQI in 2010 and began delivering awards in 2011.

Barrow became the first private training provider in Ireland to receive ISO 9001 (2015) standard in 2016. The centre was only the second company in Ireland to hold the 2015 standard at that time. In May 2026 we received ISO 14001:2015 Environmental and ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Information Security management systems.

b) Accreditation

Barrow offers short, certified training programmes as well as offering a range of programmes which are validated by QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)

All our administration and management functions are located at our office in Carlow town, Co. Carlow.

The centre offers a number of different delivery options:

Open/public programmes which are run in various approved locations

1. In-house programmes – which are tailored for a particular client or organisation.
2. Blended learning programmes which offer a combination of blended and classroom-based delivery.

c) Scope of Practice

Our scope is defined as:

"The provision of evidence-based, professional training delivered through in-house, virtual, and blended learning methods, together with business consultancy services, provided nationwide. The Integrated Management System covers the management of quality, environmental, and information security aspects associated with training delivery, consultancy activities, supporting processes, information systems, and data handling"

This includes (but not limited to) the delivery of the following courses at QQI levels 4, 5, and 6:

- Healthcare in a variety of specialist areas
- ELC Level 5 & 6
- Management
- Instructor Training
- Health and Safety
- Food Safety

The courses are delivered by tutors who are experts in their field in a variety of settings, onsite, virtually and blended via blended learning.

Consultancy is provided to, but is not limited to, the Healthcare/Childcare and Training Sectors.

Our accreditation is provided by Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

We offer specialist workshops where learners receive a Barrow Consultancy & Training Certificate of Attendance.

Our clients can expect the following:

- Delivery of professional, efficient, and learner-focused services by qualified and experienced staff
- Commitment to high standards of customer service, including timely communication, feedback, and support
- Provision of appropriate academic and pastoral support, including one-to-one tutor support where required
- Identification and support of learners with additional or specific learning needs in an inclusive learning environment
- Design and delivery of programmes that reflect diverse learning styles and promote active engagement
- Development and regular review of programme content to ensure alignment with current legislation, industry standards, and best practice
- Delivery of programmes by subject matter experts with relevant qualifications and vocational experience
- Promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring all learners are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
- Implementation of fair, transparent, and consistent assessment processes in line with QQI standards
- Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of programmes through learner feedback and internal review processes
- Maintenance of clear governance and quality assurance structures to support accountability and continuous improvement
- Compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including GDPR, health and safety, and financial obligations
- Maintenance of appropriate insurance cover to support all training activities
- Use of up-to-date digital systems and platforms to support programme delivery, communication, and learner support

d) Vision and Mission Statement

Vision Statement

The vision of Barrow is to deepen our relationship with various sectors by becoming the leading provider of training and training-related consultancy services.

Mission Statement

At Barrow our mission is to empower learners to achieve their full potential through the provision of high-quality, accessible, and industry-relevant training. We are committed to delivering learning experiences within a supportive, inclusive, and engaging environment that fosters confidence, independence, and lifelong learning.

We maintain a strong focus on continuous improvement, ensuring that our policies, procedures, and practices consistently support the delivery of training and an exceptional learner experience.

Strategic Approach

Barrow is committed to achieving its mission through the following key strategies:

- Design, develop, and deliver programmes that equip learners with the knowledge, skills, competence, and confidence required for personal, academic, and professional progression
- Integrate innovative, user-friendly technologies to support flexible and blended learning, enhancing accessibility, engagement, and learner outcomes
- Establish, implement, and continuously review quality assurance procedures to ensure alignment with QQI standards and sectoral best practice
- Recruit, support, and retain appropriately qualified and experienced subject matter experts, ensuring high standards in programme delivery and assessment in all delivery methods.
- Foster a culture of continuous professional development for staff to support excellence in teaching, learning, and assessment
- Engage with employers, professional bodies, and industry stakeholders to ensure programme relevance and responsiveness to labour market needs
- Actively gather and utilise learner and stakeholder feedback to inform programme enhancement and organisational improvement
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across all programmes, ensuring fair access, participation, and progression opportunities for all learners

Barrow is committed to providing recognised and relevant courses to the highest quality and ensuring a quality service to the learners through their educational journey.

Barrow offers a comprehensive portfolio of programmes which cover the areas of Healthcare, Childcare, Management, Personal Development and Health & Safety.

(i) Quality Assurance Procedures

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES		
QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines		
1		Governance and Management of Quality
2		Documented approach to Quality Assurance
3		Programmes of Education and Training
4		Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
5		Teaching, Learning and Assessment
6		Supports for Learners
7		Information and Data Management
8		Public Information and Communication
9		Other Parties Involved in Education and Training
10		Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
11		Improvement Planning

Barrow has established quality assurance procedures across the core policy areas identified in the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016). These procedures have also been developed and updated to reflect subsequent QQI guidance, including the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023), together with other relevant sector-specific and topic-specific QQI guidance, where applicable. Our QA manual is available for everyone to view on our website barrowlearning.ie

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES			
QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines			
CHAPTER		POLICY	QQI REF
1		Governance and Quality Assurance	1, 2
2		Programmes of Education and Training	3
3		Blended Learning	Topic Specific
4		Human Resource Management	4, 10
5		Teaching, Learning and Assessment	5, 6
6		Learner Supports	7
7		Information and Communication Management	8, 9
8		Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	11

Chapter 1. Governance and Quality Assurance

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrow's accrediting bodies:

- Governance and Management of Quality (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 1)
- Documented Approach to Quality Assurance (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 2)
- Organisational Structure and Management
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended & fully blended Learning Programmes (2023).

This manual reflects QQI's updated framework across three core contexts:

- Organisational Context
- Programme Context
- Learner Experience Context

It addresses the associated domains including strategy, governance, infrastructure, programme design, learning materials, assessment, learner supports, equality of access, and monitoring and evaluation.

1.0 Quality Assurance System

Barrow is committed to ensuring the highest standards of governance, management, and educational quality through:

- Implementation of clear management, monitoring, and reporting structures for all activities.
- Adherence to legislative and accrediting body policy requirements.
- The appointment and development of high-quality staff in educational development, delivery, and administrative roles.
- Operating under best practice and compliance with all relevant legislation e.g., data protection, health and safety, equality etc.

Barrows FET programmes are subjected to rigorous monitoring and review processes. The centre is committed to self-assessment and external review and will undergo audits and reviews by external accreditation bodies in an open, honest, and positive manner. This is to ensure that policies and procedures remain fit for purpose, relevant and compliant with changes to statutory, legal, and accrediting body requirements. These are outlined in Section 1.9 Through our QA policies and procedures, we have established a coherent framework for the provision of a high quality and professional system of training and education.

Barrow recognises the importance of Quality Assurance throughout the company. This is recognised in our attainment of quality standards such as ISO 9001 (2015), ISO 14001:2015 Environmental and ISO/IEC 27001:2022. Information Security management systems. Our Quality Assurance system is backed up with operation manuals with Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) for internal use.

This quality framework enables us to deliver our further education and training programmes to the highest standards while also conforming to national and international best practice policies, procedures, guidelines and statutory regulations.

Quality Assurance is embedded into all aspects of Barrow including:

- **Corporate** – Finance, health & safety, human resources, sales and marketing, consultancy, and business operations.
- **Academic** – Teaching, assessment, curriculum, learning environment and technologies, and learner support services.

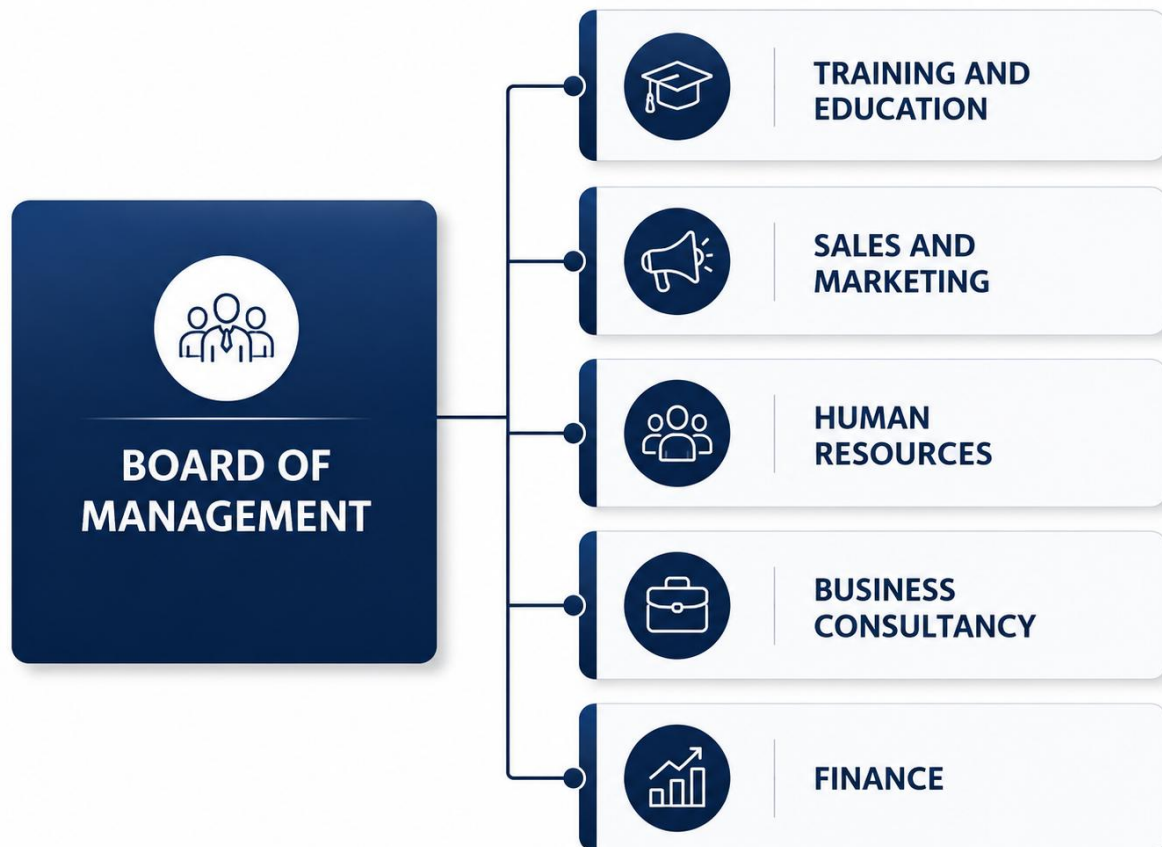
All Barrow staff are allocated relevant responsibilities and roles in the implementation of quality assurance procedures. The Board of Management ensures accountability.

The Barrow Quality Assurance System is guided by:

- The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, as amended (2014, 2019), and associated QQI guidelines and criteria for Quality Assurance procedures
- Assessment and Standards (QQI, Revised 2022)
- Criteria for Quality Assurance of Assessment for Providers (QQI, 2013; revised 2018, with interim updates 2024)
- ISO 9001:2015 Quality, including Amendment 1:2024 (Climate Action Changes), ISO 14001:2015 Environmental & ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Information Security management system
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Blended Programmes (QQI, December 2023)

1.1 Corporate Governance

The Board of Management's core task is to facilitate the delivery of products and services to meet learners needs while meeting all legal and stakeholder requirements. The Board of Management provides oversight of organisational governance, strategic direction, quality assurance, and resource planning.



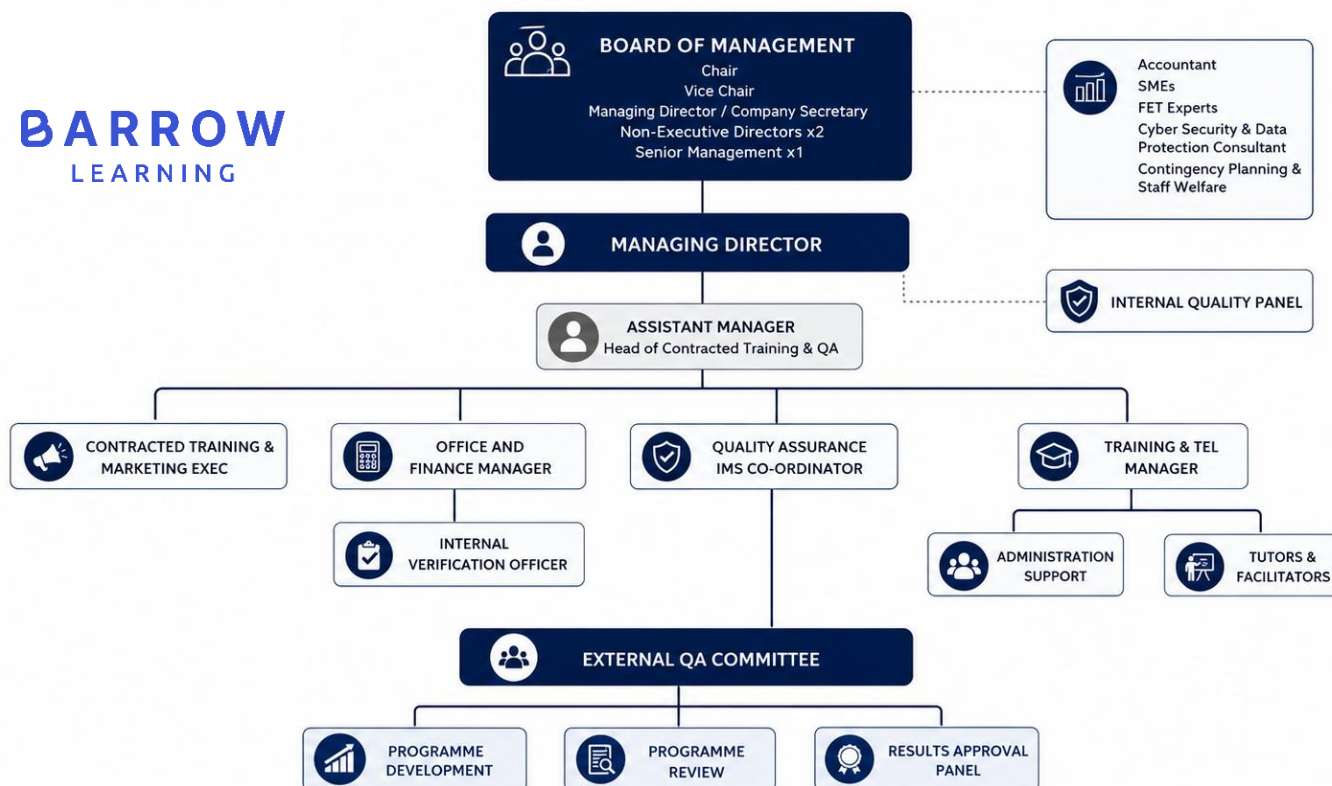
1.1 a Board of Management

1.2 Governance and Management of Quality

Academic decisions relating to programme approval, assessment standards, learner achievement, and academic oversight are informed through independent academic governance structures and are separated from commercial decision-making processes.

1.2.1 Organisational Structure

1.2.2 The diagram below outlines the organisational structure of Barrow



1.2.3 Board of Management

The primary roles of the Board of Management (BOM) are

- ✓ Management,
- ✓ Governance,
- ✓ Implementation & review of the policies and procedures of the Company.

Many of these are derived from legal and insurance obligations and others which will ensure the efficient and effective operation of the business. The BOM always must maintain the ethos of the company and ensure that principles of equality and the right of learners and staff are respected. The BOM will ensure that the company always demonstrates respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages, and ways of life in society.

It is the Board's duty to introduce A Code of Behaviour for staff and learners ensuring:

- ✓ The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by staff and learners
- ✓ Measures that may be taken when a staff member/learner fails or refuses to observe those standards.

The board shall meet quarterly and may convene additional meetings as may be necessary in the discharge of its duties. A meeting of a board may be convened at the request in writing by any member.

The role of the BOM includes:

- ✓ Review that the management system, standard operating procedures & quality process is working for the company.
- ✓ Monitor and review that the management system is effective and achieving desired result.
- ✓ Review management reports
- ✓ Auditing/Risk management, employee grievances.
- ✓ Allow Senior Management team to gather and review information of Objectives, assess trends, check on status of improvement projects.
- ✓ Provide ongoing performance and progress reviews on planned objectives.
- ✓ Ensure clear separation of academic and commercial interest by ensuring the appropriate personnel are on academic committees and sub-committees. This relates to both operational and decision-making processes.
- ✓ Acknowledge existing and external expertise and use this knowledge in decision making when appropriate.

In approving QA policies and procedures, the Board of Management considers the academic recommendations of the External QA Committee to ensure decisions are informed by independent academic oversight.

1.2.4 Structure of Meetings

BOM meetings will be held quarterly. All members will be notified in writing of the date and time of a meeting by the Managing Director. An agenda and copy of the previous meeting minutes will accompany this notice. A BOM must have a quorum of two to proceed, one of which must be the managing director.

Staff meetings will be held monthly. All staff will be notified in writing of the date and time of a meeting by the Managing Director. An agenda and copy of the previous meeting minutes will accompany this notice. A staff meeting may be held in the absence of staff members if there is a majority of staff present.

1.2.5 External QA Committee

The role of the External QA Committee is to ensure that transparent, fair, and consistent procedures (in line with National Standards) are applied in all decisions relating to academic activities. The External QA Committee will review matters that may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- ✓ Responsible for academic regulations
- ✓ Contribute to policy development and implementation
- ✓ Provide Subject Matter expertise
- ✓ New programme proposal approval
- ✓ Review Core report documents such as self-evaluation, monitoring, external authentication reports etc
- ✓ Review reports/recommendations from any sub committees
- ✓ Review and approve Quality Assurance Guidelines
- ✓ Assist the management team if required, including those that are deemed academic objectives and goals
- ✓ Review annual programme reviews and feedback from awarding bodies and make recommendations
- ✓ Review cases of any academic misconduct/plagiarism/level of use of AI in assessments
- ✓ Review relevant reports from external bodies and authenticators
- ✓ Review appeals of examination and assessment grades
- ✓ Review and approve decisions relating to learner appeals, assessment malpractice, complaints etc
- ✓ Review statistics/trends in relation to assessment results using QBS and other reports
- ✓ Approve validation applications before submission to QQI.
- ✓ Monitoring and review of operational activities.

- ✓ Review reports e.g. RAP, programme review etc

The agenda will always include programme development, programme Review and RAP on its agenda. The External QA Committee operates independently in its academic advisory role and is responsible for providing objective scrutiny of QA policies, programme design, and academic standards. Its recommendations form a critical part of the institutional approval process.

1.2.6 Selection of External QA Committee

The External QA Committee members will be selected on the basis of expertise under the terms and conditions as set out in the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of blended and fully blended programmes (2023) in compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, as amended (2014, 2019), and associated QQI guidelines and criteria for Quality Assurance procedures

1.2.7 Membership of External QA Committee

- ✓ A Chairperson
- ✓ Barrow Administrator
- ✓ Independent further education professional
- ✓ Independent TEL expert
- ✓ Quality Assurance Manager
- ✓ Tutor representatives
- ✓ Learner representative (past participant)
- ✓ Validation expert (when required)

1.2.8 Management Process

The External QA Committee will operate under delegated authority from Senior Management (BOM). The Committee may investigate any matter (within its terms of reference), needed to review any Quality Assurance resources and information it considers necessary. The External QA Committee is authorised to seek the information it requires from the BOM or other Barrow employee which to enable it to carry out the necessary duties.

Elected committee members can serve a term of three years. There is the option of a second term of service for any of the independent committee members.

1.2.9 Structure of Meetings

Meetings will be scheduled Quarterly to co-inside with the BOM schedule (extra meetings can be scheduled for unplanned or exceptional circumstances if required). An agenda will be sent out to all committee members 2 weeks in advance accompanied by previous meetings and any other documents needed for review at the meeting. A quorum of 4 is needed to make any decisions. If there is a specific issue to be discussed, sub-committees (e.g. results approval panel, programme development committee etc) or visitors may be invited for that period relevant to them only. Minutes of the meeting will be given to the Chairperson within one week of the meeting. Once approved by the chairperson they will be circulated to all committee members. The Quality Assurance Manager will report back to the Assistant Manager and other relevant committees or employees.

1.3 Format of Meetings

The committee will follow the agreed agenda. All recommendations will be recorded by the secretary, with actions assigned accompanied by timelines. Decisions will be based on the majority of the committee (votes may be held if needed). The Chairperson will have the deciding vote if there is a split vote.

Members are permitted to communicate digitally by Zoom or Teams.

1.3.1 Academic Governance and Decision Making

Barrow maintains clear separation between academic governance and commercial or operational decision-making. Decisions relating to programme approval, programme review, assessment standards, learner achievement, academic integrity, quality assurance, and the maintenance of academic standards are made through the organisation's formal academic governance and quality assurance structures.

The External QA Committee, Programme Review Committee, Results Approval Panel, and Internal Quality Panel retain responsibility for academic oversight and quality assurance decision-making within their respective remits.

Commercial, operational, or financial considerations do not override academic standards, quality assurance requirements, or decisions relating to learner achievement and assessment outcomes.

Academic governance processes are designed to ensure transparency, independence, accountability, and compliance with QQI quality assurance requirements.

This wording directly addresses the panel advisory because it explicitly states:

- separation exists;
- which bodies hold authority;
- academic standards cannot be overridden commercially;
- governance is transparent and accountable.

1.3.1 Programme Development Committee

The purpose of the programme development team is to develop new awards and programmes for Barrow. The committee will meet when required to develop the programme. The Programme Development committee is a sub-committee of the External QA Committee.

1.3.1.1 Role of Programme Development Committee

- ✓ Identify requirements of the programme e.g. entry criteria, learning hours, assessment criteria
- ✓ Ensuring maintenance of the academic standard of the award.
- ✓ Develop content for programme as outlined in the content creation policy including programme descriptor, full learner resource pack, assessment strategies, briefs and marking schemes, tutor programme specification, exams, and workbooks (where relevant).
- ✓ Self-Evaluation against QQI criteria.
- ✓ Consult with other providers in respect of transfer and progression options.
- ✓ Get approval from External QA Committee for any significant programme changes and before submission to QQI or other accreditation body for validation or re-validation.
- ✓ The committee may be involved in developing policies and procedures related to program admission, progression, graduation requirements, and other relevant areas.
- ✓ It may participate in decisions related to budgeting and resource allocation for program development, including faculty hiring, instructional materials, technology, and facilities.
- ✓ The committee may request tailored reports from the Training & TEL Manager or QA Manager to assist with programme evaluations and the analysis of learner feedback

1.3.1.2 Membership of Programme Development Committee

- ✓ Programme Manager (Barrow employee).
- ✓ Quality Assurance Manager
- ✓ Barrow Administrator
- ✓ Relevant Tutor representatives
- ✓ Training & TEL Manager
- ✓ Subject Matter experts (when required)
- ✓ Employer Representatives (when required)
- ✓ Learner Representatives (when required)
- ✓ External Chairperson

1.3.1.3 Structure of Meetings

Members will meet when required to develop a new programme. An agenda will be sent out to all committee members two weeks in advance accompanied by previous meetings and any other documents needed for review or discussion at the meeting. Members can make amendments to the agenda at this point (min one week in advance of meeting). Minutes of the meeting will be given to the Chairperson within one week of the meeting. Once approved by the chairperson they will be circulated to all committee members. Members are permitted to communicate digitally by Zoom or Teams if necessary.

1.3.1.4 Format of Meetings

The committee will follow the agreed agenda. A chairperson and secretary will be voted who will take this role for a year. All recommendations will be recorded by the Barrow Administrator with actions assigned accompanied by timelines.

1.3.2 Programme Review Committee

The Programme Review Committee is concerned with the quality, standards, and monitoring of QQI courses delivered by Barrow. They are responsible for the oversight of all QQI programmes. The Programme Review Committee will periodically review programmes to maintain standards and ensure compliance and make recommendations to enhance and improve the programmes to ensure they are fit for purpose. They will also provide advice, support and guidance on the development and delivery of all Barrow programmes. This committee is a sub-committee for the External QA Committee. The Barrow audit schedule is developed at the beginning of each year. The Assistant Manager will ensure that all procedures are evaluated at least once in a 24-month period. Our audit schedule is reviewed annually and approved by the External QA Committee before implementation.

1.3.2.1 Role of Programme Review Committee

- ✓ Provide advice, support, and guidance on the development and delivery of programmes.
- ✓ To ensure all programmes are being delivered in line with QQI Core Guidelines.
- ✓ To ensure all programmes are being delivered within scope of QQI Certificate of Validation.
- ✓ To report back and advise the External QA Committee on the delivery of existing programmes.
- ✓ To make recommendations on the programmes for continuous improvement and to ensure they are fit for purpose.

- ✓ Participate in scheduled self-assessments and programme review cycles.
- ✓ Ensure that responses from programme evaluations are being implemented.
- ✓ Evaluate feedback mechanisms for learners and tutors and the processes for acting on this feedback.
- ✓ Evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the delivery of training programmes.
- ✓ Evaluate formal links with industry, businesses, and the community.
- ✓ Review any research activities and their impact on teaching and learning.
- ✓ Monitor all progress and improvements of the awards.
- ✓ Review of current education and training programmes, including assessments.
- ✓ Review information to learners about each programme.
- ✓ Review Core report documents such as self-evaluation, monitoring, external authentication reports etc.

1.3.2.2 Membership of Programme Review Committee

- ✓ Quality Assurance Manager
- ✓ Barrow Administrator
- ✓ Tutor representatives
- ✓ Educational Consultant (External) - Chairperson
- ✓ Training & TEL Manager
- ✓ Subject Matter experts (when required)
- ✓ Employer Representatives (when required)
- ✓ Learner Representatives (when required)

1.3.2.3 Structure of Meetings

The committee will meet once a year (extra meetings can be scheduled for unplanned or exceptional circumstances if required) in advance of the External QA Committee. An agenda will be sent out to all committee members 2 weeks in advance accompanied by previous meetings and any other documents needed for review or discussion at the meeting. Members can make amendments to the agenda at this point (min one week in advance of meeting). Minutes of the meeting will be given to the Chairperson within one week of the meeting. Once approved by the chairperson they will be circulated to all committee members.

The chair of the Programme Review Committee will prepare a report for the External QA Committee. Items for review or items that require further consideration will be flagged as agenda items for the next External QA Committee meeting.

Members are permitted to communicate digitally by Zoom or Teams.

1.3.2.4 Format of Meetings

A full self-assessment of programmes and services is scheduled by Barrow every five years. Within this period programmes are reviewed/monitored from a variety of perspectives using the data gathered during a typical course delivery schedule. Data used to review programmes should include:

- ✓ Learner Evaluations
- ✓ Tutor Evaluations
- ✓ Programme Descriptor and Tutor notes
- ✓ Programme resources
- ✓ Scheme of works
- ✓ Attendance records
- ✓ Daily reports
- ✓ Retention rates
- ✓ Completion rates
- ✓ Certification rates
- ✓ Grade distribution and benchmarking
- ✓ QQI analytics and benchmarking
- ✓ Course meeting records
- ✓ IV Panel reports
- ✓ EA Panel reports
- ✓ RAP minutes
- ✓ QQI Validation reports
- ✓ Any other relevant reports or feedback from external experts or stakeholders.

1.3.3 Results Approval Panel

The purpose of the results approval panel is to confirm that assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results (including internal verification and external authentication) has been carried out in line with the provider's quality assurance process.

It confirms fairness and consistency in Barrow's assessment process and ensures the validity of the results produced.

All learner results are provisional until approved by the Results Approval Panel. This panel is a sub-committee of the External QA Committee including:

- External Chair
- Tutor Representative
- External Subject Matter Expert in the area
- Quality Assurance Manager

The Quality Assurance Manager acts as a representative of Barrow for observation purposes but holds no authority in the approval of results. Their role is solely focused on providing the necessary documentation. The chair holds the authority for the approval process.

1.3.3.1 Role of Results Approval Panel

- ✓ To meet and review and approve assessment results
- ✓ To ensure that the Results approval process has been followed and all the required documentation is in place.
- ✓ Review all relevant internal verifications reports and external authentication reports
- ✓ Sign off on approved results before submission to QQI
- ✓ Identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action
- ✓ Meet with External QA Committee if requested as a sub panel.
- ✓ Complete minutes which can be used for Barrows self-evaluation process and internal monitoring process
- ✓ Assessment procedures are observed
- ✓ To ensure there is consistency amongst tutors (especially modules where several different tutors deliver)
- ✓ To ensure correct application of administrative procedures
- ✓ To check all applicable evidence is available
- ✓ To note any irregularities and report to the Quality Assurance Manager who will then report to the QA committee if necessary.
- ✓ To review all relevant reports and make recommendations to the Quality Assurance Manager who will then report to the QA committee if necessary.

1.3.3.2 Structure

All panel members will be instructed to carry out their duties without bias and will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Their decision is to be based on the evidence presented to them only.

If the panel does not agree, the chairperson has the casting vote (only if the votes are split).

If the panel does not agree, it will be brought to the External QA Committee. However, panel members are advised that every reasonable attempt to agree should be sought.

Minutes will be compiled and distributed to all panel members to be signed; this will then be available for the QAC when requested.

1.3.3.3 Format

Quality Assurance Manager calls a meeting (in line with Barrow's submission policy).

The QA manager is to ensure that the following reports are distributed to the panel members prior to start – IV reports and EA reports.

The panel to review the reports and highlight any areas of concern and areas of good practice.

The panel will consider the evidence and approve/sign off on the final results.

The QA Manager is responsible for ensuring any issues are recorded and logged for bringing to the attention of the External QA Committee.

Members are permitted to communicate digitally by Zoom or Teams.

1.3.4 Internal Quality Panel

The role of the Internal Quality Panel is to ensure all quality standards are adhered to in relation to QQI programmes. They will ensure that all procedures in relation to certifying body validation are adhered to and meet the required specifications.

They are responsible for:

- ✓ Updating all relevant stakeholders in relation to programme development, delivery, and assessment.
- ✓ Updating and following the agreed Quality Assurance Manual.
- ✓ Providing advice, support, guidance and training to Barrow staff, management, and tutors in quality assurance practices.
- ✓ Confirming that all quality assurance guidelines in relation to QQI are being applied and implemented in practice.
- ✓ Ensuring compliance and monitoring effectiveness at all stages of the learner journey with Barrow.
- ✓ Monitoring statistics on learner enrolments, retention, completion, and progression.
- ✓ Reviewing (at regular intervals) compliance on active courses and programmes.
- ✓ Approving any minor updates to the QA or QA process.

- ✓ This committee is responsible for overseeing and approving the resources required for the successful delivery of current and future programmes. The costs associated with the resources needed for these courses are communicated to the BOM.
- ✓ This committee is responsible for successful programme management which can include scheduling, tutors, training venues, learner resources. This includes oversight of tutor competence in blended learning delivery and review of associated performance data in line with Section 4.4.

The panel will ensure that any changes or decisions on Quality are within the scope of their remit. Any large or significant changes are brought forward by the Quality Assurance Manager to the External QA Committee for approval.

1.3.4.1 Membership

The Internal Quality Panel will consist of the Assistant Manager, Quality Assurance Manager and Training & TEL Manager and any other relevant administrative staff.

1.3.4.2 Frequency of Meetings

Team meetings are held at least once a month and consist of all staff members. As staff are working under a hybrid model, meetings may be held virtually through Zoom or Teams. Where possible, onsite meetings will also be scheduled when all staff members are in the office to encourage collaboration and team engagement.

The Managing Director is responsible for issuing the recurring meeting invite to all staff members and for chairing the meeting. All meetings will be formally documented, and the minutes of each meeting will be distributed to all staff members within three working days of the meeting.

The agenda for each meeting will include review of previous team meeting minutes, agenda items, action list, AOB.

1.3.5 Individuals' Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles exist within the organisation:

- Managing Director
- Assistant Manager and Head of Contracted Training and Quality Assurance
- Quality Assurance
- Training & TEL Manager
- Contracted Training & Marketing Exec
- Office & Finance Manager
- Administration Support
- Tutors / Facilitators

The responsibilities listed below are of the personnel identified in the list above. All the duties and responsibilities below should be carried out in consultation with and with the approval of the Managing Director within an ethos of collaborative teamwork. These responsibilities are not exhaustive.

Managing Director

- Reports directly to BOM
- Overview of company operationally and financially
- Quality assurance and clinical governance overview
- Working in partnership with Board of Management in strategic development of company
- Building and maintaining an effective management team
- Develop and direct the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure that Barrow complies with all health and safety and other statutory regulations
- Human resource management, including staff recruitment, retention, and appraisal
- Manage new projects and company direction
- Provide training and guidance to team
- Representing Barrow Training at networking events and conferences

Assistant Manager Head of Contracted Training & Quality Assurance

- Reports directly to BOM
- The development, implementation, and evaluation of training programs offered by the ETB. This Coordinate includes liaising with tutors, instructors, and other stakeholders to ensure program quality and alignment with organisational goals.
- Assist in the development and review of training curricula to ensure they meet industry standards, regulatory requirements, and the needs of learners. Collaborate with subject matter experts to update content and incorporate best practices.

- Manage resources such as training materials, facilities, and equipment to support effective program delivery. Ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and that appropriate arrangements are made for training sessions and events.
- Provide support services to training program participants, including enrolment assistance, information dissemination, and addressing participant inquiries or concerns. Ensure a positive and inclusive learning environment for all participants.
- Implement quality assurance processes to monitor and evaluate training programs' effectiveness and impact. Collect feedback from learners, tutors, and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and make recommendations for program enhancements.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, accreditation standards, and contractual obligations related to training programs. Prepare reports, documentation, and data submissions as required by funding agencies, regulatory bodies, and internal stakeholders.
- Provide leadership and supervision to training program staff, including tutors, instructors, and support personnel. Foster a collaborative and supportive work environment that promotes professional growth and development.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, employers, community organizations, and industry partners. Collaborate with stakeholders to identify training needs, opportunities for partnership, and funding sources.
- Assist in the development and management of training program budgets, ensuring fiscal responsibility and accountability. Monitor expenditures, analyse financial performance, and make recommendations for resource allocation and cost-saving initiatives.
- Stay informed about emerging trends, best practices, and innovations in the field of education and training. Participate in professional development activities, workshops, conferences, and networking events to enhance knowledge and skills.
- Coordinate and manage training projects from inception to completion, ensuring deliverables are met on time, within budget, and according to client expectations.
- Stay abreast of industry trends, emerging technologies, and best practices in training and consultancy. Contribute to thought leadership initiatives, white papers, articles, and presentations to showcase the firm's expertise and insights.
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, industry standards, and ethical guidelines governing training and consultancy services. Mitigate risks associated with client engagements and contractual obligations.
- Continuously review and refine internal processes, methodologies, and tools to optimise service delivery, enhance client satisfaction, and drive business performance.
- Reports directly to Managing Director

Quality Assurance Manager

This person will act as the primary point of contact for communications between Barrow and external awarding bodies and will have overall responsibility for QA operations on a day-to-day basis, management of the centre's QA system and reporting to the Board of Management monthly.

- Reports directly to Assistant Manager
- Ensure all staff are aware of and comply with Barrow QA procedures, including management, administration support staff, tutors, and learners
- Oversight of programme validation, monitoring, and review
- Point of contact for awarding bodies
- Monitoring of overall learner journey from enrolment to certification
- Management of new programme development
- Management of assessment process, including overseeing internal verification officer and organisation of external authentication process and results approval panels
- Provision of assessment information to tutors, learners, etc.
- Management of Quality Assurance system
- Representing Barrow at conferences

Training & TEL Manager

This person will perform the key administration functions relating to the delivery of training.

- Reports directly to Assistant Manager
- Development of programme timetables and schedules
- Communication of programme details to tutors, learners.

- Approval of assessment venues
- Ensuring the assessment material and resources are securely stored and distributed
- Manages Learner Management System Moodle
- Preparation and organising of onsite days between tutor and learners
- Learner support online
- Liaising with managers and supervisors, as well as blended learning tutors
- Uploading course content on the blended platform in line with Blended Learning guidelines

Contracted Training & Marketing Exec

- Reports directly to Assistant Manager
- Planning and monitoring projects
- Managing administration deadlines
- Reporting on overall progress and use of resources
- Maintaining tutor supports
- Managing project risks
- Managing contracted training

Office and Finance Manager

Provide administrative support to ensure the smooth operation of the office, including managing supplies, equipment, and facilities.

- Reports directly to Managing Director
- Handle internal and external communication, including emails, phone calls, and correspondence.
- Manage and organise office records, files, and documents.
- Assist with budget preparation and monitor office expenses to ensure financial discipline.
- Liaise with vendors and service providers, negotiate contracts, and ensure timely payments.
- Prepare and present financial reports to senior management and stakeholders.
- Oversee accounts payable, accounts receivable, and general ledger management.
- Establish and maintain internal controls to safeguard assets and prevent fraud.
- Identify financial risks and implement risk mitigation strategies.
- Coordinate internal and external audits and address audit findings.
- Ensure compliance with financial regulations, accounting standards, and industry best practices.

Administration Support & Marketing

- Reports directly to QA Manager or Training & TEL Manager
- Providing support to tutors in programme delivery and planning
- Primary point of contact for current and potential learners
- Learner support
- Reporting of learner and tutor feedback to QA Manager

Tutor /Facilitators

- Reports directly to Training & TEL Manager
- Delivery of teaching and assessment of learners
- Integration of relevant research into course delivery
- Update Training & TEL Manager on new resources to update learner resources
- Contribute to the development, planning and implementation of high-quality resources and curriculum
- Grading of assessment
- Maintaining Barrows agreed quality standards
- Feedback and mentoring of learners
- Liaising with administration and management staff on an ongoing basis
- New programme identification
- Participating in programme board meetings and other meetings when assigned by Barrow

1.4 Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance System

The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance system is measured by:

1. Ongoing Quality Audits
2. Programme Review
3. Accreditation Body Review

1.4.1 Ongoing Quality Audits

Our audit schedule is developed at the beginning of each year. Quality Assurance will ensure that all procedures are evaluated at least once in a 12-month period.

Our audit schedule is reviewed twice annually and approved by the Board of Management.

1.4.2 Programme Review

Barrow undertakes a review of each QQI programme (suite of programmes) on a 5-year interval – Programmatic review. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management and is managed by the Quality Assurance Manager.

- Analyse efficiency and effectiveness of each validated programme (to include learner numbers, retention, pass rates, and progression)
- Review the programme development in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, and the Irish economy
- Evaluate feedback mechanisms for learners and tutors and the processes for acting on this feedback
- Evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the delivery of the programme
- Evaluate formal links with industry, businesses, and the community
- Review any research activities and their impact on teaching and learning
- Evaluate projections for the following 5 years

1.4.3 Accreditation Body Review

All providers offering QQI awards are subject to external quality assurance review of their institutions. Such reviews are carried out by QQI at 5-year intervals.

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for the review process and consists of the following:

1. Accrediting body sets terms of reference
2. Self-evaluation by Barrow
3. Visit by expert panel/member appointed by accrediting body
4. Implementation plan and response by Barrow
5. Panel report and published
6. Follow up report submitted by Barrow

1.5 Embedding a Quality Culture

Barrow is committed to the active development of a culture that recognises the importance of quality, quality assurance, quality improvement and enhancement. The centre has a strategy in place to develop the continuous enhancement of quality in all its activities:

- Regular review of annual key performance indicators (KPIs), business plans and goals
- Consultation with all stakeholders in the development of policy and procedures
- An organisation wide approach to the implementation of quality assurance procedures to encourage a sense of ownership of quality amongst staff
- Policies and procedures are designed in consultation with those involved in their implementation

Customer satisfaction and the quality of services are key, with all staff members encouraged to contribute feedback and suggestions for process improvements during monthly Board of Management and team meetings.

Progress in embedding a quality culture is measured by the Board of Management using the following methods:

- Day-to-day monitoring
- Staff performance appraisals
- Stakeholder feedback
- Learner surveys
- Internal and external audits
- Conformity with QA procedures
- Staff training and professional development

1.6 Legislative Requirements

Barrows Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all within the company are aware of the need to meet customer requirements in line with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

In addition, the Board of Management ensures that requirements under Employment, Labour and Equality Law are met in full, while the External QA Committee ensures that programmes of education and training are delivered in line with the criteria set out by QQI. The committees keep abreast of all pending legislation and updates to existing legislation by email notification from insurance companies, HAS and QQI. Barrow has commissioned the services of a HR Consultant to aid the implementation of this policy.

The following legislation is relevant to Barrow in relation to Employment, Labour, and Equality:

- Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994–2014 and European Union (Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions) Regulations 2022
- Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018
- Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- National Minimum Wage Act 2000
- Payment of Wages Act 1991

- Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973–2005
- Industrial Relations Acts 1990–2015
- Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 and associated Regulations 2001
- Maternity Protection Acts 1994–2004
- Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016
- Adoptive Leave Act 2005
- Parental Leave Acts 1998–2019
- Parent’s Leave and Benefit Act 2019
- Carer’s Leave Act 2001
- Sick Leave Act 2022
- Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023
- Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015
- Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015
- Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001
- Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003
- Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and Amendment Act 2022
- European Communities (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 2003
- Redundancy Payments Acts 1967–2014
- Protection of Employment Acts 1977–2007
- Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977–2015
- Workplace Relations Act 2015
- Mediation Act

Education and Awarding Bodies Legislation

- Education Act 1998
- Further Education and Training Act 2013
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, as amended (2014, 2019)

1.7 Documentation

Barrow aims to provide a comprehensive QA system that is fully documented, and which sets out the centre’s commitment to quality delivery and continuous improvement.

Barrow has a fully documented quality assurance system. All our processes and associated procedures are documented. This confirms the centre’s commitment to quality in relation to:

- New Programme Development
- Programme Provision
- Evaluation
- Continuous Improvement

Barrow holds the following quality assurance accreditations:

1. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) since 2010
2. ISO 9001 (2015) certification since 2016, ISO 14001:2015 Environmental and ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Information Security management systems.

The centre’s quality assurance procedures are informed by the above accreditation guidelines, as well as legislative requirements outlined in section 1.6. These procedures are available for viewing by the public on our website www.barrowtraining.ie/about/quality-assurance as a PDF file. Staff are provided with a copy as part of their induction. Our aim is to promote a culture of quality, facilitate diversity, support innovation, and demonstrate accountability. All processes are documented in our operations manuals (internal access only) and are available on our master list of files (QF01). This file is accessible to all staff and is updated regularly, as required.

1.8 Operation Manuals

Barrow has a library of standard operating procedure manuals (SOPs) for all activities and procedures that include:

Manual		SOP Number
1	Operations Manual Procedure	201
2	Moodle Procedures	202
3	Blended Learning programmes	203
4	Turn It In Procedures	204
5	QQI & Course Development & Evaluation	205
6	Finance & Purchasing procedures	209
7	Documents Record Electronic Data Control	101
8	Management Review	102
9	Auditing	103
10	Corrective Action Procedures	105
11	Human Resources and Training procedures	106
12	Customer satisfaction and Complaints Procedures	107
13	Planning Change	108
14	Risk Management	109
15	Procedure for Determining Context in the List of Interested Parties	110

1.9 Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

Quality Assurance (QA) policies and procedures at Barrow are developed, reviewed, and approved through a structured governance process that ensures academic integrity, transparency, and accountability.

The development and approval of QA policies follow a defined process:

1. Drafting:
QA policies and procedures are developed by the QA Manager in collaboration with relevant programme, training, and TEL personnel.
2. Internal Review:
Draft policies are reviewed by an Internal Quality Panel, ensuring operational feasibility, alignment with programme delivery, and consistency across provision.
3. Academic Scrutiny:
Policies are submitted to the External QA Committee for independent academic review. The Committee evaluates alignment with QQI standards, academic integrity, and sectoral best practice, and makes formal recommendations.
4. Institutional Approval:
Final approval is granted by the Board of Management, ensuring appropriate governance oversight while recognising the academic recommendations of the External QA Committee.
5. Implementation and Review:
Each policy includes a designated implementation owner, version control, and a defined review cycle, ensuring policies remain current and effective.

This process ensures a clear separation between academic decision-making and corporate governance, while maintaining accountability at all levels.

1.9.1 Policy Templates

Policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) are version controlled and date marked. This monitoring process ensures that policies continue to meet the needs of the company, customers, and stakeholders.

The common template will include:

- Policy Title
- Date
- Version Number
- Name of Creator
- Description of change

- Policy details and review date

As a controlled document, the current version of each policy is logged in the Master list file.

Barrow implements a strict document control and ownership system. All QA documents are controlled by the QA Manager. The QA Manager uses internal audits and ongoing reviews to monitor the effectiveness of each process during the year.

1.9.2 Internal Audits

Barrow conducts internal audits at planned intervals to provide information on whether the quality management system:

- a) conforms to the organisation's own requirements of ISO 9001, 14001 & 27001 within its scope
- b) is effectively implemented and maintained

Barrow shall:

- a) Plan, establish, implement, and maintain the audit programme including frequency methods responsibilities planning requirements and reporting taking into consideration the importance of the processes changes affecting the organisation and the results of previous audits
- b) Define audit criteria and scope for each audit
- c) Select auditors and conduct audits to ensure impartial and objective audit process
- d) Ensure results of audits are reported to relevant management
- e) Take necessary correction and corrective actions without undue delay
- f) Retain evidence of audit program implementation and audit results (Mandatory documented information)

Barrow Training operates a company-wide audit programme that serves the following purposes:

- Determination if company policies, procedures and systems are effectively implemented
- Identification of non-conformances
- Verification of effective correction of all identified non-conformances

A fully documented procedure is in place – SOP 103 - Auditing.

1.9.2.1 Risk (Management Review)

1.10.1 Actions to Address Risks and Opportunities in Training and Education

Matters arising during ongoing monitoring will provide an opportunity to assess programme-related risks, including risks associated with onsite and blended learning delivery. Areas of concern identified during ongoing monitoring and programme review will trigger appropriate intervention to ensure the achievement of all Barrow programme objectives.

End-of-programme surveys will acknowledge programme strengths and highlight potential areas for development and improvement before the next scheduled iteration of the programme, including feedback relating to blended learning delivery and learner experience.

All recommendations from programme reviews and ongoing monitoring will be presented to the External QA Committee and Board of Management.

1.10.2 Actions to Address Risks and Opportunities in the Organisational Context

The Board of Management Team of Barrow have completed a full risk assessment of the business taking into consideration the context (internal and external factors and conditions) of the organisation, along with the relevant requirements of their interested parties and how this may impact on the company's Quality Management System, including risks associated with onsite and blended learning provision.

The results of the risk assessments have been documented within the company business Risk Register (QF199).

The Risk Register outlines the potential threats to the ongoing operation of the organisation, including risks relating to blended learning delivery, and what mitigation measures are in place to minimise the likely occurrence of these threats.

The methodology of how the company identifies both its risks and opportunities related to the QMS are addressed according to the procedure for addressing risks and opportunities (SOP 109 Risk Management).

Barrow has planned actions to address both risks and opportunities and has fully integrated and implemented the actions into its QMS processes. Barrow evaluates the effectiveness of these actions on an ongoing basis. These risks include potential blended learning risks.

High risks identified in the risk register, including blended learning risks, will also be discussed during the quarterly Board of Management review.

A Management Review is undertaken by the Board of Management on an annual basis to ensure continued suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the Quality Management System and alignment with the strategic direction of the organisation, including the effectiveness of onsite and blended learning provision.

Chapter 2. Programmes of Education and Training

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrows accrediting bodies:

- Programmes of Education and Training (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 3)
- QQI Blended learning guidelines.

Barrow is committed to providing course content, delivery methods, a learning environment and ongoing review to help create participative, active, and meaningful learning for all our learners. We welcome and actively seek learner feedback to help us achieve this.

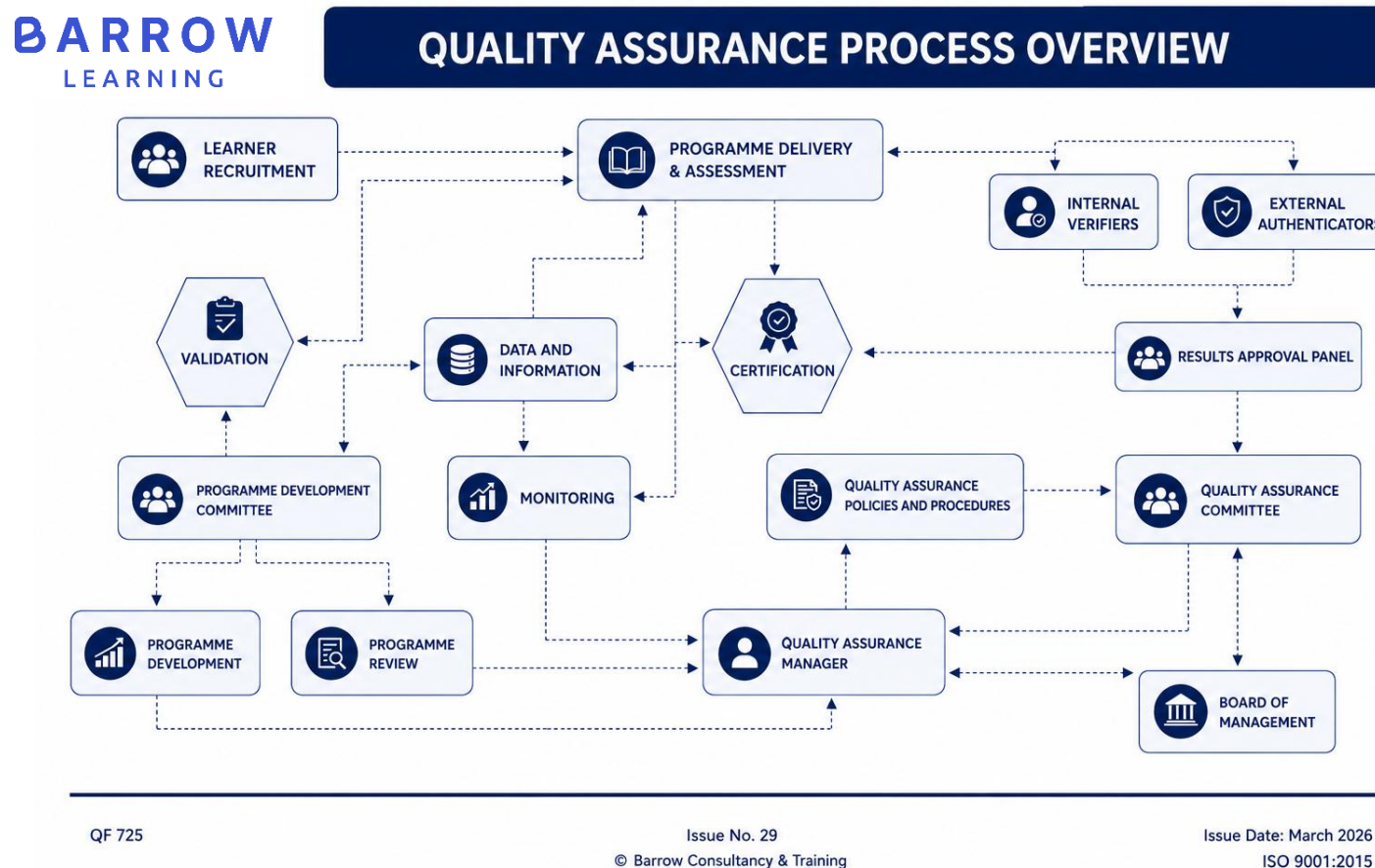
Barrow is committed to ensuring that all programmes are:

1. Developed in line with all policies and guidelines
2. Delivered to the highest standard in a professional, safe, and consistent manner
3. Reviewed on an ongoing basis

Feedback from learners, tutors, staff, and other relevant stakeholders is given priority to ensure Barrow continues to identify opportunities for improving the quality of the programmes and the service delivered.

2.0 Quality Assurance Process Overview

The figure below depicts the interrelationship between operational and governance structures and processes (QF 725).



2.1 Procedure for the Development and Approval of New Programmes

Barrow will develop and deliver programmes that are well-structured, relevant to the needs of learners and industry, and reflect the standards as set out by the National Framework of Qualifications (if applicable). This process is guided by the policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training.

For programmes delivered in a blended format, approval is subject to additional requirements as outlined in Section 3.5.5 a (Blended Learning in a Programme Context).

All such programmes must complete a Blended Programme Approval Checklist 3.5.5 a, prior to validation and delivery. This ensures that programme design, resource allocation, delivery model, and learner support arrangements meet QQI 2023 requirements.

Approval of blended programmes includes explicit consideration of delivery modality, learner workload, staff capacity, digital infrastructure, and academic integrity measures.

Programme approval and review processes consider the suitability of programmes for blended and online delivery, including learner workload, digital learning design, assessment methods, learner supports, staff competence requirements, accessibility, technological infrastructure, and academic integrity arrangements.

2.1.1 Stages in Design of New Programme

INTERNAL VERIFICATION	
PROCEDURE	DESCRIPTION
Identification and proposal of potential new programme	Ideas for new courses are generated from training needs analyses, enquiries database, away days, requests and engagement with learners, clients, employers, tutors, and stakeholders. New legislation is also considered and employment trends.
Agreement from External QA Committee	When an idea is generated, it is firstly approved by the External QA Committee. The Quality Assurance Manager will prepare a proposal for the committee and will include programme context, level, rationale, learner demand, competitors (if any), schedule for development and resources and costs associated with development and validation. The External QA Committee will then review the proposal considering Barrow's scope of practice, learner needs, alignment with NFQ, what is currently being offered by other providers and accreditation requirements.
Programme Development Committee	If accepted by the External QA Committee, then it will be passed to Programme Development Committee whose role is to develop the programme and fee schedule. A timescale is decided upon, and this sub-committee will report back External QA Committee agreed intervals.
Course Development	Learning outcomes of the programme are agreed upon. Access requirements, and transfer and progression pathways are identified for the programme. Additionally, QQI requires the following for programme validation applications: programme descriptor, self-evaluation against QQI criteria, full resource development, assessment briefs and marking sheets, and tutor programme specification.
Evaluation and approval by External QA Committee	Application is reviewed by External QA Committee and returned to Programme Development Committee for amendment, if required. QA Committee must approve application before submission to accrediting body.
Submission to Accrediting Body for Validation	Course development materials will be submitted to the relevant body through one of the following methods and required fee will be paid: • Uploaded through QBS with QQI

An external assessment from the accrediting body follows this process, ensuring core policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training are met.

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW	
PROCEDURE	DESCRIPTION
Programme Review Committee	The Programme Review Committee is concerned with the quality, standards, and monitoring of QQI courses delivered by Barrow. They are responsible for the oversight of all QQI programmes. Programme review processes include evaluation of blended learning delivery, learner engagement, digital platform effectiveness, assessment integrity, learner feedback, accessibility, and the effectiveness of learner support. The Programme Review Committee will periodically review programmes to maintain standards and ensure compliance and make recommendations to enhance and improve the programmes to ensure they are fit for purpose. They will also provide advice, support and guidance to management, tutors, and staff on the development and delivery of all Barrow programmes. This committee is a sub-committee for the External QA Committee. The Barrow audit schedule is developed at the beginning of each year. The centre will ensure that all procedures are evaluated at least once in a 12-month period.

2.1.2 Programme Design

2.1.3 Framework

Barrow applies the following framework for the design of a training programme:



2.1.4 Design Requirements for Blended Learning Programmes

Programmes delivered through blended learning must be designed to ensure equivalence of learner outcomes across delivery modes and alignment with QQI 2023 guidelines.

Programme design must explicitly address:

- The rationale for adopting a blended delivery model
- The defined proportion of onsite, synchronous, and asynchronous learning
- The alignment of learning outcomes with delivery methods

- Expected learner workload (including independent learning time)
- Appropriate class sizes and tutor-to-learner ratios
- Availability of qualified staff with digital teaching competence
- Suitability of digital platforms and tools
- Provision of learner supports (academic, technical, pastoral)
- Measures to ensure academic integrity and learner identity verification
- Application of accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles

These requirements are formally evaluated through the Blended Programme Approval Checklist (Section 3.5.4).

2.1.5 Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition

2.1.6 Access

Barrows Admission Policy & Criteria provides clear admission procedures that will be applied consistently and in a fair and transparent manner.

2.1.7 Policy Statement

Barrow operates an open admissions policy for learners who fulfil the necessary requirements to undertake a course of study offered. Inclusiveness and equality are central to Barrows policy. Barrow does not discriminate on any of the grounds outlined in the Equal Status Acts 2000 (Updated 2024). Barrow in so far as is practicable within its resources, makes special accommodation for learners with additional educational needs.

Barrow reserves the right of admission and may decide to modify, postpone, or cancel Learner admission at any time should the need arise.

2.1.8 Scope

This policy applies to all prospective learners of Barrow and relates to all Barrow courses (QQI-accredited and Barrow-certified).

2.1.9 Procedures

A) Policy Implementation

Entry requirements, admission criteria and programme information will be made available. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure they are fully briefed about their chosen course of study. Applicants will take responsibility for ensuring that they have completed all documentation required for enrolment and paid the necessary fees if applicable. This may include, but is not limited to:

- a completed enrolment form
- a photocopy of personal identification
- a photocopy of any previous qualifications
- proof of English language proficiency (if required)

Applicants will take responsibility for ensuring that they are fully registered on the programme of study. An applicant cannot be considered a learner until they have completed all stages in the registration process.

Applicants will also take responsibility for the accuracy of information supplied. Submitting false or misleading information or documentation can lead to cancellation of admission or expulsion from a programme.

Entry requirements for each of our programmes are listed on our website barrowlearning.ie

B) Criteria for Admission

Previous Qualifications: To access programmes leading to a particular award, the learner should have reached the standards of knowledge, skill and competence associated with the preceding level of the National Framework of Qualifications, i.e. to access a Level 6 programme, the learner must have achieved a Level 5 qualification.

This may have been achieved through a formal qualification or through relevant life and work experience by submitting an RPL form. See section 2.2.1 RPL Process (Entry)

Applicants must also have a strong interest in their chosen area of study.

Minimum English Language Requirements: Teaching in Barrow is through the medium of English. Therefore, learners must demonstrate a high level of competence in the English language to be admitted. Barrows minimum English language requirements apply to all applicants at all levels of study.

Learners whose first language is not English must show that they meet a certain standard of English language proficiency. This can be proven through any one of the following methods:

- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Level B2 or higher

- Merit or Distinction in the QQI Level 5 modules English as a Second Language 5N1632 or Communications 5N0690
- International English Language Testing System–Academic (IELTS) – Minimum overall band score of 7.0, with a result not less than 6.5 in each of the individual sections
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) – Internet Based Test: Minimum total score of 100 out of 120, with a score not less than 22 in Reading and Listening. Not less than 26 in Speaking and NOT LESS than 24 in the test of written English
- Leaving Certificate results of H7/O6 in English

Applicants must complete the English language proficiency test prior to enrolling on a Barrow programme. In all cases the test results must not be more than 2 years old.

Information on accessing a test is available on the Barrow website.

Additional Requirements Specific to Learners Engaging in Blended Learning: Applicants must be self-motivated and have the capacity to take responsibility for their own learning as they progress through a blended learning programme.

Basic computer literacy is required to enrol on a blended learning programme, e.g. opening an internet page, following simple instructions, and creating a Word document. Applicants must also have the following:

- Access to a laptop with functioning camera and audio **OR** access to a PC with functioning camera and audio (earphones may be required when using PC) **OR** access to a mobile device with functioning camera and audio
- Strong internet connection
- Zoom or Teams downloaded
- Photo ID in the form of a passport, public service card or driving license

Learners with a Disability, Medical Condition or Learning Difficulty: Under the Equal Status Acts, 2000(Updated 2024), Barrow is fully committed to providing reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of learners with a disability, a significant on-going medical condition or learning difficulty to enable them to successfully complete their programme on an equal footing with other learners.

A reasonable accommodation might be any action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage arising from the learner's disability, significant medical condition or learning difficulty, without changing the demands or the integrity of the examination or the programme. Upon enrolment, each learner will be required to complete a form indicating whether they require any additional learning supports. If support is requested, the Quality Assurance team and the assigned tutor will be notified and will follow up with the learner to discuss appropriate next steps.

See QF 800 Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

C) Selection Procedure

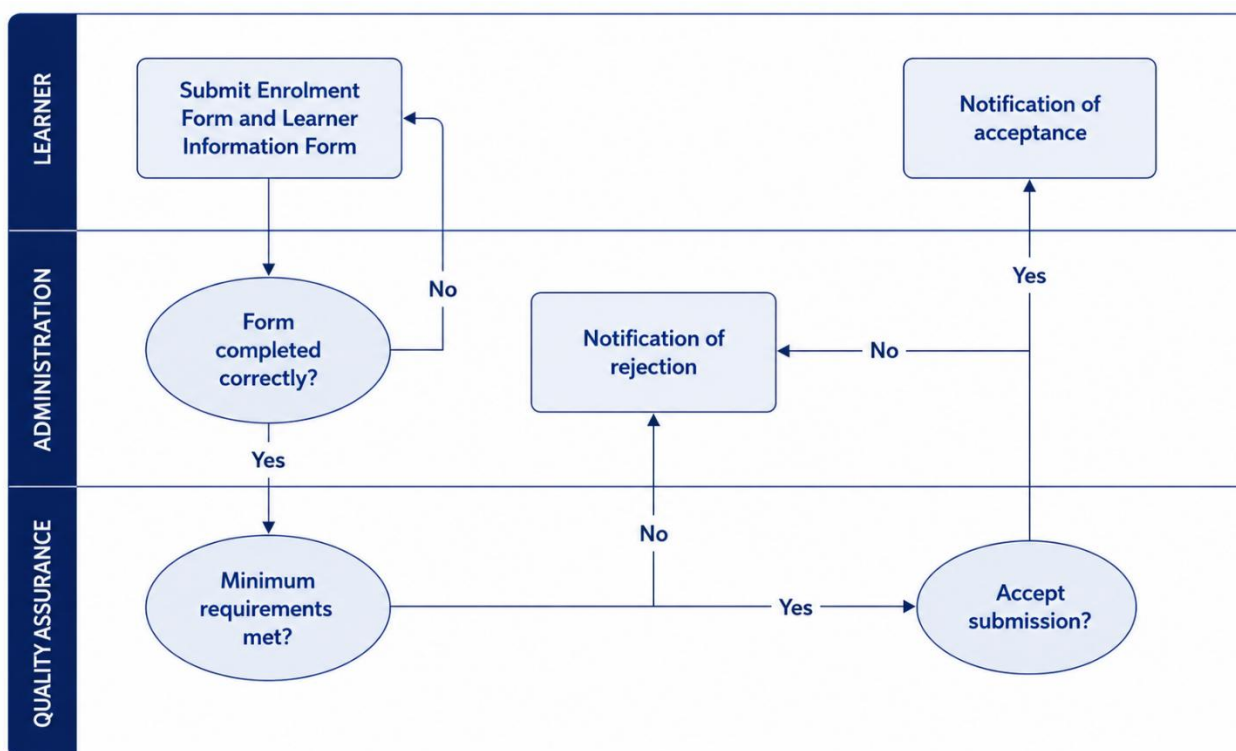
The decision to admit a learner must be based ultimately on an informed judgement that the applicant is competent to begin the course and successfully complete the course.

Barrow reserves the right to request an applicant to attend for interview to assess their eligibility for a programme where it deems such action appropriate. Should the numbers enrolling for a programme exceed available capacity, places will be offered to eligible applicants on agreed selection criteria. Applicants who cannot be accommodated due to capacity will be invited to place their names on a waiting list.

Incomplete applications will not be assessed until all information has been received from the applicant.

Fees paid in advance will be returned if, for any reason, an applicant is not offered a place on the programme or if the programme does not run.

D) Enrolment Process



2.2 RPL Process for Admissions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may be used to facilitate access, transfer, progression, exemptions, credit, or advanced standing, where appropriate and permitted by programme requirements.

Barrow offers guidance and support to assist learners in understanding the RPL process, preparing their RPL Portfolios or evidence and navigating any challenges they encounter.

Barrow provides guidance and support to applicants throughout the RPL process, including advice on evidence requirements, portfolio preparation, and available learner supports.

2.2.1 Introduction

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which individuals with relevant prior experience and learning can enter a Course, even if they do not possess formal education qualifications. At Barrow we believe in providing equitable opportunities for all learners to pursue their educational aspirations. This outlines the RPL procedure, guidelines, and criteria for candidates seeking admission to a course based on their prior learning and experience.

1. Purpose of RPL

The purpose of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process is to acknowledge and value the skills, knowledge, and experience that candidates have acquired through non-formal and informal learning experiences. This process aims to facilitate the entry of individuals with practical expertise into a course, recognising their ability to meet the course outcomes without the requirement of formal education qualifications.

2. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for RPL consideration for entry onto a Course without prior education qualifications, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- **Demonstrate relevant experience:** Candidates should provide evidence of practical experience in related roles, such as volunteering, work experience, or responsibilities.
- **Provide supporting evidence:** Candidates should compile a portfolio of evidence, including documents, testimonials, certificates, and any other relevant materials that showcase their experience and learning.

3. RPL Procedure

The RPL procedure consists of the following steps:

Step 1: Application Submission

Candidates interested in RPL for entry onto a Course should submit a formal application. The application should include details about their relevant experience, a brief statement of intent, and supporting evidence.

Step 2: Portfolio Compilation

Upon receiving the application, candidates may be required to compile a portfolio that highlights their experience, achievements, and any relevant certifications. The portfolio should clearly demonstrate how their prior learning aligns with the course outcomes.

Step 3: Assessment

The Internal Quality Panel will review the submitted portfolio. The Internal Quality Panel will evaluate the evidence provided by the candidate to determine if they meet the required criteria for RPL.

Step 4: Interview (if necessary)

In some cases, the Internal Quality Panel may request an interview with the candidate to further discuss their experience, knowledge, and alignment with the course outcomes.

Step 5: Decision

Based on the assessment and interview (if conducted), the Internal Quality Panel will decide regarding the candidate's eligibility for RPL. Candidates will be notified of the outcome within 14 days. Decisions are recorded and retained as part of the organisation's quality assurance records.

4. Outcome of RPL Assessment

Option 1: Successful RPL

Candidates who successfully demonstrate their alignment with the course outcomes through their portfolio and any required interviews will be granted RPL status. They will be eligible to enrol on a course without the need for prior education qualifications.

Option 2: Additional Learning Required

In cases where the Internal Quality Panel determines that certain gaps exist in the candidate's prior learning, they may be offered the option to undertake additional learning or assessments to bridge those gaps before enrolling on a course.

2.2.2 Induction

Learner induction is mandatory at the start of every programme. The presentation will include:

- ✓ Admission Criteria
- ✓ Submission Policy including deadlines
- ✓ Exam Policy and Code of Conduct
- ✓ Schedule of Submission
- ✓ Referencing
- ✓ Appeals
- ✓ Turnitin Similarity/Plagiarism AI
- ✓ Assessment Process
- ✓ Transfer & Progression
- ✓ Learner Supports
- ✓ PEL – Protection for Enrolled Learners
- ✓ RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning
- ✓ Health and Safety
- ✓ Learner Handbook

Learners must sign a course commencement form (QF 75) (onsite), learners on a blended learning program sign off via Moodle (Badge is awarded), confirming that they understand and agree to Barrows policies and procedures outlined in the induction.

2.2.3 Transfer & Progression

Successful completion of a component award enables the learner to progress to achieve a full major award, or to transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme where the component is a mandatory or an elective requirement.

Different combinations of components lead to different Major Awards. Each component has a credit value, typically between 15 and 30. A Major Award needs 120 credits, made up by combining components.

Progression requires a full Level 5 or Level 6 Major Award, with at least 120 credits.

Upon successful completion of a major award, learners can progress to an award on the next level on the NFQ. Alternatively, the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS) gives learners the opportunity to use their QQI Level 5/6 Major Award to apply through the CAO for a place in the first year of a higher education programme. In some instances, progression is based on specific Level 5 or 6 Major Awards which the learner should check with the higher education institution prior to commencement. Components (Minor Awards), or achievement of less than 120 credits, will not suffice for progression under the HELS.

The learner is responsible for ensuring that Barrow is made aware of their wish to apply through CAO prior to commencing the Major Award and is advised in the learner handbook. Barrow can then apply to QQI for Major Award status on the learner's behalf, prior to application to the CAO. Learners must check both the individual Higher Education institution and the CAO websites to ensure they meet any special or essential requirements specified, which may include the following:

- A specific Major Award
- A specific grade in specific component(s)
- Additional Award requirements such as mathematics
- That all credits used for scoring purposes are achieved in one 'single sitting' (whilst the Major Award may be achieved over more than one year, it is important to note that some higher education institutions require that the 120 credits are achieved within a 'single sitting' between 1 August and 31 July of any certification year)

Barrow commits to supporting learners who wish to transfer or progress to Barrow programmes or others leading to an award within the National Framework of Qualifications.

2.2.4 Recognition of Prior Learning for Exemptions

Barrow recognises prior certified, non-certified, formal, informal, and experiential learning where appropriate and in accordance with the principles of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Recognition of prior learning may be used:

- to support entry to a programme;
- to support applications for exemptions, credit, or advanced standing, where permitted by programme requirements;
- to recognise qualifications achieved outside Ireland, subject to verification through appropriate national recognition mechanisms, including QQI/NARIC guidance where applicable.

Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are considered by the Internal Quality Panel in accordance with the organisation's RPL procedures and any programme-specific requirements. Separate procedures apply for:

- RPL for programme entry (Section 2.1.4)
- RPL for exemptions, credit, or advanced standing (Section 2.1.4.1a).

Barrow provides guidance and support to applicants throughout the RPL process, including advice on evidence requirements, portfolio preparation, and available learner supports.

2.2.5 Exemptions

An exemption may only be claimed for the purpose of and at the time of achieving a major or special purpose class award. This information is provided to learners in their handbook.

In relation to CAS awards, if the component code is on the current award structure, irrespective of when it was achieved, it may be used towards a learner's major award.

Exemptions may also be claimed from other recognised awarding bodies i.e. Universities, Institutes of Technology, State Examinations Commission etc.

2.2.6 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for exemptions

Learners may apply for exemptions from specific programme components through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process where they can demonstrate that they have previously achieved the relevant learning outcomes through certified, non-certified, formal, informal, or experiential learning.

Applications for exemptions must be supported by appropriate evidence demonstrating achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. Evidence may include qualifications, professional certifications, work-based learning, employer verification, portfolios of evidence, or other relevant documentation.

Applications are reviewed by the Internal Quality Panel, which may request additional evidence or an interview where required. Decisions are based on the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes associated with the component for which exemption is sought. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing within 14 days. Where gaps in learning are identified, additional learning or assessment requirements may be specified.

Barrow provides guidance and support to applicants throughout the RPL process. Further details regarding the assessment of prior learning are outlined in Section 2.1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Entry.

Appeals process for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an RPL application may appeal the decision in accordance with the organisation's Appeals Procedure.

Appeals must be submitted in writing within 14 days of notification of the decision and must clearly state the grounds for appeal, together with any supporting evidence.

Appeals will be reviewed by appropriately authorised personnel or committees who were not involved in the original assessment or decision-making process, ensuring independence, fairness, and transparency.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the applicant in writing. The decision reached through the Appeals Procedure shall be regarded as final.

Further details regarding the management of appeals are outlined in Chapter 5 Section 5.11.9

Exemption using a CAS Module

Learners who have prior completion of a QQI module and which is relevant to the major award they are working towards must notify the Quality Assurance Manager along with a copy of the QQI certificate and/or final statement of results. Again, the learner must pay particular attention to the date on the certificate to ensure it can be used for the purpose of an exemption. Only those components which are no more than five years old, at the time the exemption(s) is sought, may be used to claim an exemption.

2.2.7 Holders of a Degree awarded by a National Awarding Body

Learners who hold a degree awarded by a National Awarding Body can apply to receive an exemption from Communications QQI Level 5 5N0690 or Level 6 6N1950 if the certificate has been achieved within the previous five years. If it is older than 5 years, learners can apply for an exemption through RPL.

The learner must inform Barrow if they hold such a degree by requesting an RPL application form (QF702).

They should then return the completed application form along with a copy of the certificate to the Quality Assurance Manager. The application form and the certificate will be reviewed internally, and the outcome will be confirmed to the learner by email within 14 days.

2.3 Supervised Work Placement

Work placement is a planned experiential learning activity and an integral part of the educational process. It provides learners with the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills within a vocational setting relevant to their programme, while developing professional competencies, evaluating employment opportunities, and adapting to workplace environments.

All learners must complete work placement in an organisation appropriate to their programme of study and in line with QQI requirements.

2.3.1 Preparation for Work Placement

Learners are responsible for securing a suitable work placement; however, support and guidance are available from tutors where required. Prior to commencing placement, learners must:

- Be fully registered on their programme
- Be undertaking the required modules
- Meet any programme-specific requirements, including Garda Vetting

Learners must provide placement details to their tutor before commencement. Workplace supervisors are issued with the Briefing to Workplace Supervisors Form (QF 148) outlining their roles and responsibilities, which must be signed prior to placement beginning.

For Early Learning and Care (ELC) programmes, learners must also:

- Complete Garda Vetting
- Complete the current Children First E-Learning Programme
- Undertake placement only in TUSLA-registered settings approved by Barrow

ELC learners are required to complete:

- 150 supervised practice placement hours per annum
- 300 hours across the full programme

Placement must include experience in:

1. Settings with children aged 0 – 2 years 8 months
2. Settings with children aged 2 years 8 months – 6 years

2.3.2 During Work Placement

Successful completion of work placement is dependent on:

- Completion of the required placement hours
- A satisfactory supervisor's report

Learners must always remain supervised during placement. Workplace supervisors are required to directly monitor learners for a minimum of 35 hours, with additional supervision provided by senior staff where necessary.

Placement provides learners with opportunities to:

- Observe experienced practitioners
- Integrate theory with practice
- Develop vocational competencies and professional values
- Engage in reflective practice and self-evaluation
- Participate fully in workplace activities

Tutors and the Training & TEL Manager maintain contact with placement providers to monitor learner progress and address any issues relating to attendance, conduct, or performance. Placement visits may be conducted, and the Work Experience Monitoring Report (QF 683) completed in consultation with the supervisor and learner.

All learners receive a Placement Handbook and are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct throughout placement.

2.3.3 Code of Conduct for Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Always act professionally
- Maintain confidentiality
- Refrain from discussing placement on social media
- Follow all workplace policies and procedures
- Arrive punctually and maintain attendance
- Follow instructions from supervisors and staff
- Notify supervisors of absences
- Take responsibility for their learning and participation

2.3.4 Completion of Work Placement

At the end of placement, supervisors complete a final evaluation report confirming learner performance and completion of required hours. Where placement forms part of programme assessment, this report contributes to the learner's overall grade.

For ELC programmes, learners must also complete a placement log, signed by the learner, supervisor, and tutor, confirming completion of all required tasks and placement hours.

Completion of all placement requirements is mandatory for the achievement of the relevant QQI award.

Chapter 3. Blended Learning

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrows accrediting body QQI.

- QQI Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes

3.0 Introduction

This policy outlines the guiding principles for the development and delivery of blended programmes/modules in Barrow Consultancy and Training Ltd. (hereafter Barrow). This has been developed as an enabling resource to facilitate the provision of blended programmes and specifies the relevant quality assurance and enhancement measures required to adhere to best practice and relevant quality standards. This policy has been informed by the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Blended Programmes (2023) and aligns with the organisation's approved Quality Assurance framework.

The design and implementation of blended learning approaches for educational programmes provides learners with alternative learning pathways in a learner-centred environment that promotes self-directed learning. The self-paced interactive and collaborative aspects of digital technology facilitate the development of coursework and learning resources that are supportive and create a constructive learning environment for learners.

The QQI topic specific guidelines state in the context of the blended provision that *"it is important that the teaching and learning experience is a positive quality experience, with quality assurance, improvement and enhancement in place"* and Barrow is committed to this. The guidelines are organised under the following principal headings:

- organisational context
- programme context
- learner experience context

For consistency with QQI 2023 guidelines, the following terminology is adopted throughout this manual:

- LMS (Learning Management System) / VLE (Virtual Learning Environment): Moodle platform used for delivery and tracking
- Synchronous learning: Real-time interaction (e.g., live blended classes)
- Asynchronous learning: Self-paced learning (e.g., recorded content, forums)
- Blended learning: Combination of onsite, synchronous, and asynchronous delivery
- Digital-first approach: Designing learning primarily for blended learning engagement
- Equivalency: Ensuring comparable learner outcomes across delivery modes
- Accessibility: Inclusive design for all learners
- Academic integrity: Authenticity and honesty in assessment
- Learning design model: Structured approach to developing learning experiences
- Evaluation analytics: Use of LMS data to monitor engagement and outcomes

3.1 Definitions

Blended Learning

Blended Learning is a type of programme where teaching, learning and assessment occur using a mix of on-site (face-to-face) and online learning, with the online components taking place synchronously, asynchronously, or in combination. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (2023)

Online Learning

Fully online learning refers to programmes delivered entirely through online means, without any requirement for onsite attendance. Such provision may include both synchronous (live online) and asynchronous (self-directed) learning activities.

Onsite Learning

Onsite learning refers to delivery that takes place in a physical location where learners and tutors are present in the same environment. This includes structured teaching and learning activities such as lectures, discussions, workshops, and collaborative group work.

3.3 Blended Learning in an Organisational Context

3.3.1 Strategic Commitment and Direction

Barrow is committed to the planned, sustainable, and quality-assured development of blended learning as a core element of programme delivery. Blended learning is defined as the intentional integration of onsite, synchronous online, and asynchronous learning activities to support the achievement of programme learning outcomes and ensure consistency of learner experience across delivery modes.

This commitment is embedded within organisational planning, governance, quality assurance, and resource allocation processes and is aligned with the *QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Blended Programmes (2023)*. The effectiveness of blended learning provision is monitored through the Management Review process (Section 1.9.2.1), while associated risks are managed in accordance with the Risk Management procedures outlined in Section 1.9.2.1. Programme design, approval, and review are governed by the procedures detailed in Sections 2.1.0, 2.1.1 and 2.2

Barrow's strategic direction is to provide high-quality, accessible, and flexible education that responds to the evolving needs of learners, employers, and the wider education and training environment. The organisation has adopted a phased approach to blended learning development, as a foundation for future expansion.

Strategic objectives for blended learning provision include:

- ensuring programmes are pedagogically robust and aligned with QQI award standards
- providing learners with a consistent, engaging, and high-quality learning experience
- supporting staff development in digital teaching and learning
- maintaining the infrastructure, governance, and learner support systems necessary to sustain and enhance provision.

These objectives are implemented through established programme development, delivery, and review processes and are subject to ongoing monitoring through organisational governance structures.

3.3.2 Scope of Blended Learning Provision

Blended learning provision at Barrow may include:

- onsite learning
- synchronous blended learning (live virtual sessions)
- asynchronous learning through the Learning Management System (LMS).

All programmes delivered in blended format must clearly define the proportion and integration of these components during programme design and approval. Programmes are approved for blended delivery only where the mode of delivery is appropriate to the programme learning outcomes, assessment requirements, learner profile, and available organisational resources and supports

3.3.3 Programme Selection and Approval Criteria

Programmes are approved for blended delivery only where this mode is appropriate to the programme learning outcomes, assessment requirements, and learner profile. Programme development processes (as outlined in Chapter 2) require explicit consideration of delivery mode, including the balance within blended learning environments.

Each programme approved for blended delivery includes a defined delivery model, learner workload expectations, assessment strategy, and support arrangements. Programme approval also requires confirmation that appropriate staffing, infrastructure, and support services are in place to ensure effective delivery.

Approval is subject to internal QA processes as outlined in Chapter 1 and requires review by relevant governance structures.

3.3.4 Resource Planning, Costing and Service Continuity

Blended learning provision is supported through structured and evidence-based resource planning processes designed to ensure the effective, sustainable, and secure delivery of programmes. The organisation allocates teaching, administrative, technical, and learner support resources in line with programme requirements, learner numbers, delivery models, and strategic priorities. Staffing levels and workload allocation are reviewed regularly to ensure sufficient tutor availability to support synchronous delivery, asynchronous engagement, assessment processes, learner support, and programme administration.

Oversight of resource allocation and organisational capacity is maintained through established governance structures, including the Internal Quality Panel, which monitors the adequacy and effectiveness of resources across all programmes and delivery modes.

Financial planning incorporates both recurring operational costs and developmental investment associated with blended learning provision. This includes expenditure related to:

- * Learning Management Systems (LMS) and digital infrastructure
- * Virtual classroom platforms and assessment tools
- * Content development and maintenance
- * Staff induction, training, and continuing professional development
- * Learner support services
- * Technical support and cybersecurity measures
- * Data storage, backup, and system maintenance

Resource allocation decisions are informed by programme performance data, learner demand, quality assurance findings, technological developments, and organisational strategic objectives to ensure funding supports quality enhancement, continuity of service, and sustainable growth.

This approach is operationalised through the organisation's use of Moodle as the primary Learning Management System, supported by synchronous delivery platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Oversight and coordination are provided through designated roles including the Managing Director, Quality Assurance Manager, Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager, tutors/facilitators, and administrative staff.

3.3.5 Staffing Structure and Responsibilities

Blended learning provision is supported through a clearly defined staffing structure with identified responsibilities and lines of accountability:

a) Managing Director

- Provides strategic oversight of organisational resources and capacity
- Ensures alignment between blended learning provision and organisational strategy

b) Quality Assurance Manager

- Monitors the effectiveness and quality of blended learning provision
- Oversees compliance with QQI requirements and internal quality assurance procedures
- Acts as an escalation point for quality or delivery-related issues

c) Training and TEL Manager

- Responsible for the design, implementation, maintenance, security, and continuous improvement of the LMS and associated digital learning systems
- Leads technical support provision and contingency planning
- Works in conjunction with the QA Manager to approve learning technologies in line with GDPR and QA requirements

d) Tutors

- Deliver programme content and learner support
- Monitor learner engagement, participation, and progression
- Provide assessment guidance and feedback
- Act as the primary point of contact for learners

e) Administrative Team

- Programme coordination - Supports learner onboarding, scheduling, communications, and record management
- Maintains learner records in accordance with GDPR and organisational procedures

f) Technical Infrastructure and Support

Blended learning provision is supported through a secure and resilient digital infrastructure, including:

- Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) – (Version 4.5.12)
- Video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams
- Secure cloud-based systems including SharePoint
- Secure data storage and backup systems
- Remote access functionality with appropriate security controls

Technical support is coordinated by the Training and TEL Manager with support from designated administrative personnel. Systems are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure reliability, security, accessibility, and operational effectiveness.

Learners, tutors, and staff are provided with guidance on accessing technical support services, including contact details, reporting procedures, and expected response times.

Staffing Model and Functional Responsibilities

Function	Role	Key Responsibilities
Academic Delivery	Tutors	Delivery of onsite and blended learning, learner support, assessment, and feedback

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)	Training & TEL Manager	Oversight of Moodle LMS, digital learning design, and staff support
Administration	Admin Team	Enrolment, learner records, and communications, scheduling and programme coordination
Technical Support	IT Support / Enovation	System maintenance, troubleshooting, and platform reliability
Quality Assurance	QA Manager	Quality monitoring, policy development, and compliance

Tutor-to-learner ratios and administrative capacity are monitored regularly, and additional staffing supports are allocated where required to ensure learners receive appropriate academic, technical, and administrative support. (Reference Point number - ADD)

3.3.6 Out-of-Hours Support and Issue Management

Recognising the flexible nature of blended learning provision, Barrow maintains structured learner, academic, administrative, and technical support arrangements to support participation across blended delivery modes. Learners are provided during induction with clear guidance on:

- Available support channels
- Types of supports available
- Expected response times
- Escalation procedures for urgent issues
- Alternative contact arrangements during scheduled live sessions

Support services are delivered through a combination of Moodle communication tools, scheduled live sessions, designated support email accounts, administrative support channels, and technical escalation procedures.

Support Channels and Response Targets

Support Channel	Purpose	Availability / Response Target
Email Support	General learner queries, technical support, assessment queries, and learner guidance	Response within 24 working hours during business days
LMS (Moodle)	Access to learning materials, announcements, assessment submission, FAQs, learner communications, and guidance resources	Available 24/7, subject to scheduled maintenance
Live Sessions (Zoom/Teams)	Real-time tutor support during scheduled classes, tutorials, and learner engagement activities	Immediate support during scheduled sessions
Tutor Support	Academic guidance, assessment clarification, learner engagement monitoring, and feedback	Available during scheduled sessions and through Moodle/email communication
Administrative Support	Enrolment, learner records, certification, scheduling, and general administration queries	Available Monday–Thursday, 9:00am–5:00pm and Friday 9:00am–4:00pm
Technical Escalation Support	Urgent technical issues affecting live sessions, learner access, or assessment activity	Escalated immediately to the Training & TEL Manager and/or designated IT support
Out-of-Hours Support	Urgent blended learning support queries submitted outside normal business hours through designated support email channels	Response target within 3 hours between 5:00pm–12:00am and within 10 hours between 12:00am–9:00am

Major technical issues are escalated to the Training and TEL Manager and/or designated support personnel where required. Learners are provided with guidance through the LMS and Student Hub on how to report urgent issues and access appropriate support services. Learners are made aware at induction of the response times and will appropriately sign (manual or digital) to show agreement to these.

Additional support arrangements include:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and guidance materials available through Moodle
- Alternative communication methods including email, telephone, SMS, and organisational social media platforms during disruptions
- Prompt communication to learners in the event of planned maintenance, technical outages, or service interruptions

Response times and support effectiveness are monitored and reviewed through Barrow's quality assurance, learner feedback, and programme monitoring processes to ensure support provision remains effective, responsive, and aligned with learner needs.

a) Contingency Planning and Service Continuity

Risk management and contingency planning processes support continuity of blended learning provision and address risks associated with:

- Technological failure
- Cybersecurity incidents
- Learner access and participation
- Staff capacity and absence
- Data protection and GDPR compliance
- Academic integrity
- Continuity of teaching, assessment, and learner support

b) Technical Failure and System Disruption

In the event of LMS or digital system failure:

- Learners are informed during induction of the contingency arrangements in place to minimise disruption in the event of technical failure. They are advised of the alternative communication and learning arrangements that will be implemented where necessary and are assured that their personal data and learning records are securely protected in accordance with the organisation's data protection and information security procedures.
- Learner data remains securely backed up and accessible to authorised personnel
- Where a technical disruption affects the availability of the Learning Management System (Moodle), learning materials, assessments, and learner communications may be distributed through approved alternative platforms, including Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Microsoft 365 (Outlook, OneDrive and SharePoint), and secure organisational email. These arrangements ensure continuity of teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support while maintaining data security, version control, and compliance with the organisation's quality assurance procedures.
- Alternative communication methods including phone, email, and social media may be used where necessary
- The Training and TEL Manager coordinates communication, escalation, and recovery actions

c) Absence of Key Personnel

To ensure continuity of provision:

- Tutors may be replaced by appropriately qualified and approved tutors from the organisation's tutor panel, ensuring continuity of teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support.
- Key operational responsibilities are documented, and staff are cross trained to provide cover during planned and unplanned absences. Duties may be delegated to appropriately trained personnel to ensure continuity of administrative, quality assurance, learner support, and programme management activities.
- All programme materials, learner records, assessment documentation, and communications are stored securely within the organisation's approved systems and are accessible only to authorised personnel.
- Documented handover procedures are implemented for planned and unplanned staff absences to ensure that programme delivery, learner support, assessment processes, and quality assurance activities continue without unnecessary disruption.
- Where temporary additional staffing resources are required, the Managing Director will allocate appropriate personnel and resources to maintain service levels, learner support, and compliance with quality assurance requirement

Loss of Physical Access (e.g. emergency situations)

- All staff can access systems remotely via secure login and two factor authentication
- Cloud-based systems ensure continuity of teaching, administration, and communication

These steps make sure that learners can keep making progress without any interruptions and that all programs can still be taught successfully

3.3.7 Data Protection and GDPR Compliance

All resourcing, learner support, and business continuity arrangements operate in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the organisation's Information Security Management System.

Measures include:

- Access to learner and organisational data is restricted to authorised personnel on a need-to-know basis.
- Password-protected systems, multi-factor authentication where appropriate, encryption, and secure authentication methods are used to protect information assets.
- Secure, automated backups of organisational data are maintained to support business continuity and disaster recovery.
- Compliance with the organisation's data protection, information security, records management, and personal data breach procedures.
- The same data protection, confidentiality, and information security standards apply during contingency arrangements or alternative methods of programme delivery.
- Specialist external IT, cybersecurity, and technical support providers are engaged to assist with the maintenance, monitoring, security, resilience, and recovery of the organisation's digital infrastructure, ensuring continuity of service and the protection of learner and organisational data.

Any actual or suspected personal data breaches or information security incidents are managed in accordance with the organisation's Data Protection Policy, Information Security Management System, Incident Response Procedures, and statutory reporting requirements.

3.3.8 Implementation and Operational Planning

Blended learning provision is implemented through structured operational planning processes designed to ensure consistency, quality, and effective learner support across all delivery modes.

Operational planning includes:

- Programme scheduling and timetabling across synchronous and asynchronous delivery modes
- Development, deployment, and maintenance of learning materials and digital content
- Tutor induction and preparation for blended learning delivery
- Learner induction and orientation to blended learning systems and expectations
- Communication of delivery requirements and expectations to learners and staff
- Coordination of assessment scheduling, learner supports, and programme administration

Each programme includes a documented delivery plan outlining:

- Schedule of synchronous sessions
- Expected asynchronous engagement
- Assessment timelines and submission requirements
- Learner support arrangements
- Communication channels and escalation procedures

Operational delivery arrangements are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain effective, accessible, and aligned with programme and learner requirements.

3.3.9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Blended learning provision is subject to ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and review processes to support continuous improvement and quality enhancement.

Monitoring mechanisms include:

- Learner feedback and evaluation processes

- Analysis of learner engagement, participation, and performance data
- Programme review and quality assurance processes (see Chapter 8)
- Tutor, Internal Verification, and External Authentication feedback
- Internal Quality Panel review and reporting
- Staff feedback and performance review processes

Key performance indicators include:

- Learner retention and completion rates
- Learner satisfaction and feedback
- Engagement in synchronous and asynchronous activities
- Assessment outcomes and achievement rates
- Effectiveness of learner and technical support arrangements

Findings from monitoring and review activities inform:

- Continuous improvement actions
- Programme updates and enhancements
- Staff development planning
- Resource allocation decisions
- Identification of risks, service gaps, or support requirements

Any significant updates or corrective actions are approved through established governance and quality assurance structures.

3.4.0 Governance and Oversight

Oversight of blended learning strategy, implementation, resourcing, and quality assurance is provided through established governance structures, including:

- Internal Quality Panel
- External Quality Assurance Committee
- Board of Management

These bodies are responsible for:

- Approving blended learning strategy and related policy updates
- Reviewing programme performance and quality indicators
- Monitoring compliance with QQI requirements and internal QA procedures
- Reviewing resource adequacy and organisational capacity
- Overseeing risk management and continuous improvement actions

Governance arrangements support accountability, strategic oversight, and the ongoing enhancement of blended learning provision.

3.4.1 Geographic Scope of Provision (Learners Outside Ireland)

Blended learning programmes are primarily delivered to learners whose primary residence is within the Republic of Ireland.

Learners who are temporarily residing outside the State may participate in programmes where Barrow is satisfied that the quality of the learner experience, learner support, and assessment arrangements can be maintained.

Participation is subject to:

- programme-specific requirements;
- applicable regulatory, legal, and jurisdictional considerations;
- the learner's ability to meet attendance, engagement, identity verification, and assessment requirements;
- access to appropriate technology, internet connectivity, and learner support services;
- time zone differences not adversely affecting attendance at scheduled synchronous sessions, tutor availability, learner support, communication, assessment deadlines, or published response times.

Where significant time zone differences would prevent Barrow from meeting its published learner support, communication, or assessment service standards, the learner may be advised to defer participation or enrol on a later programme.

Learners are required to declare their country of residence and primary location of study as part of the application and enrolment process. Where a learner intends to participate from outside the Republic of Ireland, this must be disclosed prior to programme commencement. Changes to a learner's primary location during programme delivery must also be notified to Barrow. This information enables the organisation to determine whether appropriate learner support, communication, attendance, assessment, identity verification, and published response times can be maintained.

Participation by learners accessing programmes from outside the Republic of Ireland is monitored through enrolment records and learner communications and is reviewed as part of programme monitoring and quality assurance processes to ensure that learner support and programme quality are maintained.

A learner's country of residence and correspondence address are collected during the application and enrolment process. Where participation from outside the Republic of Ireland is identified, the Quality Assurance Manager and Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager review the learner's circumstances to ensure that programme requirements, learner support arrangements, communication, assessment, and regulatory obligations can be met before enrolment is confirmed.

3.4.2 Communication of Strategy

The blended learning strategy informs organisational planning, programme development, staff training, resource allocation, and investment decisions.

The strategy and associated operational arrangements are communicated to relevant stakeholders through:

- Organisational documentation and policies
- Programme information and learner materials
- Staff induction and training processes
- Governance and quality assurance structures
- Internal communication channels and review processes

This supports transparency, consistency, and alignment between strategic objectives and operational practice.

3.4.3 Review of Strategy

The blended learning strategy is subject to periodic review to ensure continued effectiveness, regulatory compliance, and alignment with organisational priorities.

Reviews are informed by:

- Organisational strategic planning cycles
- Quality assurance review processes
- Monitoring and evaluation findings
- Changes in regulatory or QQI requirements
- Technological developments and emerging practice
- Learner, staff, and stakeholder feedback

Updates to the strategy and associated procedures are approved through formal governance and quality assurance processes and communicated to relevant stakeholders.

3.4.4 Infrastructure and Resources

Recruitment:

The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring the appointment of staff with the appropriate academic, professional, and digital competencies required to support blended learning provision. Recruitment and selection processes assess subject expertise, technology-enhanced learning capability, and the ability to effectively support learners within blended learning environments.

All appointments are made in accordance with organisational recruitment procedures and are subject to oversight by the Board of Management. Candidates are required to provide evidence of qualifications, professional experience, and relevant certifications, which are verified and retained in accordance with organisational procedures and data protection requirements.

The External QA Committee appoints appropriately qualified personnel to programme development and programme review panels.

Further procedures relating to tutor competence, induction, CPD, performance monitoring, and blended learning capability are outlined in (Chapter 4 Human Resources Management).

CPD and Training Initiatives:

Barrow is committed to ensuring that staff engaged in blended learning provision are appropriately inducted, trained, supported, and developed to maintain effective teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support practices. Staff development activities include induction, digital competency development, academic integrity training, and ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Detailed procedures relating to tutor competence, induction, CPD, monitoring, and performance review are outlined in (Chapter 4 Human Resources Management).

3.4.5 Assessment Venues

Barrow ensures that all assessment venues are appropriate to the nature and requirements of the assessment and support the integrity, fairness, accessibility, and effectiveness of the assessment process. Venues are selected and managed to provide suitable environments for both theory-based assessments and practical or skills demonstrations. All venues must meet organisational standards relating to accessibility, health and safety, learner comfort, equipment, and suitability for blended learning delivery.

Assessment venues provide appropriate lighting, ventilation, seating, and facilities to support learners in completing assessments safely and comfortably. Venues are accessible to learners with disabilities, and reasonable accommodations are provided in line with relevant legislation and organisational procedures. Learner support requirements are identified during enrolment and confirmed in advance of onsite assessment activities.

All venues comply with relevant health and safety requirements, including risk assessments, safety statements, emergency procedures, and clearly identified escape routes. Tutors, assessors, and learners are informed of relevant health and safety procedures before and during assessment activities.

Venues are equipped to support the specific assessment being conducted. Theory-based assessments include appropriate examination-style seating, timing devices, and display of assessment regulations, while practical assessments provide sufficient space, equipment, and breakout facilities where required. All venues include access to appropriate learner facilities, including toilet and waiting areas.

Responsibility for the selection, approval, and booking of assessment venues rests with the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager in accordance with QF261 Training room checklist. Learner feedback on venue suitability is collected and reviewed in line with QF24 as part of ongoing quality assurance processes. Venues are reviewed periodically to ensure continued compliance with organisational and regulatory requirements.

Further detail is provided in Section 5.1.7 of the Quality Assurance Manual.

3.4.6 Information Technology

Barrow maintains a secure and reliable information technology infrastructure to support the delivery of blended learning programmes, including teaching, learning, assessment, communication, and learner engagement monitoring.

Programme delivery is supported through the Moodle Learning Management System, provided by Enovation, together with approved synchronous platforms such as Zoom or Teams. These systems support access to learning materials, learner interaction, assessment submission, communication, and monitoring of learner participation and progression.

Responsibility for the management, maintenance, and quality assurance of information technology systems rests with the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager. All digital platforms are reviewed to ensure compliance with organisational requirements relating to GDPR, accessibility, security, and quality assurance.

The organisation applies Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to support accessibility, including the use of accessible learning materials, captions, transcripts, and alternative text. Systems are designed to be user-friendly, secure, and accessible across devices.

Learner data is securely stored using password-protected and backed-up systems, and contingency arrangements are in place to minimise disruption in the event of system failure. Alternative communication and delivery methods, including email and telephone contact, are used where necessary to maintain continuity of programme delivery.

Learners receive information on accessing technical support during induction and throughout their programme. System performance and usage are reviewed regularly as part of programme monitoring and quality assurance processes (see Chapter 8). Data generated through the LMS is also utilised to monitor tutor performance and inform ongoing appraisal processes, as outlined in Section 4.5.

3.4.7 Systems Maintenance and Capacity Management

Barrow maintains system reliability through regular maintenance, security monitoring, planned upgrades, and vendor support agreements.

3.4.8 Moodle Workplace Application

Barrow uses Moodle Workplace to support flexible blended learning. Learners can access course materials anytime through the Moodle Workplace app, including offline access to content, learner dashboards, notifications, grades, communication tools, and file uploads from mobile devices.

To support learner authentication and academic integrity, all Moodle users are required to complete two-factor authentication and upload a profile photograph together with valid photo identification (e.g. passport or driver's licence) before accessing programmes. This applies across all QQI-accredited programmes and workshops.

3.4.9 Technology Review and Migration

Barrow conducts annual reviews of its digital learning technologies, incorporating feedback from learners, tutors, administrators, employers, and other stakeholders. Reviews also consider emerging developments in e-learning and educational technology to enhance the learner experience and support effective programme delivery.

Where new technologies, frameworks, or delivery models are introduced, suitability is evaluated by programme staff and approved through the External QA Committee. The Training & TEL Manager confirms compatibility, technical support arrangements, and contingency planning prior to implementation.

3.5.0 Digital Wellbeing Policy

Barrow is committed to promoting the digital wellbeing of learners and staff engaged in blended and blended learning. The organisation encourages balanced and responsible use of digital technologies through:

- Promotion of healthy study habits, including regular breaks and time management
- Clear expectations regarding blended communication and availability
- Respectful and professional engagement across digital platforms
- Access to wellbeing resources and learner supports
- Inclusive and accessible digital content for all learners

A dedicated Digital Wellbeing section is available on Moodle, providing guidance on digital habits, wellbeing supports, and managing blended learning effectively. This policy and related supports are reviewed annually by management and the Quality Assurance team.

3.5.1 Ensuring the Quality of Blended Learning Provision

3.5.1 a Criteria for Admission to a Blended Learning Programme

Applicants to blended learning programmes must demonstrate the ability to engage independently with blended learning and possess basic digital literacy skills, including the use of internet applications and standard software.

Learners are required to have:

- Access to a laptop, PC, or mobile device with functioning camera and audio
- A reliable internet connection
- Access to Zoom or Teams
- Valid photo identification (e.g. passport, public service card, or driving licence)

Barrow assesses learner readiness for blended learning by considering digital literacy, access to technology, and capacity for independent study. Where required, learners are provided with appropriate supports to develop confidence and competence in blended learning environments.

Comprehensive programme information is provided through learner handbooks, programme specifications, inductions, and blended resources to support informed decision-making and learner preparedness. Additional information, including sample materials and platform demonstrations, may also be provided on request. Full admission requirements are outlined in the QF803 Admissions Policy.

3.5.1 b Integrity of Assessments

Barrow ensures that all blended and online assessments are valid, reliable, secure, and aligned with programme learning outcomes. Robust learner authentication, academic integrity, and e-proctoring measures are implemented, where appropriate, to protect the integrity and authenticity of assessment.

Prior to commencing programmes, learners complete mandatory induction and receive guidance on assessment requirements, academic integrity, and the appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI). Induction includes:

- learner orientation to relevant policies and procedures;
- academic writing skills;
- referencing and plagiarism awareness;
- assessment regulations, learner authentication requirements, and academic integrity expectations.

Learner identity is verified through secure Learning Management System (LMS) login credentials, uploaded profile photographs and photographic identification, tutor engagement throughout programme delivery, participation in live synchronous sessions, and, where appropriate, presentation of photographic identification during onsite or live online assessments.

Where appropriate and proportionate to the assessment risk, e-proctoring measures may be implemented to support learner authentication and assessment integrity. These measures may include webcam verification, screen sharing, browser monitoring (where approved), live invigilation, recorded assessment sessions, or viva voce verification. The selection of e-proctoring measures is risk-based, proportionate to the assessment methodology, and implemented in accordance with organisational policies, GDPR, data protection legislation, and privacy requirements.

Assessment recordings and authentication evidence are securely retained in accordance with organisational records management procedures and applicable data protection legislation. Access is restricted to authorised personnel only.

Only enrolled and authenticated learners are permitted to participate in assessment activities.

Further requirements relating to academic integrity, the use of AI, learner authentication, and e-proctoring are set out in the Academic Integrity, Turnitin and AI Use Policy (QF74) and the Assessment Procedures (Chapter 6).

Assessment submissions are completed through secure LMS systems and include learner declarations confirming authenticity and compliance with academic integrity requirements. All submitted assessments undergo plagiarism detection screening prior to marking. Digital submission and transfer systems are reviewed to ensure security and reliability, and learners receive confirmation of successful submission.

Any suspected academic malpractice, identity fraud, plagiarism, or irregularity is referred to the QA Manager for investigation, which may include follow-up interviews or requests for supporting evidence and draft work.

3.5.1 c Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence Awareness

Barrow promotes a culture of academic integrity, honesty, and responsible academic practice among learners and staff. Guidance is provided on plagiarism, referencing, ethical use of sources, and the appropriate use of artificial intelligence tools in learning and assessment. Staff and learners are supported to understand emerging risks associated with AI technologies and the importance of maintaining authenticity and academic standards in all assessed work.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessment

Barrow has adopted a transparent and assessment-specific approach to the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) within assessed work. For every assessment, learners are clearly informed of the permitted level of AI use through one of three approved categories:

- **AI Prohibited** – The use of generative AI is not permitted at any stage of the assessment. All work submitted must be the learner's own original work.

- **Restricted AI Use** – AI may only be used for specified purposes identified within the assessment brief, such as brainstorming ideas, generating an initial structure, or language support. Any permitted AI use must be appropriately acknowledged and referenced in accordance with Barrow's Academic Integrity and AI Use Policy.
- **Permitted AI Use** – In exceptional cases, where the learning outcomes support it, broader use of AI may be permitted. The assessment brief will clearly specify the acceptable use of AI together with any disclosure and referencing requirements.

The permitted level of AI use is stated within each assessment brief to ensure clarity, transparency, and consistency for learners. This enables learners to understand the expectations for each assessment, supports informed and ethical use of AI technologies, and reinforces individual responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Failure to comply with the stated AI requirements may constitute academic misconduct and will be managed in accordance with Barrow's Academic Integrity, Turnitin and AI Use Policy.

3.5.2 Assuring Quality Technology

Area	Quality Assurance Measures
Technology and TEL Oversight	Barrow maintains high standards in technology-enhanced learning (TEL) through ongoing investment, monitoring, and continuous review of digital learning systems.
External Expertise and Support	External educational and industry expertise supports the development and enhancement of blended learning provision, including Enovation, BITS, University of Galway, and SETU.
Learning Management System	Programmes are delivered through a Moodle-based Learning Management System (LMS) provided by Enovation.
System Reliability and Security	Hosting, security, and recovery arrangements are maintained to minimise downtime, protect against cyber threats, and ensure continuity of service.
Monitoring and Review	Blended learning provision is monitored through external reports, learner surveys, module review reports, tutor and staff feedback, learner engagement and achievement data, certification outcomes, and internal verification processes.
Continuous Improvement	Findings from monitoring and review processes inform programme enhancement, learner supports, staff development, and quality improvement activities.
Vendor Support	Support arrangements are provided by Enovation

3.5.3 Collaboration and Other Partners

Barrow does not engage in any collaborations relevant to its provision of blended learning.

3.5.4 Blended Learning in a Programme Context

Programme Development and Delivery; Barrow will develop and deliver programmes that are well-structured, relevant to the needs of learners and industry, and reflect the standards as set out by the National Framework of Qualifications (if applicable). This process is guided by the Policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training

All blended learning programmes must be approved using the Blended Programme Approval Checklist (Section 3.5.5 a/3.5.5 b) prior to delivery.

Programme delivery is monitored to ensure alignment with approved design parameters, including learner engagement, workload expectations, and support provision.

Programmes are subject to annual review, incorporating learner feedback, performance data, and resource evaluation.

Blended Programme Approval Checklist

All programmes delivered in blended or blended formats must complete the following mandatory approval checklist prior to validation and delivery.

This ensures that programme design, delivery, and resourcing meet QQI 2023 requirements and Barrow internal QA standards.

Blended Programme Approval and Delivery Checklist Table

3.5.5 a Mandatory Programme Validation Approval Checklist

(To be completed before programme validation/submission for approval)

	Area	Validation Requirement	Completed (Y/N)	Notes
1	Rationale for Blended Delivery	A documented educational and operational rationale confirms why blended delivery is appropriate for the programme and learner cohort. (SOP 203)		
2	Delivery Model Design	The proposed split across delivery modes has been defined and justified.		
3	Learning Outcomes Alignment	Programme and module learning outcomes are achievable and appropriately supported across all delivery modes.		
4	Programme Structure & Workload	Guided learning hours, independent learning hours, assessment workload, and learner expectations are clearly defined.		
5	Assessment Strategy	Assessment methods are suitable for blended delivery and aligned to learning outcomes and QQI requirements.		
6	Academic Integrity Measures	Measures for plagiarism prevention, AI guidance, authentication, and assessment integrity are embedded into programme design.		
7	Identity Verification Procedures	Learner identity verification processes for enrolment, participation, and assessment are defined.		
8	Accessibility & UDL Review	Programme content, assessments, and learning activities have been reviewed for accessibility and Universal Design for Learning compliance.		
9	Learner Supports Design	Academic, technical, pastoral, and administrative supports required for the programme have been identified.		
10	Engagement & Interaction Strategy	A structured plan for learner engagement, communication, tutor interaction, and collaborative learning activities is documented.		
11	Digital Platform Approval	Moodle/VLE, Teams, Zoom, and any additional digital tools required for delivery have been approved for use.		
12	Technical Entry Requirements	Minimum learner technical requirements, digital literacy expectations, and access requirements are documented.		
13	Staffing & Tutor Competence	Tutors delivering the programme meet subject expertise, teaching qualification, and digital competence requirements.		
14	Class Size & Delivery Capacity	Maximum learner numbers and tutor-to-learner ratios are defined to support effective learner engagement and assessment oversight. Standard blended learning groups are capped at 16 learners per tutor, while practical skills-based programmes, such as Manual Handling Instruction, are limited to a maximum of 12 learners per tutor.		
15	Placement / Onsite Requirements	Any mandatory onsite attendance, supervised practice, or work placement requirements are clearly specified.		
16	Programme Information & Communication	Learner-facing information, communication procedures, and response expectations are clearly documented.		
17	At-Risk Learner Strategy	Processes for identifying, monitoring, and supporting at-risk learners are incorporated into programme planning.		
18	Resource & Budget Approval	Required staffing, technology, learner supports, and financial resources have been confirmed as available.		
19	Contingency Planning	Programme-specific contingency arrangements for technical disruption, staffing absence, or service interruption are planned.		
20	GDPR & Data Protection Compliance	All programme systems, communications, and learner data processes comply with GDPR and organisational data protection procedures.		
21	Governance & QA Approval	Programme has completed internal QA review and received approval through appropriate governance structures prior to validation submission.		
22	Monitoring & Review Schedule	Annual monitoring, programme review, and quality improvement processes have been established.		

3.5.5 b Mandatory Programme Delivery Approval Checklist

(To be completed before learner enrolment and programme commencement)

Area	Delivery Requirement	Completed (Y/N)	Notes
1	Approved Programme Documentation		
2	Tutor Allocation & Readiness		
3	LMS / Moodle Setup		
4	Digital Platforms Operational		
5	Learner Technical Guidance		
6	Learner Induction Prepared		
7	Learner Support Services Active		
8	Accessibility Support Confirmed		
9	Communication Channels Active		
10	Assessment Systems Prepared		
11	Identity Verification Ready		
12	Academic Integrity Procedures Active		
13	Attendance & Engagement Monitoring		
14	At-Risk Learner Monitoring		
15	Venue & Placement Readiness		
16	Health & Safety Compliance		
17	Technical Support & Escalation		
18	Backup & Continuity Measures		
19	GDPR & Data Security Checks		
20	Programme Approval Confirmation		
21	Staff Briefing Completed		
22	Delivery Review Schedule Established		

Approval Sign-Off Section			
Role	Name	Signature	Date
Programme Lead			
QA Manager			
External QA Committee (Recommendation)			
Board of Management (Final Approval)			

3.5.6 Blended Learning Programme Design

Barrow designs blended learning programmes using the ABC Curriculum Design model, an activity-based learning approach that supports a range of learner engagement methods, including acquisition, inquiry, practice, production, discussion, and collaboration.

Programme design is further informed by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ensuring flexible and inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment practices that support the diverse needs of learners, including those requiring reasonable accommodation in line with the Reasonable Accommodation Policy (QF800).

All programmes are piloted prior to delivery and are developed in accordance with established academic quality standards, including:

- Clear course overviews and module information
- Defined learning outcomes
- Appropriate assessment strategies
- Accessible learning resources and activities
- Opportunities for interaction and engagement
- Learner support arrangements

Tutors delivering blended learning programmes are required to demonstrate competence in digital learning methodologies and the effective use of educational technologies, in line with Section 4.4.2

3.5.7 Course Overview and Introduction

At the start of a module, there are clear instructions on the structure, layout, purpose, assessment, and participation in the course. Communication expectations for blended discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated. Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated, and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided. The self-introduction by the tutor is professional and designed to build rapport with the learners.

The curriculum design for blended and blended programmes explicitly incorporates structured interactivity using Moodle discussion forums, tutor-led webinars, and peer-group collaborative tasks, with interactive discussion activities embedded within each module to promote meaningful engagement between learners and tutors, as well as among learners themselves.

3.5.8 Learning Outcomes

“Learning outcomes are sets of competences, expressing what the learner will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, long or short” (*European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (Key Features), European Commission, 2004*)

“Learning outcomes focus on what the learner has achieved rather than merely focussing on the content of what has been taught. Learning outcomes focus on what the learner can demonstrate at the end of a learning activity.” (*Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: A Practical Guide, D. Kennedy, UCC & NAIRTL, 2007*)

The minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) and minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs), while important and intrinsic to the programme, do not define it. All programmes offered by Barrow will have an associated set of MIPLOs and MIMLOs. Learning outcomes at programme and module level will be used as the basis on which decisions regarding teaching, learning and assessment approaches will be used. During the monitoring and review stage, MIPLOs and MIMLOs are reviewed by the Programme Review Committee. Clear learning outcomes that are measurable and clearly linked to the course learning activities and assessments are presented and explained at the start of the course.

3.5.9 Assessments

Assessment within blended learning programmes is designed to support the achievement of programme and module learning outcomes through a combination of formative and summative assessment methods.

Assessments are varied, appropriate to the module level, and support learner engagement, progression, and skills development.

Formative assessment activities may include quizzes, exercises, group activities, presentations, mock assessments, and tutor or peer feedback delivered through the LMS and classroom-based sessions. Summative assessments may include assignments, projects, portfolios, examinations, and skills demonstrations.

Learners are required to complete assessments in accordance with module requirements and submit work securely through the LMS. All blended submissions are subject to plagiarism detection through Turnitin, and similarity reports must normally demonstrate less than 25% matching content, excluding references and standard assessment templates. Learners are provided with clear assessment briefs, grading criteria, submission requirements, and timely feedback to support learning and progression.

Tutors are responsible for ensuring assessments are aligned with learning outcomes, appropriate to the programme level, and delivered consistently across modules. Tutors also provide assessment guidance, constructive feedback, monitor learner progress, and uphold academic integrity throughout the programme.

3.6.0 Learning Resources and Materials

All digital learning technologies, platforms, and third-party tools used in blended learning provision are subject to review and approval processes relating to quality assurance, accessibility, data protection, security, and suitability for teaching, learning, and assessment purposes.

Barrow ensures that all learning resources used in blended and blended programmes are accessible, quality assured, regularly reviewed, and aligned with QQI 2023 guidelines. Resources are delivered through the Moodle LMS and include module resource packs, tutor-generated materials, curated reading lists, blended supports, quizzes, and interactive learning activities designed to support learner engagement and independent study.

Learning materials are developed by subject matter experts and tutors and are aligned with programme learning outcomes, assessment requirements, and blended learning methodologies. Resources are designed using a digital-first approach and incorporate opportunities for interaction, formative assessment, and learner collaboration.

All materials undergo internal review and approval processes to ensure academic quality, accessibility, usability, and alignment with programme standards. Materials are reviewed by the Programme Lead and Training & TEL Manager prior to release, with version control and update records maintained to support consistency and traceability. Accessibility is supported through clear formatting, inclusive design practices, and the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.

Learning materials are subject to ongoing monitoring and annual review to ensure accuracy, relevance, and alignment with current practice. Learner feedback, programme review processes, tutor monitoring, and LMS analytics inform continuous improvement and resource development.

Barrow supports the appropriate use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and external materials where relevant and compliant with copyright requirements. Staff are supported in content development through access to digital authoring tools and guidance from the Training & TEL Manager.

Appropriate classroom and specialist equipment is provided to support programme delivery and skills demonstration activities where required. Learners are informed of minimum technical requirements prior to programme commencement, including access to a suitable device, reliable internet connection, Zoom or Teams, and valid photo identification for verification purposes.

The development, review, and management of learning materials are governed by SOP 203: Content Development and Quality Assurance.

3.6.1 Learning Activities

The following methodologies are implemented for the delivery of blended learning programmes with Barrow:

- Blended tutorials
- Learner Management System
- One-to-one support by:
 - Email
 - Meetings via Zoom or Teams
- Group meetings and discussions via Zoom or Teams
- Study and revision days
- Blended exercises
- Practical sessions to include role-play scenarios
- Simulated environments on skills demonstration days

3.6.2 Interaction

Barrow is cognisant of the Universal Design for Learning and uses interactive material to engage learners in the virtual learning environment.

Over 200 templates have been designed by a graphic designer for use in the VLE to be visually engaging, promote consistency and to integrate audio, video, and learner activities to enhance the overall learning experience. Module design features such as facilitator photos and video introductions, a community forum for learners, and collaborative learning activities can facilitate social presence and enable learner-instructor and learner-learner interaction.

Minimum levels of alternative formats are set out for all courses to provide multiple means of engagement to promote inclusivity in the learning environment for all learners.

3.6.3 Community Forum

The LMS includes a discussion forum for each module which can be accessed by both learners and tutors. The purpose of the discussion forum is for learners to ask questions about their course content, engage with fellow learners and respond to questions raised by tutors. The forum is monitored by the Training & TEL Manager – all comments must be approved prior to publishing.

Positive blended behaviours are encouraged, and the following ‘netiquette’ (internet etiquette) applies to the discussion forums on the LMS:

1	Respect the opinions of other learners. Disagree respectfully and acknowledge the valid points in the other learner’s argument. Acknowledge that others are entitled to have their own perspective on the issue.
2	Avoid sarcasm as it can be difficult to get tone across on an online platform
3	Try not to distract other learners with off-topic discussions
4	Before posting a question to a discussion forum, check if anyone has asked it already and received a reply
5	Always try to use proper punctuation, spelling, and grammar. It’s also important to be respectful about others’ grammar mistakes.
6	Set a respectful tone. A certain level of formality is expected in this communication. Remember to say “please” and “thank you” when soliciting help from tutors or other learners.
7	Do not type in ALL CAPS as readers tend to perceive it as shouting
8	When replying to a question from another learner, make sure the answer is accurate
9	Be responsive to queries to show interest

Abusive or offensive comments will not be tolerated. The forum should not be used to:

1	Abuse, harass, stalk, threaten or violate the rights of others
2	Post illegal material
3	Solicit personal information
4	Harm minors in any way
5	Solicit passwords of personal identifying information for commercial or unlawful purposes
6	Post material that contains software viruses or harmful programmes such as trojan horses, worms, time bombs, computer code or files designed to interrupt, destroy, or limit the functionality of any computer software or hardware
7	Post material that falsely expresses or implies that such material is endorsed by Barrow
8	Post irrelevant material
9	Post any unsolicited or unauthorised advertising, promotional content, junk mail, spam, chain letters or any other form of commercial publicity.
10	Post material that contains violence or offensive subject matter or contains a link to an adult website
11	Post material that promotes or encourages illegal activity

A learner found to be in breach of the above may be removed from the LMS and can lead to expulsion from a programme.

3.6.4 Onsite (Classroom-Based) Days

Learners on blended learning programmes are invited to onsite days which involve a variety of the following:

- Practical skills demonstrations and assessments
- Exam (if applicable)
- Onsite tutor support
- Group revision and study sessions

Learners completing their QQI accredited training and education programmes through blended learning are invited to an onsite assessment day, where they will meet with their tutor for assessment of knowledge and practical skills.

Onsite days for learners completing a blended learning programme are scheduled one day per month by the Training & TEL Manager.

All practical skills demonstrations that take place on these onsite days are demonstrated initially by the tutor, then practiced by the learner before final assessment takes place. Skills demonstrations that form part of the assessment are photographed or, preferably, video recorded to be presented as evidence. If the module includes a skills assessment, learners sign a consent form which confirms that they understand that video recordings/photographs of their skills demonstration will be submitted as part of their assessment for certification in line with GDPR requirements.

Evidence of skills demonstrations are stored in an encrypted file and made available only to those involved in the certification process, i.e. tutor, internal verifier, external authenticator, and results approval panel. The maximum timeframe for these to be stored is nine months. After this time, skills demonstrations are deleted from the system. Learners who complete skills demonstrations in the workplace must also present video/photographic evidence, as appropriate.

All examinations held in Barrow adhere to the procedures and standards that are required by the respective awarding body. Exam papers are provided to the tutor in a sealed envelope and stamped with the Barrow stamp. The exam date must be clearly written on the envelope along with the statement “must be opened and witnessed in class.” The version used is logged on the Barrow system and the versions of exams are alternated. This envelope must be stored securely by the tutor.

Learners are made aware of the exam code of conduct during their induction, and this is reiterated to the learners immediately prior to the exam. Tutors must then return corrected exams to the Barrow office in person or by registered post. Any spare exam papers are also returned and are shredded and destroyed. If a learner is unsuccessful in their examination, they may repeat the exam within two weeks of their first attempt (maximum of 3 attempts). If the learner requires a repeat examination for a QQI module, their grade will be capped at a Merit. This may result in postponement of Certification until the next submission date. An administration fee of €50 applies per additional sitting.

3.6.5 Virtual Classroom Scenario

Zoom or Microsoft Teams is used by Barrow to facilitate live synchronous teaching sessions, one-to-one learner support, tutorials, group discussions, assessment support, and skills demonstrations. Where a learner or employer is unable to use Zoom or Microsoft Teams due to organisational or technical restrictions, an alternative approved platform may be used, provided it meets Barrow's requirements for security, accessibility, learner authentication, and data protection.

Live online teaching sessions may be recorded and made available through the Learning Management System (LMS) to support learner revision and programme continuity, in accordance with Barrow's Data Protection Policy and published privacy notices.

Learners joining live online sessions are initially placed in the virtual waiting room until admitted by the tutor or an authorised Barrow representative. Where learner authentication is required, identity verification is completed in a private breakout room before the learner joins the main session. Recording does not take place during this identity verification process, and no other learners are present.

Acceptable forms of photographic identification include:

- Passport;
- Driving Licence;
- Public Services Card;
- National Identity Card;
- Employer or Student Identification Card displaying the learner's photograph (where appropriate).

Learners are notified in advance where photographic identification is required for programme participation or assessment.

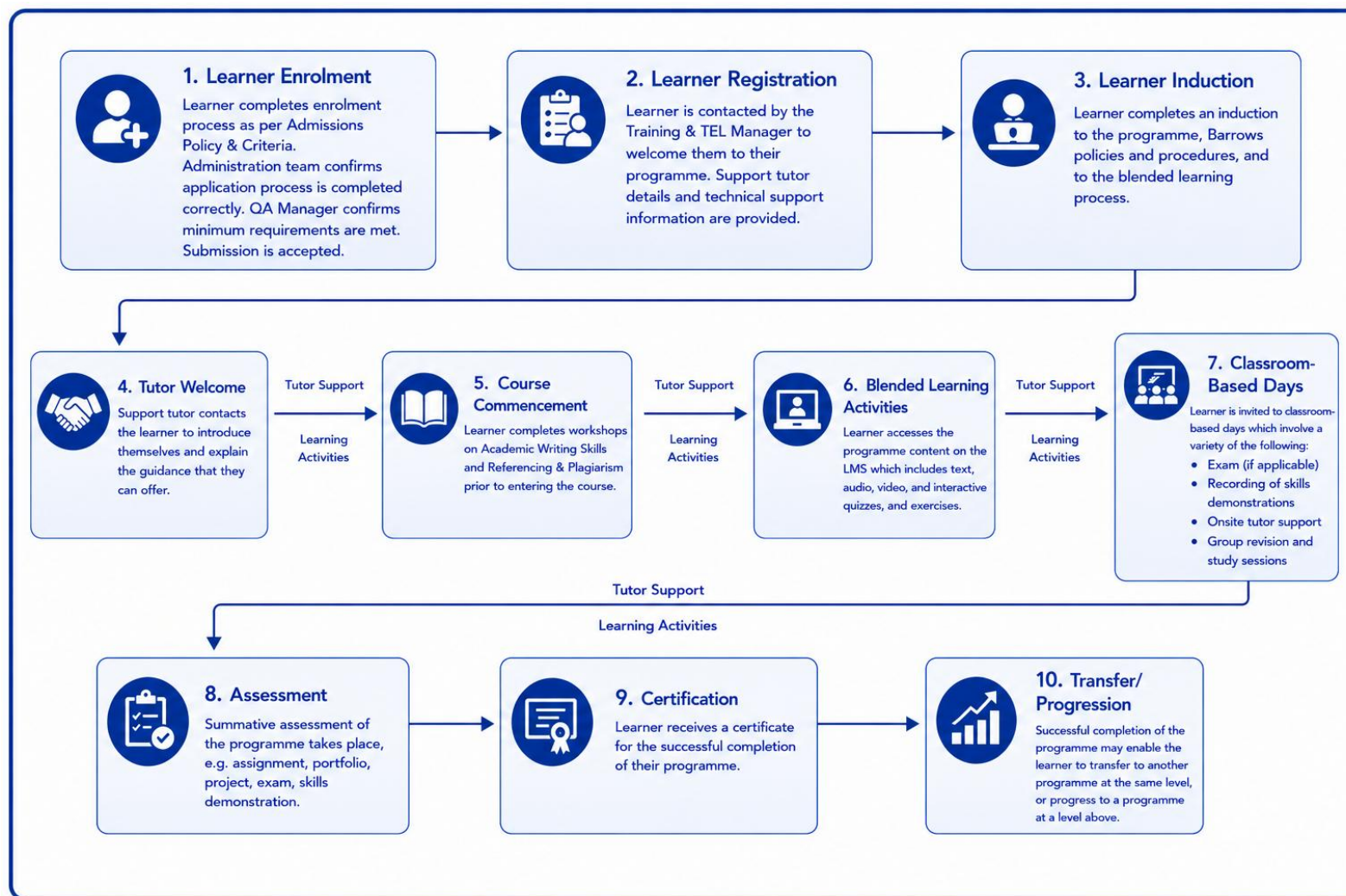
An email invitation containing joining instructions is issued prior to each live online session. At the commencement of the session, the tutor agrees appropriate break arrangements with learners. As good practice, a 10–15-minute break is recommended every 60–90 minutes to support learner wellbeing, reduce screen fatigue, and encourage regular movement.

If a learner leaves a session without returning following a scheduled break, or exits before the session concludes, the tutor records the learner's attendance accordingly and marks the learner absent for the unattended portion of the session in accordance with Barrow's attendance procedures.

Photographic identification is checked only where required for learner authentication or assessment integrity purposes and is processed in accordance with GDPR, Barrow's Data Protection Policy, and the organisation's Learner Authentication and E-Proctoring procedures.

3.6.6 Blended Learning in a Learner Experience Context

3.6.6 a Blended Learning Learner Journey



3.6.7 Support Available to Learners

3.6.7.1 Induction

Learners are provided with guidance and support to enable effective participation in blended and online learning environments, including orientation to digital platforms, access to technical support, and information on available learner supports. Learner induction processes include orientation to the Learning Management System, communication tools, assessment submission processes, academic integrity expectations, and learner support arrangements.

Induction includes, but is not limited to, the nature and extent of autonomous learning, collaborative and supported aspects of learning, details of specified timings for synchronous learning or assessment, rules governing flexibility for learners, and regulations in place to protect learner information.

The learner induction will also specify requirements for access to the blended learning environment – detailing the required broadband specification and any specific hardware or software requirements, for example.

The learner induction will provide information on the level and nature of support available, including but not limited to academic, technical, and pastoral support. Further detail will be offered to learners in the Learner Handbook.

3.6.8 Badges

Barrow uses digital badges within the Learning Management System (Moodle) to encourage learner engagement, recognise achievement, and support progression through blended learning programmes. Badges provide learners with visible milestones as they complete key stages of their learning journey and are awarded directly to the learner's personal Moodle account.

Moodle badges may be awarded automatically or manually by the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager or authorised tutors, based on predefined completion criteria.

Digital badges are currently awarded for completion of:

- QQI Learner Induction;
- Introduction to Blended Learning;
- Academic Integrity, Academic Writing, Referencing and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessment;
- Programme Completion.

Completion of the Academic Integrity, Academic Writing, Referencing and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessment badge is mandatory before learners undertake assessed work. This induction introduces learners to Barrow's Academic Integrity, Turnitin and AI Use Policy (QF74) and explains:

- the organisation's three-category approach to the permitted use of generative AI within assessments;
- learner responsibilities relating to academic integrity;
- appropriate referencing and acknowledgement of AI where permitted;
- plagiarism, collusion, impersonation, and other forms of academic misconduct;
- the consequences of breaches of academic integrity.

The Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager maintains oversight of digital badge allocation and has access to badge records, including the date awarded and the learners who have successfully completed each badge. Programme content is designed to support self-directed, learner-centred study. Moodle enables learners to monitor their own progress through completion tracking, progress indicators, formative quizzes, automated feedback, digital badges, and learner dashboards, encouraging self-reflection, learner engagement, and successful progression.

Learner engagement is monitored throughout programme delivery using Moodle learning analytics, activity completion data, attendance records, forum participation, communication logs, assessment submissions, and tutor observations. This information is reviewed regularly by tutors and the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager to identify learners who may require additional academic, technical, or pastoral support.

Where early indicators suggest that a learner may be at risk of disengagement or non-completion, an Early Intervention process is initiated. Learners are contacted promptly and offered appropriate support to encourage continued participation and successful completion of the programme. Actions taken are recorded and monitored as part of the organisation's learner support and quality assurance processes.

Data generated through Moodle learning analytics is used solely to support learner success, programme monitoring, and continuous quality enhancement and is processed in accordance with Barrow's Data Protection Policy and applicable GDPR requirements.

Attendance and engagement expectations are clearly communicated to learners through the Learner Handbook, programme induction, and the Learning Management System and are reinforced throughout programme delivery by tutors and programme staff.

3.6.9 Technical Support

Barrow Training provides a comprehensive learner support system through multiple channels. Learners can access learning materials, communications, and guidance resources through the LMS (Moodle), which is available 24/7, subject to scheduled maintenance. General learner, assessment, and technical support queries can be submitted via email, support@barrowlearning.ie with responses provided within 24 working hours during business days. Academic support is available from tutors during scheduled live sessions and through Moodle and email communications. Administrative support is available Monday to Thursday, 9:00am–5:00pm and Friday, 9:00am–4:00pm. Urgent technical issues affecting learner access, assessments, or live sessions are escalated immediately to the Training & TEL Manager and/or designated IT support. Out-of-hours support queries submitted through designated support email channels are responded to within 3 hours between 5:00pm–12:00am and within 10 hours between 12:00am–9:00am. The Training & TEL Manager receives key learner and tutor activity notifications through the LMS and has access to 24/7 technical escalation support from the LMS provider where required.

3.7.0 Security

Learners will be assigned a private username and password for secure access to their personal account on the LMS. This will be issued to the email address provided at enrolment.

If a learner has forgotten their password or inputs their password incorrectly, they will be prompted to reset their password. The link provided will be sent directly to the learner's email address.

3.7.1 References

CAST (2019) *Universal Design for Learning*. Massachusetts: Available from <http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.XTbuBohKiUk> [Accessed 28th September 2020]

Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training. QQI, November 2017

Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes. QQI, March 2018

University College London (2020) *ABC Learning Design @ UCL*. London: Available from <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/abc-ld/> [Accessed 17th September 2020].

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (2023) *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes*. Dublin: QQI.

Chapter 4. Human Resources Management

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrow Training's accrediting bodies:

- Staff Recruitment, Management and Development (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 4)
- Other Parties involved in Education and Training (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 10)
- Human Resource Management

4.1 Policy Statement

Barrow is committed to ensuring that all staff engaged in programme delivery, learner support, assessment, administration, and quality assurance are appropriately qualified, competent, and supported in the performance of their roles.

The organisation maintains fair, transparent, and quality-assured procedures for staff recruitment, induction, development, performance management, and continuous professional development in accordance with QQI quality assurance requirements and organisational objectives.

Barrow also engages external Human Resource support services to support the implementation and review of employment-related policies and procedures.

4.2 Recruitment and Selection Procedure of Academic and Administrative Staff

Vacancies for administrative staff arise in response to changing or additional organisational needs, as identified by the Board of Management. Vacancies for academic staff arise in response to programme delivery, assessment, learner support, or quality assurance requirements, as identified by the Quality Assurance Manager or Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager.

When an academic or administrative vacancy arises, a role-specific job specification and selection criteria are developed by the Managing Director and approved by the Board of Management prior to advertisement. Vacancies may be advertised through appropriate channels, including the Barrow website, social media platforms, blended recruitment websites, and other relevant media.

Candidates are shortlisted against the approved selection criteria and interviews are conducted before appointments are confirmed. All candidates are required to provide evidence of relevant qualifications, experience, identification,

and references. Records relating to recruitment and selection are securely retained in accordance with organisational procedures and data protection requirements.

Selection criteria for administrative staff include:

- a relevant qualification; or
- a minimum of two years' relevant work experience;
- satisfactory reference checks.

Selection criteria for tutors include:

- a recognised pedagogical qualification, such as a QQI Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Training and Development, Train the Trainer, or equivalent;
- a subject-specific qualification at least one level above the level being delivered;
- relevant vocational, academic, or professional experience in the subject area;
- a minimum of two years' training or teaching experience
- satisfactory references relating to training delivery, academic experience, or professional practice.

Tutors are engaged on a part-time, ad hoc basis as required by programme delivery needs. Tutors are advised during induction that Barrow cannot guarantee ongoing work or fixed hours.

Barrow maintains a panel of suitably qualified and inducted tutors across its scope of provision. This supports continuity of programme delivery where a tutor becomes unavailable. Where cover is required, the Training and TEL Manager contacts suitable approved tutors, confirms availability, and provides the replacement tutor with the relevant programme briefing and delivery information.

Additional requirements relating specifically to tutor competence and blended learning capability are outlined in Section 4.4 Tutor Competence for Blended Learning Provision.

4.2.1 Roles & Responsibilities

4.2.2 Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for:

- approving staffing structures and recruitment policies;
- ensuring adequate staffing and organisational resources;
- overseeing compliance with quality assurance and employment obligations;
- supporting organisational equality, diversity, and inclusion commitments.

4.2.3 Managing Director

The Managing Director is responsible for:

- overseeing organisational operations and staffing arrangements;
- supporting implementation of organisational strategy and quality objectives;
- approving recruitment requirements and staffing needs;
- ensuring adequate organisational resources are available to support programme delivery and learner support;
- supporting compliance with legal, regulatory, and employment obligations.

4.2.4 QA Manager

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for:

- overseeing implementation of QA procedures;
- supporting staff induction and quality monitoring;
- monitoring programme quality indicators and learner feedback;
- supporting continuous improvement activities.

4.2.5 Training & TEL Manager

The Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager is responsible for:

- supporting blended learning delivery systems;
- coordinating TEL-related induction and CPD;
- maintaining approved digital learning platforms;
- supporting staff and learner access to digital systems

4.2.6 Tutors

Tutors are responsible for:

- delivery of teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support;
- participation in QA and CPD activities;
- compliance with organisational policies and blended learning requirements;
- maintenance of professional and digital competence.

4.2.7 Administrative Staff

Administrative staff are responsible for:

- supporting learner onboarding, scheduling, communications, and record management;
- maintaining learner and organisational records in accordance with quality assurance and data protection requirements;
- supporting programme administration and reporting processes;
- assisting learners in accessing organisational systems, supports, and information;
- supporting operational and quality assurance processes associated with blended learning provision.

4.2.8 Internal Quality Panel

The Internal Quality Panel is responsible for:

- monitoring the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures and continuous improvement activities;
- reviewing programme performance, learner feedback, retention, completion, and assessment outcomes;
- reviewing quality indicators relating to blended learning provision, learner engagement, and learner support;
- monitoring the effectiveness of teaching, learning, assessment, and support arrangements across delivery modes;
- reviewing findings arising from programme monitoring, internal verification, external authentication, and performance review processes;
- identifying areas for improvement and recommending corrective or enhancement actions where required;
- monitoring the effectiveness of staff development, induction, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities;
- supporting organisational compliance with QQI quality assurance requirements and blended learning guidelines;
- reporting recommendations and quality assurance findings through the organisation's governance structures

4.2.9 Staff Induction, Training and Continuous Professional Development

Barrow is committed to ensuring that all staff are appropriately inducted, trained, and continuously developed to support the effective delivery of high-quality education and training in line with QQI standards and organisational objectives.

4.2.9.1 Staff Induction

All newly appointed staff participate in a structured induction process prior to commencing their role. The induction process ensures that staff are familiar with:

- the organisation's Quality Assurance policies and procedures;
- role-specific responsibilities and reporting arrangements;
- programme requirements and delivery expectations;
- teaching, learning, and assessment practices, where relevant;
- data protection, academic integrity, confidentiality, and regulatory requirements;
- relevant learner support and communication procedures.

Staff induction is implemented in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in Section 4.2.

Completion of induction is documented and retained in staff or tutor records.

Additional induction requirements relating specifically to blended learning delivery, digital capability, and technology-enhanced learning are outlined in Section 4.5.

4.4.2 Staff Training and Continuous Professional Development

Barrow operates a structured approach to staff training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure that staff maintain and enhance the knowledge, skills, and competence required for their roles.

CPD supports:

- subject matter and professional expertise;
- teaching, learning, and assessment practice;
- quality assurance and regulatory compliance;
- learner support and inclusive practice;
- academic integrity and assessment security;
- organisational development and continuous improvement.

CPD activities may include induction and refresher training, workshops, seminars, external professional development, peer learning, mentoring, and role-specific training. Staff may also receive organisational updates relating to legislation, quality assurance, learner supports, programme requirements, and relevant sectoral developments.

CPD needs are identified through quality assurance processes, programme monitoring, learner and tutor feedback, internal verification, external authentication, Results Approval Panel outcomes, performance review, and organisational planning.

Oversight of CPD activities is managed in accordance with Section 4.3 Roles and Responsibilities Where development needs are identified, appropriate training, mentoring, or support measures are implemented.

Continuous Professional Development activities relating specifically to blended learning, digital capability, and technology-enhanced learning are aligned with the competency requirements outlined in Section 4.4.

4.3 Performance Management

4.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of performance management procedures is to support and promote high standards of professional conduct, teaching practice, and staff performance across all areas of programme delivery and organisational activity. Barrow is committed to maintaining fair, transparent, and constructive performance management processes that support continuous improvement, staff development, and organisational quality assurance objectives.

Performance management processes are designed to:

- support staff in achieving and maintaining required professional standards;
- identify strengths, development needs, and support requirements;
- promote reflective practice and continuous improvement;
- ensure consistency in programme delivery and learner support;
- support compliance with organisational policies, procedures, and quality assurance requirements.

4.3.2 Monitoring of staff performance

Staff performance is monitored through a range of quality assurance and management processes appropriate to the staff member's role and responsibilities.

These processes may include:

- learner feedback;
- programme monitoring and review activities;
- internal verification and moderation processes;
- peer review activities;
- attendance and retention data;
- performance review meetings;
- feedback from employers, stakeholders, and relevant programme personnel;
- quality assurance review activities

Information arising from performance monitoring processes is used to support staff development, programme improvement, and organisational quality enhancement activities.

Additional procedures relating specifically to tutor competence, digital capability, blended learning delivery, and technology-enhanced learning are outlined in Section 4.4 Tutor Competence for Blended Learning Provision.

4.3.3 Support and Improvement Measures

Where performance concerns or development needs are identified, Barrow is committed to implementing appropriate support and improvement measures in a fair and constructive manner.

Support measures may include:

- additional training and professional development;
- mentoring or peer support;
- agreed improvement plans;
- increased monitoring or follow-up review activities;

- additional guidance relating to organisational procedures or programme requirements.

Records relating to performance review and support measures are maintained in accordance with organisational quality assurance and data protection procedures.

4.3.4 *Disciplinary Procedures*

Where serious or ongoing concerns arise relating to staff conduct, attendance, or performance, these are managed in accordance with the organisation's formal disciplinary procedures.

The purpose of disciplinary procedures is to support staff in achieving and maintaining required standards while ensuring fairness, consistency, and compliance with organisational and employment requirements.

4.4 **Tutor Competence for Blended Learning Provision**

Barrow maintains formal procedures to ensure that tutors involved in blended learning provision possess and maintain the academic, professional, pedagogical, and digital competencies required for effective blended learning delivery. These procedures are aligned with organisational quality assurance requirements, programme delivery needs, and the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Blended Programmes (2023)

4.4.1 **Purpose**

Barrow recognises that effective blended learning delivery requires not only subject-specific expertise, but also competence in technology-enhanced learning, digital communication, learner engagement, assessment practice, accessibility, and academic integrity. Accordingly, the organisation has established formal procedures for the recruitment, induction, development, monitoring, and ongoing support of staff engaged in blended learning provision.

These procedures are designed to:

- ensure consistency and quality across blended learning delivery
- support compliance with QQI quality assurance requirements and organisational policies
- promote continuous professional development and reflective practice
- support learner engagement, participation, and achievement
- ensure that staff are appropriately supported in the use of approved learning technologies and digital teaching approaches

The requirements outlined in this section apply to all staff involved in the design, delivery, assessment, support, and quality assurance of blended learning programmes.

4.4.2 **Tutor Digital Competency**

Barrow has established a Tutor Digital Competency check which outlines the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours required for effective blended learning delivery.

Competency requirements include:

- effective use of the Learning Management System (LMS) to support teaching, learner engagement, assessment, and learner progression;
- competent use of approved synchronous learning platforms and associated learner engagement tools;
- application of appropriate digital pedagogical approaches to support learner participation and engagement;
- ability to design, deliver, and manage assessment activities within blended learning environments;
- provision of effective learner support, communication, and feedback within blended and blended contexts;
- awareness and application of academic integrity principles, including appropriate and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education.

All tutors engaged in blended learning provision are required to meet the competency standards defined within this framework prior to programme delivery and are expected to maintain these standards through ongoing professional development and quality assurance processes.

4.4.3 **Recruitment and Selection for Blended Learning Tutors**

In addition to standard organisational recruitment procedures, the selection of tutors for blended learning provision includes evaluation of digital competence and prior experience in blended or blended learning delivery.

Selection processes may include:

- review of evidence demonstrating effective use of digital learning technologies;
- assessment of blended learning delivery experience;
- structured interviews relating to blended learning capability;
- demonstration of blended delivery skills or micro-teaching activities

Recruitment and selection processes for academic staff consider blended learning capability, digital competence, and the ability to support learners across onsite, synchronous, and asynchronous delivery modes.

4.4.4 Induction and Initial Approval

All newly appointed tutors engaged in blended learning provision are required to complete a structured induction process prior to the delivery of programmes. The purpose of induction is to ensure that staff are appropriately prepared to deliver teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support within the organisation's blended learning environment.

Induction processes are coordinated by the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Manager and include orientation to:

- the organisation's Learning Management System (Moodle) and approved synchronous delivery platforms;
- approved digital tools and communication systems used to support teaching, learning, and learner engagement;
- organisational quality assurance policies and procedures relevant to blended learning provision;
- assessment procedures, learner authentication requirements, and academic integrity expectations;
- learner support arrangements, including technical, academic, and pastoral support processes;
- accessibility requirements and inclusive teaching practices aligned with Universal Design for Learning principles;
- data protection, confidentiality, and appropriate use of digital systems.

Tutors may also be required to demonstrate competence in the use of relevant digital platforms and blended learning delivery approaches prior to programme commencement.

Completion of induction requirements is recorded and retained within tutor personnel records in accordance with organisational quality assurance and data protection procedures.

4.4.5 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Barrow is committed to supporting the ongoing professional development of staff involved in blended learning provision to ensure the effective delivery of teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support across onsite, synchronous, and asynchronous environments.

All tutors engaged in blended learning delivery are required to participate in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities relevant to their role and the organisation's blended learning provision. CPD activities support the development and maintenance of competencies relating to technology-enhanced learning, digital pedagogy, learner engagement, assessment practice, accessibility, academic integrity, and emerging developments in digital education.

CPD activities may include:

- structured training sessions and workshops;
- mentoring and professional support;
- peer learning and reflective practice activities;
- training relating to assessment design, learner engagement, and academic integrity;
- guidance on the ethical and appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and assessment;
- updates relating to organisational procedures, digital systems, and regulatory requirements.

Participation in CPD activities is recorded and monitored as part of the organisation's quality assurance and staff development processes. Where development needs are identified through programme monitoring, learner feedback, internal quality assurance activities, or performance review processes, appropriate support and targeted CPD interventions are implemented to support continuous improvement and maintain the quality of blended learning provision.

4.5 Monitoring and review

Learner engagement and participation data generated through digital learning platforms may be used to support learner engagement monitoring, programme review, and continuous improvement activities.

Barrow maintains formal processes for the monitoring and review of tutor performance within blended learning environments to ensure the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support.

Monitoring processes support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and identification of professional development requirements. These processes form part of the organisation's broader quality assurance framework and are applied across delivery modes.

Monitoring and review activities may include:

- observation of teaching and learning activities, including live or recorded blended sessions
- review of learner engagement, participation, retention, and completion data through the Learning Management System;
- monitoring of assessment practices, learner feedback, and timeliness of tutor feedback;
- learner feedback relating to teaching effectiveness, communication, support, and learner experience;
- peer review and internal quality assurance review activities;
- review of programme performance indicators and assessment outcomes.

Information gathered through monitoring and review processes is used to:

- support continuous enhancement of blended learning provision;
- identify professional development and support needs;
- inform programme review and quality assurance activities;
- ensure consistency in the learner experience across delivery modes.

4.5.1 Performance Review and Support

Barrow maintains structured performance review and support processes to ensure that staff engaged in blended learning provision continue to deliver high-quality teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support.

Performance review processes are intended to support reflective practice, continuous improvement, and professional development, while also ensuring consistency and compliance with organisational quality assurance requirements.

Performance review activities may include consideration of:

- learner feedback and learner engagement data;
- outcomes from teaching observations and monitoring activities;
- effectiveness of communication and learner support;
- assessment and feedback practices;
- engagement with continuous professional development activities;
- adherence to organisational policies, procedures, and quality assurance requirements.

Where areas for development are identified, appropriate support measures are implemented. These may include:

- additional training or mentoring;
- targeted CPD activities;
- increased monitoring or follow-up review;
- one-to-one support from the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager or Quality Assurance Manager;
- agreed improvement and development plans.

The organisation is committed to supporting staff in maintaining and enhancing their competence in blended learning delivery. Support measures are designed to promote effective teaching practice, learner engagement, and the consistent application of organisational standards across all delivery modes.

Performance review outcomes and support actions are documented and retained in accordance with organisational quality assurance and data protection procedures.

4.5.2 Governance and Oversight

Oversight of tutor competence and blended learning staff development is maintained through the organisation's quality assurance and governance structures.

The Quality Assurance Manager, in conjunction with the Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager, oversees the implementation and monitoring of procedures relating to tutor competence in blended learning delivery, induction, CPD, performance review, and blended learning support arrangements.

The Internal Quality Panel reviews quality indicators relating to tutor performance, learner feedback, programme monitoring, and staff development to support continuous improvement and enhancement of blended learning provision.

Relevant findings arising from monitoring, review, and quality assurance activities are reported through the organisation's governance structures, including the Internal Quality Panel, External QA Committee, and Board of Management.

4.6 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

4.6.1 Policy Commitment

Barrow is committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion, dignity, and respect across all aspects of its activities, including recruitment, programme delivery, assessment, learner support, and staff engagement. The organisation

seeks to create an inclusive learning and working environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and with respect.

We are committed to ensuring that blended and blended learning environments, learning materials, assessments, and digital platforms are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to learner needs. Reasonable accommodations and supports are provided, and the organisation seeks to apply principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in programme design and delivery.

All staff, tutors, and learners are expected to:

- act in accordance with the organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- treat others with dignity, fairness, and respect;
- contribute to an inclusive and supportive learning and working environment;
- participate in equality and diversity training where required;
- ensure that teaching, learning, assessment, and support practices reflect principles of equality, inclusion, and accessibility.

The Board of Management is responsible for promoting compliance with equality legislation and organisational policy and for ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place to address allegations of discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment.

Barrow will ensure that:

- staff receive appropriate equality, diversity, and inclusion training relevant to their role;
- staff are supported in responding appropriately to equality, diversity, and inclusion matters arising in the course of their work;
- equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations are reflected in organisational policies, procedures, teaching practices, and learner support arrangements.

Any staff member or learner who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment may raise their concerns through the organisation's formal reporting procedures.

Concerns relating to equality, diversity, inclusion, discrimination, or harassment are managed in accordance with the organisation's complaints, grievance, and disciplinary procedures.

4.7 Other Parties involved in Education and Training

The purpose of this section is to outline the organisation's arrangements for engagement with external stakeholders, sectoral bodies, peer providers, and quality assurance personnel in support of programme quality, benchmarking, continuous improvement, and regulatory compliance.

4.7.1 Peer and Sectoral Engagement

Barrow engages with peer providers, sectoral organisations, professional bodies, and relevant stakeholders to support benchmarking, programme development, sectoral awareness, and continuous improvement activities. Engagement with other education and training providers in further education and higher education in programme development

- Working with Education Training Boards
- Attending conferences and seminars to meet with other experts in the area
- Benchmarking exercises with other education and training providers

4.7.2 External Authenticators

4.7.2.1 Role

The External Authenticator reports to the Quality Assurance Manager. External authentication provides independent, authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards.

This process establishes the credibility of Barrow's assessment processes and ensures that assessment results have been marked in a valid and reliable way and are compliant with the requirements for the award.

Barrow will have at least one External Authenticator in any one submission period, and will be assigned depending on the following:

- the number of learners
- the number, range and diversity of awards being offered – all award areas must have an external authenticator assigned per annum

4.7.2.2 Recruitment and Requirements

External authenticators are recruited prior to a submission period. The authenticators list on the ISO Supplier list is used to recruit an authenticator in the relevant field.

If these authenticators are not available to complete this process, or if the requirement is for a different accrediting body the role is advertised externally. A job specification and associated selection criteria for the particular role is devised by the Managing Director and approved by the Board of Management prior to advertising. Posts will be advertised in regional newspapers, on the Careers section of the Barrow website, social media platforms, and blended recruitment websites.

Candidates are then shortlisted and approved by the Board of Management prior to interviews taking place. All interview candidates are required to provide copies of relevant qualifications, photographic proof of identification, a tax compliance certificate and a signed passport photograph which are kept together with their Curriculum Vitae and other relevant documentation such as interview sheet.

Requirements for this role are as follows:

- Independent of Barrow.
- Demonstrated ability to apply assessment and quality assurance procedures accurately and consistently
- Excellent communication and report-writing skills.
- Familiarity with provider's assessment policies and procedures, and accrediting body's code of practice.
- Technical/subject matter expertise within the relevant award area.
- Previous experience of delivering programme assessment or work in the relevant field.
- Agree to undertake appropriate training and attend appropriate briefings.
- Must not have delivered training for Barrow previously.

4.7.2.3 Responsibilities

- Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of learners consistent with the provider's procedures and with accrediting body's policy
- Review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes
- Apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment results
- Identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process
- Recommend results for approval
- Produce an external authentication report using the template provided by Barrow

4.7.3 Accreditation & Regulatory Bodies

Barrow currently offers programmes accredited by QQI. Any proposal for a new programme partnership must be reviewed and approved by the External QA Committee. The proposal is considered under the following headings, prior to forming a Programme Development Committee:

- Barrows scope of practice
- Quality assurance
- Financial implications
- Legal implications
- Risk

4.7.4 Collaborative Provision

Barrow does not engage in collaborative provision with other providers and must submit QA procedures to the relevant accrediting body for this purpose and secure approval, prior to engaging in any collaborative provision in the future.

4.7.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Barrow maintains appropriate relationships with relevant stakeholders to support programme relevance, learner outcomes, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. Synergetic partnerships include:

- ✓ Relationships with other FET QQI providers on areas of mutual interest and best practice.
- ✓ Membership of international learning and development organisations and attendance at events
- ✓ Membership of Aontas, NALA, NISO and ENAI
- ✓ Relationships with Skillnet Training Networks and being a member of professional panels
- ✓ Developing solution-based approaches with industry clients

Barrow works with and has relationships with the following:

- accrediting bodies
- professional and sectoral networks
- community and industry stakeholders
- external QA personnel
- technology and digital learning providers
- other education and training providers

Chapter 5. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrow's accrediting bodies:

- Teaching and Learning (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 5)
- Assessment of Learning (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 6)
- Learning Environment

5.1.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy

The design, approval, delivery, monitoring, and review of programmes take account of the requirements of blended learning, including learner engagement, accessibility, digital resources, assessment integrity, learner support, and staff competence. The strategy for teaching and learning at Barrow is designed to achieve learner-centred learning that empowers individual learners and ensures continuously evolving, innovative approaches to teaching, learning, support, and guidance. This strategy applies across all modes of delivery, including classroom-based and blended learning environments, and is implemented in line with the organisation's Blended Learning Policy (Chapter 3).

The overall approach to teaching and learning will integrate core principles of adult education:

- Acknowledge the prior experience of the learner and integrate this experience into the learning process
- Reflection as an integrated and active process
- Learners take ownership and responsibility for their own learning
- Formative assessment and feedback where learners will be given the opportunity to discuss their own performance and plan improvements for future efforts
- Constructive pedagogy where knowledge is created together, and all theories/models are subject to critique of real-life application

The foundations for Barrow's Teaching and Learning Strategy are:

- Learning outcomes
- Establishing a learner-centred culture
- Ensuring fairness and consistency
- Promoting the continuous improvement of the learning process

5.1.2 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence" (European Commission, 2018)

Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do on successful completion of a programme or module" (QQI, 2023)

All programmes offered by Barrow have associated Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs). These learning outcomes form the basis for decisions regarding teaching, learning, and assessment approaches.

Learning outcomes are designed to be clear, measurable, and achievable across all delivery modes, including blended learning. Teaching strategies, learning activities, and assessment methods are aligned to ensure that learners can achieve these outcomes irrespective of whether they are participating in classroom-based or blended learning environments.

Learning outcomes at programme and module level are reviewed during programme monitoring and review processes by the Programme Review Committee.

5.1.3 Establishing a Learner-Centred Culture

Barrow is committed to equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for employability, career progression, and lifelong learning.

The organisation fosters an engaging and supportive learning environment that stimulates learners to think critically, learn independently, and actively participate in their learning experience.

This learner-centred approach applies across all delivery modes, including blended learning environments, where learners may engage in a combination of onsite, synchronous, and self-directed learning activities.

To support this approach:

- Barrow continuously updates its Quality Assurance policies and procedures to reflect a learner-centred ethos
 - Maintains manageable class sizes (Maximum 16 learners) to ensure appropriate learner support and engagement
 - Provides structured supports for learners engaging in independent and technology-enhanced learning
- Barrow is committed to ensuring that learning materials, digital platforms, assessments, and learning activities are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to learner needs. The organisation seeks to apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and provides reasonable accommodations and alternative formats where appropriate.

The organisation ensures that learners are supported in developing the skills required to engage effectively in their learning, including independent learning and, the use of digital tools and platforms.

5.1.4 Ensuring Fairness and Consistency

Barrow is committed to ensuring that all learners are treated fairly, equitably, and consistently throughout their learner journey, while responding appropriately to individual learner needs in accordance with the organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Section 4.6).

The organisation promotes an inclusive learning environment that values diversity and supports learner success across all modes of delivery. Teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support are designed to provide equitable access to programmes, learning resources, support services, and assessment opportunities regardless of whether provision is delivered onsite, blended, or online.

Barrow is committed to applying the principles of accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the design and delivery of programmes wherever reasonably practicable. Learning materials, digital resources, assessments, and learner support arrangements are developed to maximise accessibility and to facilitate participation by all learners. Reasonable accommodations are implemented, where appropriate, in accordance with organisational policy and individual learner needs.

Equality of opportunity is promoted in access to programmes, learning, assessment, certification, and progression without direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine protected grounds identified in the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018:

1. Gender;
2. Civil status;
3. Family status;
4. Sexual orientation;
5. Religion;
6. Age;
7. Disability;
8. Race;
9. Membership of the Traveller community

All applicants must possess a standard of written and spoken English sufficient to participate effectively in teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support activities.

Applicants enrolling on blended learning programmes must also demonstrate the basic digital skills required to participate successfully in technology-enhanced learning. This includes the ability to access the internet, navigate the Learning Management System (Moodle), participate in live online sessions, use email, and open, complete, upload, and download standard electronic documents.

Blended learning programmes are primarily intended for learners whose primary residence is within the Republic of Ireland. Learners who are temporarily residing outside the State may be admitted where Barrow is satisfied that programme requirements, learner support arrangements, communication, attendance, assessment, learner authentication, and published response times can be maintained. Further information is provided in Section 3.3.1.9 Geographic Scope of Provision (Learners Outside Ireland).

5.1.5 Promoting the Continuous Improvement of the Learning Process

Barrow is committed to providing intellectually stimulating, engaging, and professionally relevant programmes that support learner achievement and employability. Learner support systems are designed to provide a high-quality and inclusive learning experience for all learners, irrespective of their location or mode of study, including those participating in blended and technology-enhanced learning.

Teaching, learning, assessment, and learner support practices are reviewed on an ongoing basis to promote active, learner-centred, and reflective learning. Learning materials, digital resources, and online content are periodically

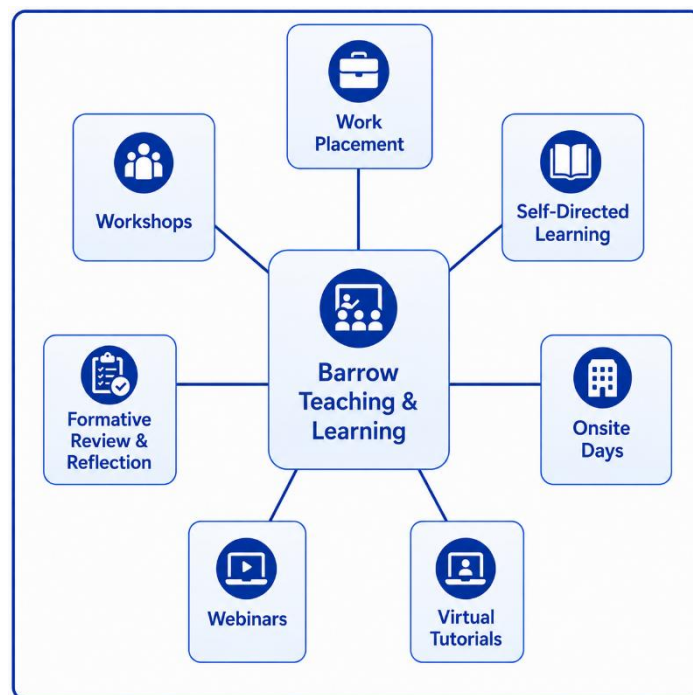
reviewed to ensure they remain academically robust, accessible, current, and appropriate for onsite, blended, and online delivery. Principles of accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are applied, where appropriate, to support equitable participation by all learners.

Assessment briefs are reviewed as part of the annual programme monitoring and review process and are updated where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, professional practice, programme requirements, learning resources, learner feedback, External Authenticator recommendations, Internal Verification findings, and emerging risks relating to academic integrity and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Assessment activities are designed to promote authentic learning and reduce opportunities for plagiarism, collusion, impersonation, and inappropriate use of AI. Learner feedback forms an integral part of Barrow's quality assurance and continuous improvement processes. Learners are invited to complete an end-of-programme evaluation, which includes feedback on teaching, learning, learner support, assessment, digital resources, and the overall learner experience. Tutors also complete programme evaluations to identify areas for enhancement.

Programme delivery is monitored through scheduled and, where appropriate, unannounced observations by the Quality Assurance Manager or designated personnel. Information gathered from learner feedback, tutor evaluations, programme monitoring, Internal Verification, External Authentication, Results Approval Panels, and other quality assurance activities is analysed and considered by the Programme Review Committee. Recommendations for enhancement are reported, where appropriate, to the External QA Committee to support ongoing quality improvement and academic oversight.

5.1.6 Teaching and Learning Environment

Barrow incorporates a variety of delivery modes into its training and education programmes. These are depicted in the figure below:



Learners are provided with guidance and support to enable effective participation in blended and online learning environments, including orientation to digital platforms, access to technical support, and information on available learner supports.

5.1.7 Training Venues

Barrow will ensure that training venues are designed so that they meet the requirement for which they are intended.

 Lighting	All rooms will have the lighting appropriate to their use.
 Accessibility	Access for people with a disability (including special arrangements) where required shall be in accordance with national legislation, or reasonable accommodation made as appropriate.
 Health & Safety	All venues will comply with legislative requirements relating to health and safety. This will include insurance, risk assessments, safety statements, escape routes, fire drills, emergency contacts and ensuring this information is communicated to both tutors and learners.
 Equipment	Venues for theory assessments and skills demonstrations will satisfy the following: • Desks/chairs set out in examination format • Space to display clock and examination regulations • Sufficient space and breakout rooms for skills demonstrations • Access to appropriate toilet facilities • Appropriate waiting areas

The Quality Assurance Manager and the Training & TEL Manager will identify and make booking arrangements with appropriate venues that satisfy the required standards. They will be aware of and will communicate any specific requirement beyond the minimum standard. Bookings will only be confirmed upon completion of a site visit to determine the suitability of the venue and completion of the Venue and Training Room Checklist. At every rebooking of an existing approved venue, the venue will be required to confirm that they continue to meet the minimum standards and must inform Barrow of any changes.

Learners are requested to submit blended feedback relating to venues after each module. This feedback is collated by the Training & TEL Manager. Any issues or concerns will be notified to the Quality Assurance Manager. Issues will be listed in the corrective action database. Tutors are also requested to submit feedback when they are asked to rate the on-site teaching venue and facilities at the end of each delivery instance.

The venue will be notified of concerns where corrective actions need to be taken. All concerns and issues are recorded in the incident database and will consider these when planning venue bookings for the next sitting.

5.3 Complaints and Grievance

Barrow operates formal Complaints, Grievance, Appeals, and Disciplinary Procedures which are communicated to learners, staff, tutors, and stakeholders through the relevant handbooks and organisational policies.

Complaints are managed fairly, transparently, and within defined timeframes. Complaints relating to blended learning provision, including digital access, learner support, communication, assessment processes, accessibility, and learning technologies, are managed through the same procedures.

Records of complaints, investigations, outcomes, and corrective actions are maintained and reviewed through the organisation's quality assurance processes.

5.3.1 Policy on Assessment

Complaints relating to blended and online learning provision, including digital access, online learner support, communication, assessment processes, and learning technologies, are managed in accordance with the organisation's complaints procedures.

Barrow is committed to a fair and consistent assessment process. Barrow therefore develops and complies with procedures for the fair and consistent assessment of learners in line with the relevant standards and guidelines as set out by our accrediting bodies. Barrow will ensure that assessment tools are fit for purpose, and that learners will receive formative feedback and ongoing support in a timely manner. Barrow will publish all relevant criteria and regulations. By doing so, Barrow will ensure validity and reliability of assessment tools and methodologies.

5.3.2 Assessment of Learning

Assessment of learning incorporates formative and summative assessment. Assessment of learning is a judgement, estimation or evaluation of a learner's knowledge, skills, and competence by comparison with a standard base.

Learner assessment may be used to:

- determine entitlement to a qualification (e.g. summative assessment)
- confirm learning progress (by the learner or by another)
- to determine a learner's 'learning' competence
- identify gaps in learning (to, e.g., enable and inform the development of formative feedback to the learner or to adapt learning strategy)
- help determine special educational or training needs (e.g. diagnostic assessment)
- provide a learning opportunity
- inform the evaluation of the quality of a programme of education and training
- recognise experiential learning
- support the learner to monitor their own progress
- determine eligibility to enrol on a programme

5.3.3 Principles of Assessment

Assessment principles are organised under six themes (QQI Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013)

- a) Learners are responsible for demonstrating their learner achievement
- b) Assessment support standards are based on learning outcomes
- c) Assessment promotes and supports effective teaching and learning
- d) Assessment procedures are credible
- e) Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements
- f) Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed

Barrow Training Assessment principles are: (QQI Green Policy on Assessment of Learners and Learning, March 2018)

- a) Assessment will be valid, reliable, and effective
- b) Assessment and feedback will empower learners to become self-regulated learners
- c) Assessment and feedback will be clear and understandable by staff and learners
- d) Decisions on assessment and feedback will be guided by a programme-level approach
- e) Assessment and feedback approaches will foster partnership between staff and learners
- f) Learners will experience a diverse range of assessment methods, including, where relevant, authentic, and work-based assessments
- g) Assessment and feedback will be manageable for staff and learners
- h) Assessment and feedback will be enhanced through staff engaging in related professional development, including engagement in scholarship in this area
- i) Assessment and feedback will be supported by enabling policies

5.4 Marking and Grading

Barrow's assessment strategy is developed at programme design stage and should:

- Link the programme assessment instruments (formative and summative) to the MIPLOs and MIMLOs
- Describe and provide a rationale for each choice of assessment task
- Describe specific special regulations associated with a programme, i.e. learner may be required to achieve a minimum grade in each assessment
- Match the programme assessment instruments to the requirement of Barrow's grading system
- Ensure the programme workload is balanced and distributed, and that the effort required is proportionate to the credit allocated
- Relate to the programme's teaching and learning strategy

(QQI Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013)

Marking criteria are established through approved marking schemes and assessment rubrics for each assessment component to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in the application of academic standards.

To promote consistency across tutors and programmes, Barrow implements internal moderation and cross-moderation processes, where appropriate. These may include the review of a representative sample of marked learner work by another suitably qualified tutor or Internal Verifier to confirm the consistent application of marking criteria, grading standards, and assessment decisions. Any discrepancies identified are discussed and resolved prior to the completion of the Internal Verification process.

These arrangements support the reliability and validity of assessment decisions and contribute to the consistent application of standards across all tutors, programmes, and assessment locations.

Once graded, assessment material is subject to internal verification (maximum 2-week process). Borderline or failed grades may be passed onto internal cross moderation. All assessed work is subject to an external, independent evaluation/moderation by an external authenticator. Once the assessment material has been verified and evaluated, and marks approved by the external authenticator they will be submitted to the results approval panel. Assessment results that have been passed through each of these stages is then submitted to the relevant awarding body for certification.

5.5 Assessment Strategies

Assessment strategies are developed by the programme development committee at programme design stage in line with the QQI programme descriptor levels 4-6. The committee also reviews these strategies on an ongoing basis.

Grading criteria of QQI assessments as follows:

Distinction	80% - 100%
Merit	65% - 79%
Pass	50% - 64%
Refer	0% - 49%

5.6 Assessment Procedures

Assessment procedures are provided to each learner at the commencement of the programme through the Learner Handbook and programme induction. These procedures outline all aspects of assessment, including assessment requirements, marking criteria and grading standards, submission deadlines, learner responsibilities, procedures for extensions and deferrals, reasonable accommodations, compassionate consideration arrangements, academic integrity requirements, plagiarism and assessment malpractice, appeals processes, and the supports available to learners throughout the assessment process.

Barrow abides by best practice principles for assessment:

- Setting and sharing the learning outcomes for each module and programme
- Sharing criteria for success for each assessment
- Providing feedback

5.6.1 Types of Assessment

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	BOTH	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
For tutors: - To monitor learning - To ascertain progress - To check understanding - To teach responsively For learners: - To evaluate own learning - To build knowledge - To identify strengths and weaknesses - To continually improve learning - To target learning	BOTH Ways to assess learning Opportunities to give and receive feedback Ways to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching	For tutors: - To measure whether a student has met the learning outcomes, and to what extent - To make further improvements in future iterations For learners: - To understand their overall performance in a unit of study - To understand whether they have met the learning outcomes, and to what extent

Assessment plays a key role in the learning outcome approach by Barrow. Assessment tasks are seen as a primary means of learning and will provide the opportunity for demonstrating the learning outcomes in an integrated and realistic setting. Barrow aims to provide a balance of formative and summative assessment in its training and education programmes. The outcomes of these assessments provide an opportunity for the learner to give and receive feedback and aid their progress.

Formative assessment activities are integrated throughout programme delivery to support learner development and preparedness for summative assessment. These activities are normally designed by tutors, are informal in nature, and do not contribute to the final module mark or grade.

Formative assessment may include individual and group exercises, role-play, problem-solving activities, presentations, quizzes, mock assessments, reflective activities, peer feedback, tutor feedback, and other learning activities designed to reinforce knowledge and skills. This inclusive approach encourages learner reflection, builds confidence, and enables learners to identify areas for improvement prior to summative assessment.

Where appropriate, learners may submit one draft of an assessment for formative tutor feedback before the final submission deadline. Feedback is developmental in nature and is intended to guide learners in improving their work. Tutors provide guidance on areas requiring improvement but do not pre-mark or guarantee grades for draft submissions. Additional draft reviews may only be facilitated in exceptional circumstances at the tutor's discretion, taking account of learner needs, programme requirements, and available resources.

Summative assessments normally take place at the end of a module and measure the extent to which a learner has met the learning outcomes. Examples of this type of assessment include exams, skills demonstrations, assignments, projects, and portfolios. The result of these assessments will contribute to the learners overall grade for the module.

5.6.1.1 Assessment Methodologies

It is important to link learning outcomes to assessment methods. Barrow uses a range of assessments to achieve learning outcomes which are linked to the Accrediting Body Assessment Criteria and are outlined below:

Type of Learning Outcome	Assessment Methodology
Communicating	• Oral presentation • Role play • Group work • Written presentation
Make judgements and think critically	• Review • Assignment • Report
Solving problems	• Group work • Case study • Problem scenario
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	• Report • Quiz • Assignment • Case study • Exam
Developing/managing yourself	• Self-Evaluation • Group work/project • Learning journal
Performing procedures and demonstrating techniques	• Role play • Demonstration

5.6.2 Responsibilities relating to Assessment

All summative assessments are validated internally and externally. The tutor and the Quality Assurance Manager are responsible for the assessment of learners.

Approval for new assessment instruments is developed by the programme development committee and reviewed by the External QA Committee. Pending recommendations, these will be submitted to the Board of Management for ratification before a proposal is submitted to the accrediting body.

5.6.3 Examinations Procedures

All examinations conducted by Barrow are administered in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding body and the organisation's Assessment Procedures.

Where paper-based examinations are used, examination papers are issued to tutors in sealed envelopes bearing the Barrow stamp. The examination date is clearly displayed together with the instruction "To be opened in the presence of learners at the commencement of the examination." Examination versions are securely controlled, recorded, and rotated to maintain assessment integrity. Tutors are responsible for the secure storage of examination papers before the examination and for the secure return of completed scripts and any unused examination papers to Barrow following the assessment. Unused papers are securely destroyed in accordance with organisational procedures. Learners are informed of the Examination Code of Conduct during programme induction and through the Learner Handbook. The Code of Conduct is reiterated immediately prior to each examination and includes requirements relating to academic integrity, learner authentication, permitted materials, conduct during examinations, and the consequences of academic misconduct.

Learners who are unsuccessful in an examination may be offered a repeat examination, subject to meeting programme attendance and engagement requirements, having made a genuine first attempt at the assessment, and complying with the organisation's Assessment Procedures. Learners who are unable to attend an examination due to approved compassionate consideration or other authorised exceptional circumstances may be facilitated in accordance with the organisation's Compassionate Consideration Policy. A maximum of three examination attempts is permitted unless otherwise specified by the awarding body. Where a repeat assessment is undertaken, the resulting grade will normally be capped at Merit, in accordance with awarding body regulations. Repeat examinations may result in certification being deferred until the next available certification period. An administration fee of €50 applies to each repeat examination, unless waived under an approved compassionate consideration or other organisational policy.

Where examinations are conducted through online or blended learning arrangements, equivalent standards of security and assessment integrity are maintained. Appropriate learner authentication, identity verification, e-

proctoring measures (where appropriate), invigilation arrangements, examination controls, and academic integrity procedures are implemented in accordance with Barrow's Assessment Procedures, Academic Integrity, Turnitin and AI Use Policy (QF74), and applicable data protection requirements.

5.6.4 Assessment of Skills

Skills demonstrations that form part of the assessment for classroom-based modules are completed during class time. Learners completing their training and education programmes through blended learning are invited to a skills demonstration day, where they will meet with their tutor for assessment.

Skills demonstration days for learners completing a blended learning programme are scheduled one day per month in the Barrow by the Training & TEL Manager. Offsite skills demonstration days are organised as required.

All skills demonstrations that form part of the assessment are photographed or, preferably, video recorded to be presented as evidence. If the module includes a skills assessment, learners sign a consent form which confirms that they understand that video recordings/photographs of their skills demonstration will be submitted as part of their assessment for certification in line with GDPR requirements.

Evidence of skills demonstrations are stored in an encrypted file and made available only to those involved in the certification process, i.e. tutor, internal verifier, external authenticator, and results approval panel. The maximum timeframe for these to be stored is nine months. After this time, skills demonstrations are deleted from the Barrow system. Learners who complete skills demonstrations in the workplace must also present video/photographic evidence, as appropriate.

5.7 Recording Receipt of Assessments

Learners upload assessments to the Moodle portal where they undergo a plagiarism/ai check while being submitted. Learners confirm that they are uploading their own work by agreeing to the terms and conditions. Learners receive an electronic receipt of assessments submitted and a notification is sent to the course tutor and QA Manager.

5.8 Assessment Extensions – Compassionate Considerations

Assessment extensions are granted only in exceptional circumstances and are considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval is not automatic and is subject to review by the Quality Assurance Manager in accordance with the organisation's Compassionate Consideration Policy and Assessment Procedures.

Learners requesting an extension should submit a completed Assessment Extension Request Form to the Quality Assurance Manager no later than three working days before the assessment submission deadline, unless exceptional circumstances prevent advance notification.

Valid grounds for requesting an extension may include, but are not limited to:

- bereavement;
- serious illness or injury;
- accident or hospitalisation;
- significant family or personal circumstances;
- other exceptional circumstances beyond the learner's reasonable control.

Where possible, requests should be supported by appropriate documentary evidence (e.g. a medical certificate or other relevant supporting documentation).

Each application is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Manager in consultation with the relevant tutor, taking account of the individual circumstances, the supporting evidence provided, programme requirements, and the need to ensure fairness and consistency for all learners. The learner will normally be notified of the decision within one working day of receipt of all required information.

As a general guideline, a maximum of three approved assessment extensions and three assessment resubmissions are permitted during a programme. Any requests exceeding these limits will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and are subject to approval by the Quality Assurance Manager following review of the individual case.

5.9 Security and Integrity of Assessment

Assessment security arrangements are implemented to protect the integrity, validity, reliability, and authenticity of assessment. Detailed procedures relating to academic integrity, artificial intelligence, learner authentication, identity verification, e-proctoring, and assessment malpractice are outlined in Sections 5.10 – 5.11.7

5.10 Academic Integrity and Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Barrow is committed to fostering a culture of academic integrity, where honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility underpin all teaching, learning, and assessment activities. Academic integrity is promoted proactively through programme design, learner engagement, staff development, and clear policy guidance, rather than solely through the detection and management of malpractice.

Learners and staff are provided with guidance and resources to support academic integrity, including expectations relating to authentic work, proper referencing, collaboration boundaries, and ethical use of digital tools, including generative artificial intelligence (AI). This guidance is communicated through learner induction, programme materials, and ongoing tutor support.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including generative AI tools, is addressed explicitly within Barrow's Academic Integrity and AI Use Policy. The permitted use of AI is determined on an assessment-by-assessment basis and is clearly stated within each assessment brief to ensure transparency and consistency for learners. Each assessment is designated as one of the following:

- **AI Prohibited** – the use of AI is not permitted for any aspect of the assessment.
- **AI Restricted** – AI may only be used for specified purposes (for example, brainstorming, planning, language support, or proofreading) as outlined in the assessment brief. Any permitted use must be appropriately acknowledged and referenced by the learner.
- **AI Permitted** – AI may be used where this supports the achievement of the assessment outcomes and where explicitly authorised within the assessment brief. Learners remain responsible for ensuring the originality, accuracy, and integrity of all submitted work.

The AI designation applicable to each assessment is communicated within the assessment brief, together with any referencing or disclosure requirements. Learners are responsible for complying with these requirements and for ensuring that all submitted work accurately reflects their own knowledge, understanding, and achievement of the learning outcomes. The submission of AI-generated content as original learner work where AI use is prohibited, or the failure to disclose permitted AI use where required, constitutes academic misconduct and is managed in accordance with Barrow's Academic Integrity Policy.

Where AI tools are used, learners are required to include a declaration of use, confirming how AI contributed to their work. Failure to appropriately disclose AI use may be treated as a breach of academic integrity.

Barrow provides guidance to staff on recognising potential indicators of AI misuse, collusion, and contract cheating, including inconsistencies in learner performance, unusual writing styles, or discrepancies between formative and summative work. Where concerns arise, additional verification methods may be used.

To support authorship verification, Barrow may implement viva voce assessments, reflective questioning, or follow-up discussions to confirm learner understanding and ownership of submitted work. These approaches are used proportionately and in line with assessment design.

Robust identity verification procedures are in place to ensure that the learner completing the assessment is the registered learner. This may include verification of identity through photographic ID, authentication during live blended sessions, or other appropriate methods depending on the assessment context.

Where blended invigilation or e-proctoring is used, Barrow ensures that it is applied in a proportionate, transparent, and GDPR-compliant manner. Learners are informed in advance of any proctoring requirements, including the nature of monitoring, data collection, and their rights. Alternatives to proctoring are considered including assessment design strategies that reduce the need for high-stakes invigilation.

A clear privacy notice is provided to learners where blended invigilation is used, outlining how data is processed, stored, and protected. All such practices comply with applicable data protection legislation.

Concerns relating to academic integrity, including AI misuse, collusion, impersonation, or other forms of malpractice, are managed through a structured escalation and investigation process. This includes initial review, evidence gathering, formal investigation where required, and application of appropriate outcomes in line with QA procedures. This approach ensures that academic integrity is embedded across all aspects of programme delivery and aligns with QQI 2023 expectations for blended and blended learning environments.

5.11.1 Assessment Malpractice

Assessment malpractice includes any act that may undermine the integrity or validity of the assessment.

In cases where tutors suspect assessment malpractice, the matter should be reported to the Quality Assurance Manager. If there is insufficient evidence, then no further action will be taken. Otherwise, the Quality Assurance Manager and tutor, with appropriate witnesses, will conduct a preliminary investigation, which will include (an) interview(s) with the learner(s) concerned. If sufficient evidence that an offence has been committed exists, the Quality Assurance Manager will bring this to the attention of the External QA Committee who will decide on a course of action, which may include any of the following:

- Reduction in the mark (including a mark of 0) for the work affected.
- Where a learner is required to repeat or resubmit an assessment due to not achieving the required standard, the maximum grade that may be awarded for the reassessment is Merit, in accordance with Barrow's Assessment Regulations.
- Where assessment malpractice has been substantiated, the Internal Quality Panel may impose one or more sanctions, depending on the nature and severity of the breach. Where resubmission is permitted, the learner may be required to submit new or amended work within a specified timeframe. In such cases, the maximum grade that may be awarded is Pass. More serious breaches may result in a mark of zero, failure of the assessment, failure of the module, suspension, or other disciplinary action in accordance with the Academic Integrity and Assessment Malpractice Policy.
- The results of the assessment may be invalidated if malpractice is confirmed, meaning the individual's scores or grades may be nullified.
- Penalties such as a failing grade for the assessment, course, or program may be imposed.
- The individual involved may face disciplinary action, which could include warnings, suspension, or expulsion from enrolling on any more courses.

Examples of assessment malpractice include the following:

- Plagiarism
- Impersonation of another learner
- Fabrication of evidence
- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment materials, e.g. examination paper
- Behaving in such a way that would undermine the assessment process, e.g. mobile phone use during an exam, communication with others during an exam, bringing prohibited materials into the exam centre

The sanction applied will be proportionate to the seriousness of the academic misconduct, taking account of factors including the nature of the breach, whether it is a first or repeated offence, the level of intent, and any mitigating circumstances. Decisions are recorded and learners have the right to appeal in accordance with the organisation's Appeals Procedure.

5.11.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work, ideas, words, data, or other intellectual property as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing. It constitutes academic misconduct and is contrary to the principles of academic integrity expected of all learners.

Barrow employs robust academic integrity measures, including the use of Turnitin for similarity checking and AI writing detection, to support the authenticity of learner work. All submitted assessments are subject to review through Turnitin and may also be examined using additional verification methods where appropriate.

Learners are informed of the organisation's Academic Integrity Policy, plagiarism requirements, AI use requirements, and the consequences of assessment malpractice during learner induction, within the Learner Handbook, through the mandatory Academic Writing and Referencing module, within the Academic Integrity and AI Use Policy, and within each individual assessment brief. Assessment briefs clearly state whether the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is prohibited, restricted, or permitted for that assessment, together with any disclosure and referencing requirements. Confirmed cases of plagiarism, unauthorised AI use, collusion, contract cheating, impersonation, falsification of evidence, or other forms of academic misconduct are managed in accordance with the organisation's Assessment Malpractice and Academic Integrity procedures.

5.11.3 Grading Assessments

Tutors are the primary assessors of learner assessments. Barrow is committed to ensuring that assessment decisions are fair, valid, reliable, transparent, and consistent across all programmes and delivery modes. Constructive written feedback is recorded by the tutor on the Assessment Front Cover Sheet or approved electronic equivalent. Feedback is designed to support learner development, explain the assessment decision, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and assist learners in preparing for future assessments.

Assessment decisions are guided by the grading criteria set out in the QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013) together with Barrow's approved assessment briefs, marking schemes, and assessment rubrics. These documents support consistency in marking and ensure that learners are assessed against the published learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

To promote consistency, fairness, and reliability of assessment decisions across tutors, modules, and programmes, Barrow operates internal quality assurance processes including standardised marking schemes, Internal Verification (IV), cross moderation of assessment decisions where appropriate, and External Authentication (EA). These processes

support consistency of grading, identify any anomalies in marking, and ensure that assessment standards are applied equitably across all learners and modes of delivery.

5.11.4 Internal Verification

Internal verification is the process by which Barrow's assessment policies and procedures relating to planning, managing, and completing all aspects of assessment practices are monitored and checked internally by Barrow itself. The internal verification officer is external from the RAP panel. The QA manager is the recipient of reports from the internal verifier. During the RAP Meeting, all documentation is presented by the QA manager. While the Quality Assurance Manager serves as Barrow's representative for observational purposes, they do not possess authority in approving results. Barrow completes 100% internal verification of its courses. Barrow may have more than one Internal verification officer in any one submission period, depending on the following:

- the number of learners
- the number, range and diversity of awards being offered

Responsibilities of the internal verification officer include the following:

- Confirm that Barrow's assessment procedures were adhered to across the range of assessment activities from planning to finalising results
- Ensure learning has been assessed using the techniques and instruments as indicated in the validated programme
- Check the accuracy of assessment results to ensure learner evidence exists, and that results, and grades are correctly computed and recorded
- Monitor assessment results
- Produce an internal verification report outlining the outcome of the internal verification process
- Reports directly to Quality Assurance Manager

5.11.5 Grade Rechecks

Should a learner consider that they may have been assigned an incorrect grade, they may request a recheck of the grade within two weeks of their provisional results becoming available. To request a recheck, the learner must contact the Quality Assurance Manager.

The following procedure should be followed by the tutor responsible for the relevant module:

- Review the exam script and the original assignment submission(s)
- Regrade the exam script and assignment to establish whether or not the original mark/grade awarded was correct
- Check to ensure that marks given to individual elements of the assessment are included in the total marks
- Check that the original total mark, is accurate and that the grade awarded is correct
- The tutor shall pass the marking sheet to the QA Manager who will consult with the Internal QA Panel for their authorisation. Grades may be changed to lower or higher grades or may remain the same.

The tutor shall return the rechecked assessment to the Quality Assurance Manager, with their decision noted, within two weeks from the time the request is lodged.

5.11.6 Cross Moderation

A sample of each module will be subjected to cross moderation prior to submission for certification. A sample is chosen and checked by Barrow's lead assessor for the field of learning.

Where the lead assessor identifies a difference in the standard of marking greater than 5% but no greater than 10%, then the lead assessor has the authority to alter the mark awarded. Where a significant difference is identified, the mark will be altered, and relevant tutors will be invited for further training.

5.11.7 External Authentication

A sample of the assessments will be reviewed by an external authenticator prior to submission for certification. The role of the external authenticator is as follows:

- Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of learners consistent with the provider's procedures and with QQI
- Review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes
- Apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment results
- Identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process
- Recommend results for approval
- Produce an external authentication report using the template provided by Barrow
- Maintain Barrow's agreed quality standards

Any feedback received is communicated to the relevant tutors by the Quality Assurance Manager. Changes and recommendations for any future delivery will also be reviewed and considered by the Results Approval Panel.

5.11.8 Results Approval

Learners undertaking blended or online assessments have access to the same appeals procedures and protections as learners in onsite delivery contexts.

The purpose of the Results Approval Process is to ensure that results are quality assured entirely and signed off by Barrow prior to submission to the relevant awarding body.

The Results Approval Process ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes, i.e. the internal verification and external authentication processes.

If the external authenticator has concerns regarding the results, a report will be submitted to Barrow outlining these concerns and identifying the irregularities found. Barrow must then instigate appropriate corrective action, as decided upon by the Results Approval Panel.

Responsibilities of the results approval panel include the following:

- Meet as required to review and approve assessment results
- Review reports of the internal verification and external authentication processes
- Agree to the submission of final results to the relevant accrediting body for certification
- Maintain Barrow's agreed quality standards
- Identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action

5.11.9 Result Appeals

It is the policy of Barrow to provide arrangements for appeals in relation to assessment results and to ensure that they are dealt with in a thorough, fair, transparent, and timely manner. Learners are informed of their right to appeal during induction and when they receive their provisional results.

Prior to formal appeals request when provisional grades are provided learners can contact the QA Manager who will request and provide feedback to the learner from the tutor in relation to their query. This gives the learner an opportunity to resubmit their work or a section of their work if they wish to do so. If the learner is still unsatisfied with the feedback, they can commence the appeals process.

Upon receipt of the final result for a module, a learner who wishes to appeal the grade awarded should contact the Quality Assurance Manager. The learner can appeal if they believe there were irregularities or inequality in their assessment.

The learner can appeal the results of their assessment if they feel that:

- There was a substantial error of judgement or miscalculation on the part of the tutor
- Their performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors, which they were unable or unwilling to divulge prior to completion of the assessment
- The tutor did not give sufficient weight to any extenuating circumstances previously notified to Barrow or did not meet the request for reasonable accommodation

A request for an appeal must be submitted in writing using the Appeals Request Form to the Quality Assurance Manager not later than the date specified in the letter accompanying results. An administration fee of €50 applies for the appeal which is refundable if the appeal is successful. Further submission of evidence is not allowed at this stage. The assessment material for the module is issued to the lead assessor for review. If the lead assessor is the original assessor, another assessor will be appointed.

Appeals outcomes are reviewed and approved through the organisation's academic governance structures in accordance with established appeals procedures. The Quality Assurance Manager will inform the learner in writing of the outcome of the recheck within 14 working days. The relevant tutor will also be notified of the outcome within this timeframe.

The potential outcomes of the appeals process are as follows:

- Result upgrade or downgrade – the relevant accrediting body will be requested to amend database and issue new certificate accordingly
- No grade changes

Chapter 6. Learners Supports

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrow's accrediting bodies:

- Supports for Learners (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 6)

6.1 Delivery Mechanisms and Learning Resources

Barrow provides an integrated and relevant range of learning resources and learner supports. These are actively promoted and communicated within Barrow and are responsive to learner feedback and to the evolving needs to learners. Learners are made aware of the supports and resources available to them in their learner handbook and are asked to evaluate these in their evaluation form upon completion of the module.

Onsite Classroom Delivery	Barrow's programme content is facilitated through appropriate delivery mechanisms such as role plays, group discussion, tutorials, and workshops.
Blended Learning Delivery	Barrow delivers programmes through classroom-based, synchronous online, and asynchronous learning methods supported by a Moodle-based Learning Management System (LMS), ensuring flexibility and accessibility for learners.
Course Resource Packs	Barrow has developed comprehensive learner resource packs for each course. These are provided to all learners by soft copy (hard copy can be supplied). Programme material is updated as necessary to ensure validity and currency, while ensuring that the programme and module-specific learning outcomes are delivered. All updated and current packs are saved on the master list for access by the Barrow employees.
Practical Assignments and Group Quizzes	This practical application is a key process and is assessed through practical assignments such as case studies and project work. Tutors will also use quizzes and worksheets to reinforce learning through formative assessment.

6.1.1 Ongoing Support Mechanisms

Barrow supports the learner over the duration of the programme. The QA Manager has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the various learner supports, including arranging special accommodation requests, by learners and monitoring their effectiveness.



6.1.2 Blended Learning Support

Barrow provides a comprehensive range of supports to ensure learners can successfully engage with blended learning programmes. These supports include technical assistance for accessing the Learning Management System (LMS) and virtual classrooms, academic guidance from tutors, access to learning materials and recorded sessions, and support to help learners understand the digital skills, equipment, and connectivity requirements of their programme. Learner engagement is encouraged through live online sessions, discussion forums, collaborative activities, and regular communication with tutors. Participation and progress are monitored through attendance records and LMS activity, allowing Barrow to identify learners who may require additional support and to respond in a timely manner. For programmes that include work placement, learning is supported through a collaborative partnership between:

- The Learner
- The Host Employer
- Barrow

Barrow Responsibilities

Barrow will:

- Provide guidance on securing a suitable work placement.
- Supply relevant learning resources and programme materials.
- Deliver academic and practical support through blended and onsite learning activities.
- Provide ongoing tutor support, mentoring, and guidance.
- Offer administrative support throughout the programme.

Learner Responsibilities

The learner will:

- Secure an appropriate work placement.
- Complete the required work placement hours.
- Engage fully in learning activities and complete all required assessments and assignments.
- Comply with workplace policies and any agreements in place with the host employer.
- Inform Barrow of any significant changes affecting their work placement.

Employer Responsibilities

The host employer will:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to develop and demonstrate relevant workplace knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- Support the learner in undertaking programme-related activities within the workplace.
- Maintain appropriate communication with Barrow regarding the learner's progress and workplace experience.
- Notify Barrow of any issues, concerns, or changes that may affect the learner's work placement or achievement of learning outcomes.
- Complete and return any required workplace documentation, including Supervisor Reports, competency verification forms, or other assessment documentation, to confirm the learner's demonstration of workplace skills, competencies, and professional behaviours where required by the programme.
- Cooperate with Barrow in supporting the learner and facilitating any monitoring or review activities associated with the work placement.

6.2 Reasonable Accommodation

6.2.1 Policy Statement

Barrow is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment that promotes equality of access, participation, and achievement for all learners. In accordance with the Equal Status Acts 2000–2015, Barrow will provide reasonable accommodations for learners with a disability, significant ongoing medical condition, or specific learning difficulty where such accommodations are required to support participation in learning and assessment.

Reasonable accommodation aims to reduce or remove barriers to learning while maintaining the integrity, standards, and learning outcomes of the programme. Accommodations do not exempt learners from meeting programme requirements or assessment standards.

The designated contact for all reasonable accommodation enquiries is the Quality Assurance (QA) Manager.

6.2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that learners with a disability, significant medical condition, or specific learning difficulty have equitable opportunities to access, participate in, and successfully complete their programme of study. Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual basis and are intended to support learners in achieving greater independence and full participation in their learning experience.

6.2.3 Disclosure and Application

Learners who require reasonable accommodation are encouraged to disclose their needs as early as possible, preferably before programme commencement. Disclosure does not automatically result in the provision of accommodations, nor does it guarantee that a particular accommodation request will be approved.

To request accommodation, learners must:

- Complete a Reasonable Accommodation Request Form.
- Provide relevant supporting documentation from an appropriately qualified professional.
- Participate in a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA), where required.

Applications submitted after programme commencement will be considered on a case-by-case basis. While Barrow will make every reasonable effort to implement approved accommodations promptly, requests made immediately before assessments may not be fully accommodated within the available timeframe.

6.2.4 Assessment and Approval Process

Upon receipt of an application, the QA Manager will review the supporting documentation and, where appropriate, conduct a Learning Needs Assessment.

The assessment process may consider:

- The nature and impact of the disability, medical condition, or learning difficulty.
- Previous accommodations received in educational settings.
- Programme and assessment requirements.
- Access to assistive technologies or specialist supports.
- Potential barriers to participation and achievement.

Recommendations arising from the assessment will be reviewed by the Internal Quality Panel, which will determine appropriate accommodations based on individual need, fairness, practicality, and the preservation of programme standards.

Learners will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application and any approved accommodations.

6.2.5 Types of Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual basis and may include learning, assessment, examination, and digital learning supports.

Learning and Digital Supports

Where appropriate, accommodations may include:

- Accessible learning materials, including large print, accessible PDF, Word, audio, or screen-reader compatible formats.
- Captioned recordings and learning resources.
- Access to approved assistive technologies, including screen readers, speech-to-text software, and magnification tools.
- Accessibility features within the Learning Management System (LMS).
- Additional academic support and guidance.
- Reasonable flexibility in assignment deadlines when supported by evidence and programme requirements.

Assessment and Examination Supports

Where appropriate, accommodations may include:

- Additional examination time.
- Supervised rest breaks.
- Alternative examination venues.
- Examination papers in accessible formats.
- Use of assistive technologies.
- Reader, scribe, sign language interpreter, or personal assistant support.
- Adapted furniture or specialist equipment.

Alternative Assessment Arrangements

In exceptional circumstances, and where programme learning outcomes can still be demonstrated, alternative assessment arrangements may be approved. These may include:

- Oral assessments.
- Adjusted assessment scheduling.
- Assessments completed over multiple sessions.
- Other appropriate modifications that do not compromise academic standards.

6.2.6 Review and Monitoring

Approved accommodations will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain appropriate, effective, and responsive to learner needs.

Accommodations may be amended, continued, or withdrawn where circumstances change or where supports are no longer required.

The QA Manager will maintain confidential records of accommodation requests and approvals and will provide anonymised reports to the relevant quality assurance bodies as part of Barrow's ongoing monitoring and review processes.

6.3 Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)

Barrow has learner protection arrangements in place for all eligible QQI-validated programmes in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2012.

The following programmes are covered under these arrangements:

- Healthcare Support (5M4339) – Blended Delivery
- Healthcare Support (5M4339) – Classroom Directed
- Healthcare Service Skills (5M3782) – Classroom Directed
- Management (6M4587) – Classroom Directed
- Early Learning and Care (Level 5) - Blended – Onsite + Synchronous and Asynchronous
- Early Learning and Care (Level 6) - Blended – Onsite + Synchronous and Asynchronous

Where applicable under learner protection arrangements.

Learner protection applies to programmes of more than three months' duration where fees have been paid. The purpose of these arrangements is to protect learners if a programme ceases before completion.

Barrow maintains learner protection insurance through Arachas underwritten by Aviva Insurance Ireland DAC. Each eligible learner will receive an individual Learner Protection Insurance Policy and should retain this documentation for their records.

In the event of programme cessation, learners may be entitled to a refund of fees in accordance with the 2012 Act. Where appropriate, learners may also be offered the option to transfer to a similar programme with another provider. Fee refunds remain the primary protection measure, with programme transfer considered where suitable.

6.4 Pastoral Care

Barrow is committed to supporting the wellbeing, personal development, and educational success of all learners. The organisation recognises that learners may experience personal, social, financial, educational, or emotional challenges during their studies and is committed to providing a supportive, respectful, and inclusive learning environment in which learners are encouraged to seek assistance whenever required.

Pastoral support services are communicated to learners during programme induction, through the Learner Handbook, on the Learning Management System (Moodle), and by tutors throughout programme delivery. Learners are reminded of the availability of these supports at appropriate stages during their programme, particularly where tutors identify that additional support may be beneficial.

Learners have access to a qualified Life Coach and Adult Career Guidance Counsellor who holds a postgraduate qualification in Guidance and Counselling. A confidential 30-minute appointment is available free of charge upon request. Learners may self-refer directly or may be signposted by a tutor, the Quality Assurance Manager, or another member of staff, with the learner's consent.

Where appropriate, learners may also be signposted to external specialist support services where needs extend beyond the supports available within the organisation.

Tutors are supported by the Quality Assurance Manager in providing appropriate learner support. Staff and tutors participate in continuing professional development (CPD) in areas such as mental health awareness, inclusion, equality and diversity, and learner wellbeing to ensure effective support is available throughout the learner journey.

Chapter 7. Information and Communication Management

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrow's accrediting bodies:

- Information and Data Management (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 8)
- Public Information and Communication (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 9)

Barrow is committed to reviewing, maintaining, and continuously enhancing its knowledge-based information system to allow for the collection, analysis, and use of relevant information to ensure effective management support and development of its programmes and other activities. Critical quality indicators are maintained and reviewed on an ongoing basis and used to inform continuous improvement within the organisation.

Our QA manual is available to view on our website www.barrowlearning.ie

7.1.1 Data Collection and Sources

Barrow collects and holds a wide range of data which is captured within our IMS, the NAS (network-attached storage) system and the emails systems. These can be used for relevant analysis and reporting within all functional areas. The data which is captured can be organised into the following 6 categories.

- a) Personal data (tutors, learners, and staff – queries, learner admission and assessment information)
- b) Programme-specific
- c) Assessment
- d) Financial and operational
- e) Learner, tutor, and client feedback
- f) Marketing

Data is collected through various methods such as booking forms, enquiry forms, telephone conversations, emails, Live Chat, CVs, registration forms and other appropriate means.

Information is stored on Barrow's internal administration system for seven years, at which point it is deleted. Hard copies of information collected is destroyed after one year.

Relevant data sources, including learner feedback and LMS analytics, are used to support the monitoring and appraisal of tutor competence in blended learning, as outlined in Section 4.4.

Information derived from the Learning Management System, learner engagement analytics, attendance records, assessment activity, learner feedback, and programme monitoring processes is used to support the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and enhancement of blended learning provision. These data sources inform programme review, learner support interventions, resource planning, tutor development, and continuous improvement activities as outlined in Chapter 8.

Data relating to programme performance, learner engagement, learner feedback, assessment outcomes, and support service utilisation is reviewed through programme monitoring processes and reported to the Internal Quality Panel and External Quality Assurance Committee as part of the organisation's quality assurance framework.

7.2 Backups and Disaster Recovery

Barrow's backup system is managed by a local external IT Support company.

Business IT Solutions, 16 Hebron Business Park, Hebron Road, Kilkenny

(056) 778 6882 support@bits.ie

Barrow servers are protected from physical and electronic attack. The security and retention of learner data is paramount, and a multi-layer back-up policy and data processing agreements are in place. All files are backed up twice a day to secure cloud storage. Barrow monitor these daily backups by the support dashboard and can respond immediately to any abnormal events.

The system is designed to handle hardware failure on any individual server with minimum disruption to learners and faculty. Load balancers automatically manage network traffic in the event of a server failure, in many cases without interruption to the learners' blended experience.

In case of an emergency where it is not possible to gain access to Barrow's physical office, e.g. red weather warning, all staff can access the NAS drive remotely. This will ensure that the company can operate on a temporary basis.

These arrangements support the continuity of blended learning provision and ensure that learners retain access to essential learning resources, communications, and support services during periods of disruption.

7.3.1 Policy & Procedure for Data Protection

7.3.2 Introduction

This policy is a statement of Barrow's commitment to protect the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with Data Protection Law.

Barrow may have to collect and use information about people with whom we work. These may include current, past, and prospective employees, learners, clients, and suppliers. This personal information must be handled and dealt with properly, however it is collected, recorded, and used, and whether it be on paper, in computer records or recorded by any other means.

Barrow regards the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to our successful operation and to maintaining confidence between us and those with whom Barrow carries out business. Barrow will ensure that we treat personal information lawfully and correctly.

To this end Barrow fully endorses and adhere to the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which confers rights on individuals as well as responsibilities on those persons processing personal data.

This policy applies to the processing of personal data in manual and electronic records kept by us in connection with its human resources function as described below. It also covers our response to any data breach and other rights under the GDPR.

This policy applies to the personal data of job applicants, existing and former employees, learners, placement learners, workers, and self-employed contractors. These are referred to in this policy as data subjects.

7.3.3 Definitions

"Personal data" is information that relates to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified from that information, for example, a person's name, identification number, location, online identifier. It can also include pseudonymised data.

"Special categories of personal data" is data which relates to an individual's health, sex life, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, political opinion, religion, and trade union membership. It also includes genetic and biometric data (where used for ID purposes).

"Criminal offence data" is data which relates to an individual's criminal convictions and offences.

"Data processing" is any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure, or destruction.

7.3.4 Data Protection Principles

Under GDPR, all personal data obtained and held by us must be processed according to a set of core principles. In accordance with these principles, Barrow Training will ensure that:

- a) processing will be fair, lawful, and transparent
- b) data be collected for specific, explicit, and legitimate purposes
- c) data collected will be adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary for the purposes of processing

- d) data will be kept accurate and up to date. Data which is found to be inaccurate will be rectified or erased without delay
- e) data is not kept for longer than is necessary for its given purpose
- f) data will be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction, or damage by using appropriate technical or organisation measures
- g) Barrow will comply with the relevant GDPR procedures for international transferring of personal data

7.3.5 Types of Data Held

Employees

Barrow keeps several categories of personal data on our employees to carry out effective and efficient processes. Barrow keeps this data in a personnel file relating to each employee and we also hold the data within our encrypted and password-protected computer systems, for example, our holiday booking system.

Specifically, Barrow holds the following types of data:

- a) personal details such as name, address, phone numbers and in case of emergency next of kin details
- b) information gathered via the recruitment process such as that entered in a CV or included in a cover letter, references from former employers, details on your education and employment history etc
- c) details relating to pay administration such as PPS numbers, bank account details and tax codes
- d) medical or health information
- e) information relating to your employment with us, including:
 - i) job title and job descriptions
 - ii) Salary
 - iii) Wider terms and conditions of employment
 - iv) details of formal and informal proceedings involving you such as letters of concern, disciplinary and grievance proceedings, annual leave records, appraisal, and performance information
 - v) internal and external training modules undertaken

Learners

Learner data is mainly obtained from the details they provide directly through the application/enrolment/registration process, or which their manager/supervisor provides, as well as their academic information, e.g. results, certification. This is held by Barrow on its records systems including encrypted and password-protected Excel spreadsheets and the Learner Management System.

Categories of personal data collected/recorded include:

- a) Name
- b) Postal and email addresses
- c) Phone number
- d) Date of birth
- e) Gender
- f) PPS Number
- g) Next of kin/emergency contact details
- h) Financial information (including details of funding and fees paid and outstanding)
- i) Image (where required for learner identification and participation in online or blended learning environments)
- j) Garda vetting record
- k) Engagement with Barrow's virtual learning environment activity
- l) Information about examinations, assessments, and results, repeat examinations and learner progression
- m) Certificates awarded
- n) Details of disabilities (optional) and/or medical records (may be necessary in application for reasonable accommodation)
- o) Disciplinary, grievance procedures data
- p) IP address, and the type of device you are using when visiting the Barrow website on a mobile device
- q) Supervisor information

7.3.6 Rights of Data Subjects

Rights relating to personal data include:

- a) to be informed (via a privacy notice and other communications)
- b) to request access to Personal Data held by Barrow, and to have any incorrect Personal Data rectified
- c) Where legally necessary to the restriction of processing data concerning learners
- d) to have Personal Data erased, where legally necessary
- e) to data portability regarding certain automated Personal Data

- f) regarding rights within the legislation relating to “automated decision-making,” Barrow does not use such processes, and they do not arise
- g) to restrict the use of the data Barrow, hold and the right to object to Barrow using learner data. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted if a learner believes their personal data is being used unlawfully or if they have a particular reason why Barrow should not be processing it.

Requests for any of the above should be addressed by email to info@barrowlearning.ie or in writing setting out your specific request to Barrow’s Data Protection Officer, Barrow Consultancy & Training Unit 10 Enterprise House O Brien Road Carlow R93Y0Y3. All requests will be processed within 30 days of receipt. Please note, however, it may not be possible to facilitate all requests, for example, where Barrow is required by law to collect and process certain personal data including that personal information that is required of any learner of Barrow.

Additionally, you can update your personal data by contacting the Quality Assurance Manager.

7.3.7 Responsibilities of Employees

To protect the personal data of data subjects, which it holds or to which it has access, Barrow has designated employees with specific responsibilities for the processing and controlling of data.

Barrow has also appointed employees with responsibility for reviewing and auditing our data protection systems.

7.3.8 Responsibilities of Data Subjects

1. *Updating your details:* The GDPR requires that personal data is accurate. Please let Barrow know if your contact details change. If Barrow does not have the correct contact details, we cannot take responsibility if we are unable to provide you with any information you require, for example, missing an exam or deadline resulting in serious consequences.
2. *Processing Personal Data:* You must comply with Barrow’s Data Protection Policy and GDPR if, as a learner, you have access to the personal data of others; or if you wish to collect or process any personal data as part of your studies or research. You must ensure that you notify and seek approval from your tutor before any processing occurs. If you are processing personal data other than as part of your studies, you should contact the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (Supervisory Authority) as you will not be covered under Barrow’s registration. You can contact that Office at info@dataprotection.ie or by writing to the Data Protection Commission, 21 Fitzwilliam Square South, Dublin 2, D02 RD28.

7.3.9 Lawful Bases of Processing

Data Protection law requires that Barrow must have a valid lawful basis to process personal data. Barrow relies on several such bases as follows:

1. *The provision of a contract* – much of the personal information Barrow processes is necessary to meet its commitments to you, for example, processing your data in relation to teaching, assessment and associated administration. The following sets out the main purposes of which we process learners’ personal data in the provision of a contract:
 - Recruitment and admission of learners
 - Provision of teaching and associated academic services including examinations, progression, and related administration
 - Facilitating accreditation with professional and industrial bodies
 - Managing and administering learners’ educational contracts
 - Recording and managing learner conduct (including disciplinary procedures)
 - Maintaining learner records
 - Management and administration of learner finance (including fees and funding)
 - Delivering plagiarism checking and academic validation services
 - Providing services necessary for the learner experience (including IT and communication services)
 - Providing support and maintenance services (including IT)
 - Safeguarding and promoting welfare of learners
 - Dealing with grievances and disciplinary actions
 - Dealing with complaints and enquiries
 - Providing careers and placement advice and services
 - Service improvement via feedback and surveys
 - Internal reporting and record keeping
 - Responding to data access requests you make
 - Inclusion in Barrow’s Outlook directory
 - Providing learner support services including:
 - Disability and learning support services
 - Careers and employment advice and services
 - Health and wellbeing services

- Barrow's email distribution lists: as a registered learner you will automatically be added to several email distribution lists to enable Barrow to manage its operations and provide the full range of services to you. An opt-out option is not permitted for these operations and core services.

The following sets out the main purposes of which we process employees' personal data in the provision of a contract:

- Contact details such as name, address, phone numbers
 - Information gathered via the recruitment process such as that entered a CV or included in a CV cover letter, references from former employers, details on your education and employment history etc
 - Details relating to pay administration such as PPS numbers, bank account details and tax codes
 - Medical or health information
 - Information relating to your employment with us, including:
 - job title and job descriptions
 - your salary
 - your wider terms and conditions of employment
 - details of formal and informal proceedings involving you such as letters of concern, disciplinary and grievance proceedings, your annual leave records, appraisal, and performance information
 - internal and external training modules undertaken
2. *The fulfilment of a legal obligation* – Barrow must process your personal data when required to do so under Irish/EU law, for instance:
 - Sharing information with statutory bodies
 - Monitoring equal opportunities
 - Providing safety and operational information
 - Performing audits
 - Preventing and detecting crime
 - Administration of insurance and legal claims
 - Garda vetting
 3. *To protect the vital interest of you or another person* – under extreme circumstances Barrow would share your personal data with third parties to protect your interests or those of another person, for example:
 - Providing medical or emergency contact information to emergency services personnel
 - Contacting you or your next of kin, in case of an emergency
 4. *Consent* – under certain circumstances, Barrow will only process your personal data with your explicit consent. Explicit consent requires you to make a positive, affirmative action and be fully informed about the matter to which you are consenting, for example:
 - Dealing with enquiries by providing information on Barrow courses and other programmes of study that may be of interest and benefit to learners, applicants, and other interested parties
 - Promoting Barrow's services (e.g. career guidance, consultancy)
 - Marketing, including images, online, in print and on social media; publications, invitations and other communications
 - Competition entries – As per the data retention schedule, contact details will be retained until competition closing date has passed and winner has been notified
 - References: Academic staff may agree to provide a reference for you if you apply for a job or further study. You should ensure that the requesting organisation can provide the academic staff member with a copy of your signed consent to the issuing of your reference to them
 - Participating in third party surveys

You will be given clear instructions on the desired processing activity, informed of the consequences of your consent and of your clear right to withdraw consent at any time.

7.3.10 Access to Data

As stated above, employees and learners have a right to access the personal data that Barrow hold on them, as per the Subject Access Request Policy. To exercise this right, data subjects should make a Subject Access Request using the Subject Access Request Form. Barrow will comply with the request without delay, and within 30 days unless, in accordance with legislation, Barrow decide that an extension is required. Those who make a request will be kept fully informed of any decision to extend the time limit.

No charge will be made for complying with a request unless the request is manifestly unfounded, excessive, or repetitive, or unless a request is made for duplicate copies to be provided to parties other than the employee making the request. In these circumstances, a reasonable charge will be applied.

7.3.11 Data Disclosures

The Company may be required to disclose certain data/information of an employee to any person. The circumstances leading to such disclosures include:

- a) any employee benefits operated by third parties
- b) disabled individuals - whether any reasonable adjustments are required to assist them at work
- c) individuals' health data - to comply with health and safety or occupational health obligations towards the employee
- d) for sick pay purposes
- e) HR management and administration - to consider how an individual's health affects his or her ability to do their job
- f) The smooth operation of any employee insurance policies or pension plans
- g) to assist law enforcement or a relevant authority to prevent or detect crime or prosecute offenders or to assess or collect any tax or duty.

These kinds of disclosures will only be made when strictly necessary for the purpose.

7.3.12 Data Security

All employees are aware that personal information is securely stored on an external drive using an encrypted system. Employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities when their role involves the processing of data. All employees are instructed to store files or written information of a confidential nature in a secure manner so that are only accessed by people who have a need and a right to access them and to ensure that screen locks are implemented on all PCs, laptops etc when unattended. No files or written information of a confidential nature are to be left where they can be read by unauthorised people.

Where data is computerised, it should be coded, encrypted or password protected both on a local hard drive and on a network drive that is regularly backed up. If a copy is kept on removable storage media, that media must itself be kept in a locked filing cabinet, drawer, or safe.

Employees must always use the passwords provided to access the computer system and not abuse them by passing them on to people who should not have them.

Personal data relating to employees or learners should not be kept or transported on laptops, USB sticks, or similar devices, unless prior authorisation has been received from the Data Protection Officer. Where personal data is recorded on any such device it should be protected by:

- a) ensuring that data is recorded on such devices only where necessary.
- b) using an encrypted system — a folder should be created to store the files that need extra protection and all files created or moved to this folder should be automatically encrypted.
- c) ensuring that laptops or USB drives are not left where they can be stolen.

Failure to follow the Company's rules on data security may be dealt with via the Company's disciplinary procedure. Appropriate sanctions include dismissal with or without notice dependent on the severity of the failure.

7.3.13 Third Party Processing

Barrow may disclose certain personal data to third parties. These external organisations, and the purpose for sharing the information, are set out below. This list will be updated periodically as required.

Barrow will only share your personal data with external third parties where we are required to do so under a statutory or legal obligation, or we are required to do so under a contractual obligation or we have your consent, or we are otherwise permitted to do so in accordance with data protection legislation.

The disclosure of your data to third parties includes:

- Accrediting Bodies – Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) – Sharing data relating to qualification recognition, quality assurance, and qualification details referenced to the National Framework of Qualifications
- External Software as A Service (SAAS) provider. Barrow has entered into commercial agreements with external software service providers to support and enhance teaching, learning and assessment and research mission of Barrow. These services include Learning Management Systems, online discussion forums, lecture and tutorial recording, research publications, authenticity checking, and feedback and assessment. This sharing is governed by a Data Processing Agreement between the organisation and Barrow.
- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection: Information may include details of your progression/completion to ensure continuance of funding
- Stripe – credit/debit card payment provider. Barrow will accept credit/debit card payment by phone. This information is processed during the phone call and is not stored by Barrow. Therefore, if payment processing is unsuccessful, you will be required to provide the information again.
- Your Web (website providers) – By simply visiting our website, you do not disclose, nor do we collect, personal data about you. The information collected about your visit is limited to technical data such as:
 - the Internet address (or IP address) of the device you used to access this website

- whether you reached the site using a search engine or if you clicked a link on another website
- the type of web-browser you used
- the type of device you used to access the Internet

We use this data for administrative and statistical purposes as well as to help us improve our website. This technical data does not provide us with the personal data of visitors to our website.

- Web Browsers via Cookies – A cookie is a small piece of data or text file sent by a website to the browser on your computer or mobile device when you are visiting a website. To measure performance, our website uses cookies on certain sections to gather data for statistical purposes only. You can modify your browser to accept or decline these cookies at any given time. Please note if some cookies are blocked, you may not be able to reach certain pages of our website.
- Revenue Commissioners
- Tenders – Details of relevant employees, tutors and company referees are shared in tender applications
- Awards – Details of relevant employees and tutors are shared in award nominations
- Regulatory Authorities – e.g. Office of the Ombudsman, Office of Data Protection Commissioner, Office of the Information Commissioner
- Legal advisors, Courts
- An Garda Síochána – prevention/detection of crime, apprehension and prosecution of offenders, protection of an individual's vital interests/welfare or safeguarding national security
- Garda Vetting Bureau – details of learners who have applied for courses that require Garda vetting
- Insurance companies for the purpose of providing insurance cover or in the event of an insurance related claim
- External Authenticators – Assessment scripts for external review, quality assurance
- Employers, voluntary and charitable organisations – To facilitate cooperative and volunteering placements of learners
- Other training providers for external training.
- Financial sponsors – if a learner's fees are paid by an external organisation (e.g. your employer, Community Employment Scheme), Barrow may share personal data relating to your attendance and academic progress
- Prospective employers for confirmation of qualification and provision of references with your consent
- Press and the media – with your consent we may share information about you for publicity and marketing purposes online, in print and on social media
- Data may be shared with reputable "data processors" for the purposes of sending communications.

7.3.14 International Data Transfers

Barrow does not transfer personal data to any recipients outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

7.3.15 Requirement to Notify Breaches

All data breaches will be recorded on our Data Breach Register. Where legally required, Barrow will report a breach to the Data Protection Commission within 72 hours of discovery. In addition, where legally required, Barrow will inform the individual whose data was subject to breach.

More information on breach notification is available in our Breach Notification policy.

7.3.16 Training

Employees must read and understand Barrow's policies on data protection as part of their induction. All employees also receive training in GDPR Awareness which must be refreshed every two years, as they have access to the secure data storage systems. This training covers protecting individuals' private data, ensuring data security, and understanding the consequences of any potential breaches of the Company's policies and procedures. The nominated Data Protection Officer receives additional training in their role under the GDPR.

7.3.17 Records

The Company keeps records of its processing activities including the purpose for the processing and retention periods in its Records Management and Retention Policy. These records will be kept up to date so that they reflect current processing activities.

7.3.18 Data Protection Compliance

Barrow Consultancy & Training Data Protection Officer is:

Norah Ryan

info@barrowlearning.ie 059 9721416

7.3.19 Learner Data Protection Privacy Notice

7.3.20 Introduction

Barrow must process the personal data of its learners to carry out its functions and manage its operations. The processing of this data is carried out in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/Data Protection Act 2018 and with Barrow's Data Protection Policy.

Barrow is a registered Data Controller and is the Data Controller for personal data we process. The purpose of this Data Protection Privacy Notice is to explain how Barrow uses personal data we collect and hold about prospective, current, and previous learners of Barrow. This notice should be read in conjunction with Barrow's Data Protection Policy and Compliance Regulations. This notice extends to all personal data as defined under Article 2(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

Why do Barrow hold data?

1. Barrow must process personal data to provide educational services through its teaching, research and associated academic and administrative activities, for example, recruitment of learners, provision of programmes of study, examinations, engaging with accrediting bodies and Government agencies such as Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Department of Education & Skills.
2. Barrow will process personal data to promote programmes of study and in these circumstances explicit consent will be sought to enable such processing.

7.3.21 Your Rights

Your rights relating to your personal data include:

- to be informed
- to request access to Personal Data held by Barrow and to have any incorrect Personal Data rectified
- To the restriction of processing concerning, you or to object to processing
- to have Personal Data erased, where legally necessary
- to data portability regarding certain automated Personal Data
- about rights within the legislation relating to "automated decision-making," Barrow does not use such processes, and they do not arise
- to restrict the use of the data we hold and the right to object to Barrow using your data – please contact the Data Protection Officer if you believe your personal data is being used unlawfully or have reason particular to your personal situation why we should not be processing it.

Requests for any of the above should be addressed by email to info@barrowlearning.ie or in writing setting out your specific request to Barrow's Data Protection Officer, Barrow Training, Unit 10 Enterprise House O'Brien Road Carlow R93 Y0Y3. Your request will be processed within 30 days of receipt. Please note, however, it may not be possible to facilitate all requests, for example, where Barrow is required by law to collect and process certain personal data including that personal information that is required of any learner of Barrow. Additionally, you can update your personal data by contacting the Quality Assurance Manager.

7.3.22 Queries, Contacts, Right of Complaint

Further information on Data Protection at Barrow may be viewed at <https://www.barrowlearning.ie/about/data-protection>. You can contact Barrow's Data Protection Officer by email or by writing to Data Protection Officer, Barrow Consultancy & Training Ltd, Unit 10 Enterprise House, O'Brien Road, Carlow, R93 Y0Y3

You have a right to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (Supervisory Authority).

While we recommend that you raise any concerns or queries with us first, you may contact that Office at info@dataprotection.ie or by writing to the Data Protection Commission, 21 Fitzwilliam Square South, Dublin 2, D02 RD28.

Full details regarding categories of personal data collected lawful bases for processing, third-party disclosures, retention arrangements, and data security measures are contained within **Section 7.3 Data Protection Policy**.

7.3.23 Review

This Privacy Notice will be reviewed and updated from time to time to consider changes in the law and the experience

7.3.24 Records Management & Retention Policy

7.3.25 Purpose

Barrow is committed to the proper and effective management of the records and data it creates, receives, captures, maintains, or otherwise processes, in all formats, during its operations, academic and administrative, in a manner which:

- is transparent, consistent, and accountable
- meets legal, regulatory, and audit requirements
- supports the efficient conduct of its business

- protects the security and integrity of Records and Data, including Personal Data
- ensures the preservation of Archives documenting its history and development

Barrow recognises that record management is a collaborative process, which calls for the support and active participation of management and staff at all stages, including design, implementation, compliance, and review. Engagement is essential to achieving the purposes of this Policy.

It is acknowledged that the greater part of Barrow's records is now held in digital formats, including records comprised of data within digital systems. Barrow commits itself to ensuring its record systems, for both digital and hard copy records, support records management processes and the purposes of this Policy.

Recognition is given to Barrow's obligations as a data controller and processor towards data subjects under Barrow's Data Protection Policy and Data Protection legislation, and to the special and limited derogations given under that legislation for processing data for research and statistical purposes, and for archival purposes in the public interest.

7.3.26 Scope

This Policy applies to all records, in all formats, created, received, maintained, or otherwise processed during the activities of Barrow including, without limitation, hard copy and digital records. Personal records unrelated to Barrow activities are not within the scope of this policy. Staff are advised to avoid maintaining such records within Barrow systems (e.g., email servers, network folders), as doing so may place them within the scope of legislation such as Freedom of Information.

7.3.27 Records Management

Records Management is the application of controls and procedures to the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records in accordance with approved procedures.

Records Management includes, but is not limited to, records classification; management of filing systems, retention scheduling; the administration of inactive records storage; management of record conversion programmes; disaster planning; vital records protection; archival preservation activities and appropriate destruction of records.

7.3.28 Ownership of Records

All records (including emails, images, photographs, databases etc.) that are created by Barrow employees in the course of their duties are the property of Barrow. All records received are in the care of Barrow and are also subject to Barrow's overall control and to the provisions of this policy.

7.3.29 Responsibilities of Barrow Employees

This policy applies to all areas and locations of Barrow and includes all departments and areas of work which form part of Barrow structure. Operational responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Manager in each Academic/Administrative area.

Where records are used by more than one department, clarity about which department has primary/final responsibility for management of the records should be established between the relevant department

The confidentiality of information within records must be always safeguarded. It is the responsibility of each department to ensure that the appropriate security measures are observed for maintaining records containing personal or other confidential information.

Once records have been retained by the creating department (in situ or offsite storage) for the requisite time as stipulated in the attached retention schedule, they must be destroyed or archived for permanent retention as set out in the schedule.

When scheduled for destruction, records must be shredded, pulped, or otherwise disposed of securely. The manner of destruction of records must be appropriate to the level of confidentiality of the records.

In the case of in-house destruction, the department/office/unit should document and retain the date and manner of destruction of records. In the case of third-party destruction, a certificate or docket confirming destruction should be received and retained as proof of destruction.

7.3.30 Definitions

Record

Records are documents in all formats, which are created/received and maintained as evidence of business completed or as a source of knowledge and which must be retained for as long as required to meet legal, administrative, financial, operational, or historic needs of Barrow.

The Freedom of Information Act, 2014, defines a 'record' as follows:

- "a book or other written or printed material in any form (including in any electronic device or in machine readable form)
- a map, plan, or drawing
- a disc, tape or other mechanical or electronic device in which data other than visual images are embodied to be capable, with or without the aid of some other mechanical or electronic equipment, of being reproduced from the disc, tape, or other device

- d) a film, disc, tape or other mechanical or electronic device in which visual images are embodied to be capable, with or without the aid of some other mechanical or electronic equipment, of being reproduced from the film, disc, tape, or other device
- e) a copy or part of anything which falls within paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d)."

Record Series

Groups of related records, which are created and used with a common purpose, for example, financial records; personnel records; examination results, committee minutes etc.

Records Classification

The procedure where records are identified and categorised for filing based on their subject and are assigned a file name for efficient retrieval.

Active Record

Active records are records, which are required and referred to constantly for current use, and which need to be retained and maintained in office space and equipment close to users.

Semi-Active Record

Semi-active records are records, which are referred to infrequently and are not required constantly for current use. Semi-active records are often removed from office space to off-site storage until they are no longer needed.

Inactive Record

Inactive records are records for which the active and semi-active retention periods have lapsed, and which are no longer required to carry out the functions for which they were created.

Permanently Valuable Records – Archives

Permanently valuable records include those with legal, operational, administrative, historical, scientific cultural and social significance.

Disposition

Disposition is the action taken about the disposal of active records, which can involve physical destruction by means of security shredding or recycling; transfer to archival storage for selective or full retention; or special disposition through a formal act of alienation from the custody of Barrow.

Records Retention Schedules

A Records Retention Schedule is a control document that describes Barrow's corporate records at a series level and indicates the length of time each series should be retained prior to final disposition; and the final disposition of each series. This document serves as the legal authorisation for the disposal of records.

7.3.31 Forms of Records

Records may exist in a variety of physical forms including:

- paper documents (written or printed matter)
- electronic records (i.e. word processing files, databases, spreadsheet files, emails, electronic data on any media etc.)
- books, drawings, and photographs
- anything on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic or mechanical means
- copies of original records

7.3.32 Electronic Records

The nature of electronic records requires that consideration be given to security, authenticity, accessibility, version control, preservation (e.g. back-up of records) and the disposal of such records.

Staff must employ the following good housekeeping practices in the management of electronic records:

- sensible and consistent naming of files and folders
- systematic indexing/classification of records
- backup of appropriate files on a regular basis
- delete records regularly (including email records) in accordance with the attached retention schedule
- restrict access to record systems (use of passwords, timed lock out of PCs, etc.)
- particularly sensitive records to be emailed to external bodies should be password protected
- produce paper copies if required to maintain the integrity of manual files

In the case of electronic records where the computer equipment is maintained by a local external IT Support company – Business IT Solutions (BITS), Barrow must formally agree backup and recovery procedures with BITS. This is to ensure that there is no ambiguity as to which office is responsible for records in the event of hardware failure or accidental deletion of records.

Where electronic records are kept on systems not maintained by BITS, a formal inventory of such records must be maintained by the head of academic/administrative area.

7.3.33 Management and Retention of Records

Records should be retained for as long as they are required to meet the legal, administrative, financial, and operational requirements of Barrow during which time, they should be filed appropriately. Following a period, as set out in the attached retention schedule, they are either archived or destroyed.

Barrow records must be sorted and filed on a basis that ensures efficient retrieval.

Appropriate filing/archiving or destruction of records is to be carried out in accordance with the retention schedule.

The retention schedule is based on a determination of legal retention requirements as defined in relevant legislation (Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Acts 2001 & 2005; Freedom of Information Act 2014; General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 etc.) as well as Barrow policies and procedures, administrative and operational requirements, historical value, and general best practice.

7.3.34 Record Retention Schedule

The records retention schedule prescribes the retention period for a range of records held by Barrow. Any department which considers that records should be retained for a longer period than that set down in Barrow retention schedule is required to consult with the Data Protection Officer to ensure that reasonable justification exists for their retention and, in the case of records which contain personal information, to ensure compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts (1988-2018).

7.3.35 Provision of Programme Information

Barrow is committed to providing accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible information about the programmes and services which they offer. Information that is published on programmes offered by Barrow include the following:

- Programme Title
- Award Type
- NFQ Level (if applicable)
- Credits (if applicable)
- Awarding body and relevant quality assurance procedures
- Programme Background
- Information relating to accreditation/validation of programme, including self-certified programmes
- Profile of potential learners
- Entry Requirements
- Transfer & Progression
- PEL Requirements
- Detailed Programme Outline
- Teaching and Learning Mechanisms and Relevant Supports
- Assessment Information
- Tutor Details
- Learner Testimonials
- Programme Schedules
- Programme Pricing

All programme information is reviewed and approved by the Quality Assurance Manager prior to publication to ensure accuracy, consistency, and compliance with organisational and regulatory requirements. Information is reviewed periodically and updated where programme, regulatory, technological, or quality assurance changes occur, ensuring that prospective learners are provided with accurate and current information at all stages of the learner journey. Some of the information above is provided to potential learners and other stakeholders through the following channels:

- Barrow website www.barrowlearning.ie
- Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok and LinkedIn

Where programmes are delivered through blended or online learning, published information also includes details regarding delivery mode, learner workload, digital platform requirements, assessment arrangements, learner support services, accessibility supports, and learner expectations relating to online participation.

Information published by Barrow is presented in a clear, accessible, and learner-centred format. Reasonable efforts are made to ensure that publicly available information and digital communications are accessible to all learners.

7.3.36 Publication of Information

Barrow publishes the following information with respect to the quality of its programmes:

- Programmatic Review Reports (Self-Evaluation and Reports of the Expert Panel and/or relevant awarding body)
- Institutional Review Reports (Self-Evaluation and Reports of the Expert Panel and/or relevant awarding body)
- Learner/Client Testimonial

Published quality assurance information is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains accurate, current, and accessible to learners and other stakeholders.

Chapter 8. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

This chapter relates to the following Quality Assurance guidelines from Barrow's accrediting bodies:

- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 11)

8.1.1 Policy Statement

Barrow is committed to the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, review, and enhancement of its programmes and quality assurance procedures. Monitoring and review activities are evidence-based and informed by learner feedback, tutor feedback, assessment outcomes, programme performance indicators, stakeholder engagement, and external quality assurance processes. Findings arising from monitoring and review activities are used to support continuous improvement and to ensure that programmes remain current, effective, accessible, and aligned with learner, industry, and regulatory requirements. Monitoring and review activities for blended learning provision include evaluation of learner engagement, participation, progression, retention, accessibility, learner support effectiveness, assessment integrity, and the performance of digital learning environments. Findings are used to inform programme enhancement, staff development, resource planning, and strategic decision-making.

8.1.2 Procedures for the Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

Barrow has a cycle of reviews and evaluations to ensure regular academic quality assurance and to allow continued improvement for each of its programmes.

Ongoing monitoring is conducted through a combination of internal programme monitoring, annual programme review, learner and tutor feedback, learning analytics, assessment monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and periodic external evaluation. Together, these processes provide assurance regarding programme quality, learner achievement, and the effectiveness of blended learning provision.

Monitoring activities for blended learning provision also include review of learner engagement data, attendance at synchronous sessions, participation within the Learning Management System, assessment engagement, learner support usage, accessibility considerations, and learner experience within online and blended learning environments. Action plans arising from Annual Programme Review Reports are monitored by the Programme Review Committee and progress is reviewed through the organisation's quality assurance and governance structures.

8.1.3 Internal Programme Monitoring

Evaluation Method	Stakeholders Involved	Frequency	Content Reviewed
End of course learner evaluation forms	Learners	Completion of each programme delivery	Tutor delivery, programme objectives, resources, supports, facilities, assessment, and customer service. Feedback received through Microsoft forms from each learner.
End of Course Tutor Evaluation	Tutors	Completion of each programme delivery	Training venue, programme delivery, timing, customer service/support, learner issues, assessment
External Authenticator Reports	External Authenticator	Twice a year	MIPLO, learner attainment, assessment, learner evidence
Informal discussion and correspondence with learners and tutors	Learners, tutors	Once per course	All aspects of programme content and provision
Management Meetings	Board of Management, Quality Assurance Manager, Training & TEL Manager	Quarterly	All aspects of programme content and provision, including assessment rates, completion rates, grades, statistics, and trends
In-house Clients Management	Training & TEL Manager	Once per course	All aspects of programme content and provision
LMS analytics and learner engagement reports	QA Manager / TEL Manager	Quarterly	Attendance, participation, learner engagement, completion activity, learner progression and blended learning effectiveness

8.3.1 Learning Analytics and Learner Engagement Monitoring

Barrow utilises learning analytics generated through the Learning Management System and synchronous delivery platforms to support the monitoring of learner engagement and progression. Data monitored may include learner logins, participation in learning activities, attendance at synchronous sessions, assessment submission patterns, completion of learning resources, and learner communication activity. This information is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Manager and Training and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager to identify trends, evaluate programme effectiveness, and support early intervention where learners may be at risk of disengagement. Learning analytics are considered alongside learner feedback, assessment outcomes, and tutor observations to provide a comprehensive evaluation of programme performance.

8.3.2 Changes to a Programme

The Programme Review Committee is responsible for conducting internal monitoring activities. They also ensure that areas are identified that require programme modifications and improvements. The External QA Committee reviews proposed programme modifications and determined whether changes constitute major or minor modifications in accordance with awarding body requirements. Any major changes or modifications require QQI approval. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Addition of modules
- Change to credit weightings
- Changes to learning outcomes
- Change to programme title

Any minor changes or modifications are approved by the External QA Committee.

Minor modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Changes that don't impact on the learning outcomes
- Changes/updates in assessment brief
- Update of learner resources

8.3.2.1 Annual Programme Review Report

The Annual Programme Review Report is completed by the Programme Review Committee.

The Annual Programme Review Report provides a structured evaluation of programme performance and identifies actions to support continuous improvement, learner success, quality enhancement, and ongoing compliance with regulatory and awarding body requirements. Sources for this report include:

- a) Learner Evaluations
- b) Tutor Evaluations
- c) Programme Descriptor and Tutor note
- d) Programme resources
- e) New relevant legislation
- f) Scheme of works
- g) Attendance records
- h) Daily reports
- i) Retention rates
- j) Completion rates
- k) Certification rates
- l) Grade distribution and benchmarking
- m) QQI analytics and benchmarking
- n) Course meeting records
- o) IV Panel reports
- p) EA Panel reports
- q) RAP minutes
- r) QQI Validation reports
- s) Any other relevant reports or feedback from external experts or stakeholders

The Annual Programme Review Report includes a summary of findings, identification of strengths and areas for improvement, an action plan with assigned responsibilities and timelines, and a review of progress against actions arising from previous review cycles. Progress against agreed actions is monitored by the Programme Review Committee and reported through governance structures.

8.3.2.2 External Programme Review

This is a formal evaluation of our validated programmes by our various accrediting bodies. It is carried out on a five-year cycle. This project is managed by the Quality Assurance Manager.

This review has 3 stages:

- Internal review
- External review
- Final overall review by Barrow

8.4.1 Internal Review

Formation of Programme Review Team	This team is appointed by the External QA Committee. This process is the responsibility of and is co-ordinated by the Quality Assurance Manager who will develop a project plan with timelines, key tasks, and review meetings.
Consultation with Relevant Stakeholders	Relevant stakeholders may include learners, graduates, tutors, employers, industry representatives, external quality assurance personnel, accrediting bodies, and other relevant stakeholders.
Review of Collected Data	Feedback from stakeholders above is reviewed along with annual programme review reports. The data is critically analysed to establish to what extent the programme meets the accrediting body validation criteria. Recommendations and findings are presented to the Board of Management prior to the completion of the Self-Evaluation Report.
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	This report is compiled by the Quality Assurance Manager. It will provide the expert panel with an overview of developments over a 5-year period. The External QA Committee will approve the final report before submission to relevant accrediting body. The Self-Evaluation Report includes analysis of programme performance data, learner achievement, quality indicators, stakeholder feedback, blended learning effectiveness, and actions arising from previous review cycles.

8.4.2 External Review

Expert Panel Formation	An expert panel is formed by the accrediting body with experts from relevant fields of learning.
Site Visit	This allows the panel to review necessary documentation and meet relevant personnel. An agenda is agreed in advance.
Panel Review and Feedback	Formal report is based on combined review and evaluation of SER and panel visit and will contain a recommendation in respect of the continuing validation of the programme.

8.4.3 Final Overall Review by Barrow Training

Review by Barrow Training

The Board of Management reviews the findings and recommendations arising from the external review process and oversees the implementation of agreed actions. Responsibility for academic recommendations and quality enhancement actions remains with the appropriate academic and quality assurance governance structures. A formal response will be submitted to the accrediting body.

8.5 Reporting and Governance

Findings arising from programme monitoring, annual programme review, self-evaluation, external review, learner feedback, assessment outcomes, and quality assurance activities are reported through the organisation's governance structures, including the Programme Review Committee, Internal Quality Panel, External QA Committee, and Board of Management, as appropriate. These processes support organisational oversight, accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous quality enhancement.

Quality indicators relating to blended learning provision, including learner engagement, retention, completion, learner satisfaction, assessment outcomes, academic integrity incidents, and accessibility considerations, are reviewed periodically through governance structures to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous enhancement.