

## **Terms of Reference for the Standards and Frameworks Panel (revised September 2020)**

The Standards and Frameworks Panel works on behalf of the Devolved Administrations (DAs) in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It ensures that National Occupational Standards (NOS), Apprenticeships and Qualification Products meet the requirements of relevant quality criteria and that employers and relevant stakeholders (where applicable) in each nation have been adequately consulted.

Standards and Frameworks Panel members will receive quarterly written & verbal reports of outcomes and decisions from the NOS Governance Group (NOS GG), following its meetings.

### **Members of the Panel are responsible for:**

- Monitoring and ensuring that NOS being produced meet the requirements of the NOS Quality Criteria (whether contracted or self-funded).
- Making recommendations on the format and style of the specification for NOS.
- Reviewing annually the quality criteria for NOS development and other products (Apprenticeships and Scottish Qualification Products) as appropriate.
- Monitoring and ensuring that Apprenticeship Frameworks and Qualification Products being produced meet relevant quality requirements.
- Identifying and proposing solutions to common issues identified through the Quality Assurance (QA) arrangements.
- Assuring the three DAs that the QA arrangements are robust and operating effectively.
- Recommending approval of final NOS in line with the individual requirements of the three nations.
- Reporting to the NOS GG meetings on behalf of the three governments.
- Resolving issues on NOS approval disputes and, where relevant, escalating issues to the NOS GG, in line with the NOS Governance Conflict Resolution Procedure.
- Producing an annual performance report for the NOS GG and making recommendations for the next phase of QA arrangements.
- Contributing to and prioritising a demand statement of NOS products for subsequent commissioning.
- Supporting the evaluation of mini-competition bids, in conjunction with SDS procurement.
- Supporting and contributing to project inception calls with suppliers.
- Advising on NOS database functionality, usability and content and making recommendations for consideration by the NOS GG.

### **Members and/or their representatives will:**

- Give an initial response to NOS submissions within the agreed 10 working days. Requests for further information will restart the 10 working days from the point where re-submission occurs
- Approve Parts A and B submitted by suppliers for NOS review or development.
- Review the content of the NOS to ensure that they are fit for purpose, can be incorporated into SVQs and other qualifications and are capable of being assessed.
- Review the Terms of Reference and membership of the Panel on an ongoing basis.

**Frequency of meetings:**

Virtual monthly meetings will be held, with the Panel meeting in person by exception, if and when required. The approval of NOS business will be carried out electronically using the NOS database.

**Membership of the Standards and Frameworks Panel:**

- Skills Development Scotland, SQA Accreditation (Scotland), SHELL (Welsh Government), CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland), Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland). Skills Development Scotland chairs Panel meetings and provides secretariat.