



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## Memorandum of Understanding between

the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)  
and  
the Department for the Economy (DfE)

1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018



# Memorandum of Understanding between the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Department for the Economy

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## PREAMBLE

The Department for the Economy (DfE) will invite the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) to provide inspection and evaluation services based on an agreed annual work programme and assumptions about levels of resources. It will be the responsibility of ETI to determine its methods of working, and to provide independent reports and other advice.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The memorandum sets out a framework for co-operation between DfE and ETI. It is intended to clarify the respective roles of DfE and ETI and, while it is not a statutory or contractually enforceable document, ETI and DfE agree to abide by its terms.
2. It is agreed that ETI and DfE should work together in the best interests of all learners, sharing an open and transparent relationship which recognises and respects one another's discrete roles and responsibilities. This necessarily implies ongoing dialogue and exchange of papers on matters of mutual interest.

## STATUS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

3. ETI's professional evaluations about the quality of further education, work-based learning, employment programmes and other training provision will be made and published independently of DfE. ETI provides inspection services and information about the quality of education and training provision to DfE. ETI will evaluate the impact of these services

for the purpose of promoting improvement in the overall quality of education and training provision and of informing policy discussions and decisions. Evidence from inspection may also be used to assure Government and the public of the quality and standard of services.

4. ETI will provide, when requested by DfE, an independent, professional evaluation of the effectiveness of existing or proposed policies and advise DfE accordingly. ETI will plan and implement its programme of work, including policy advice, through a Service Level Agreement (SLA), agreed with DfE. From time-to-time, DfE may invite ETI to carry out special assignments/inspections/evaluations, as appropriate. If necessary, and in mutual agreement between DfE and ETI, this may involve the cancellation or postponement of assignments/inspections/evaluations which may already be included in the SLA operational at that time.
5. Inspection provides a key source of up-to-date information on the quality of existing provision and services, and DfE may seek appropriate advice from ETI when new policies are being developed or consideration is being given to major changes in existing policies. When DfE is evaluating policy, or engaging with new contracted providers for the first time, baseline inspections and/or the monitoring of progress of initiatives may be undertaken as part of the annual agreed work programme of ETI.

## WORK PROGRAMME AND STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

6. ETI will develop its work programme - embodied in its Business Plan - as part of its SLA with DfE.
7. By a mutually agreed date, DfE will prepare a prioritised list of bids for ETI time for inspections, evaluations and support for policy development.

## SHARING VIEWS AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES, ETC

8. Bilateral contact between the Assistant Chief Inspector and the Managing Inspector for further education and work-based learning and the appropriate grade 5(s) and the Quality Improvement Adviser in DfE will occur regularly in order to progress specific issues, supported by the circulation of relevant internal papers where possible.
9. Where appropriate, and as agreed in the business planning process, DfE and ETI will involve the other's officials in internal and external committees, working groups, project management boards, etc. ETI will act as an independent observer to any such group to ensure that its subsequent inspection/evaluative role is not compromised. In participating in discussions at a formative stage, ETI will respect fully all confidences, will seek to comment only in ways geared to improving quality of provision and will base its advice on the best evidence available to it through its inspection and evaluation programmes. ETI's participation in working groups does not take the place of formal consultation between ETI and DfE on draft proposals.

## INSPECTION FRAMEWORKS

10. ETI will liaise with DfE regarding revisions to inspection models and frameworks, related strategies and accompanying guidance. Where appropriate, ETI will also consult other customers and key stakeholders about such revisions.

## PUBLICATION OF REPORTS AND ADVICE

11. The Chief Inspector will present to DfE a written, bi-ennial report (CI Report). In preparing the report, ETI will provide DfE with a draft and will note and respond to any comments received regarding matters of factual accuracy. The report will then be placed on the ETI website, along with an accompanying press release.

12. ETI has the responsibility to publish inspection and evaluation reports, on its website. Prior to publication on its web site, the ETI will provide the DfE Quality improvement Team with a final draft of all inspection and evaluation reports. The draft will principally be for information and for briefing of Ministers, but also permits the identification of factual error before final issue and publication. Drafts will be supplied in electronic format. ETI will request any comments within one week<sup>1</sup>; if no comments are returned it will be assumed that there are no issues. For further education, work-based learning and other training inspections, the inspection report will also be sent concurrently to the organisation in question to check for factual accuracy. All information shared is on a confidential basis and should not be made available to the press or public sector prior to publication/announcement by ETI. In some circumstances, ETI may simultaneously seek comment from other public bodies. ETI retains the independent right to publish on the basis of its inspection evidence and findings. Copies of the final version of reports discussed in this paragraph, accompanied by an appropriate submission, will be sent electronically to DfE on the day of publication.
13. Where appropriate, DfE will provide ETI with copies of DfE reports/publications/policies concerning ETI for comment at least four weeks ahead of scheduled publication, and a copy of the final version before publication.

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<sup>1</sup> *Two weeks for evaluation reports*

## REPORTING TO MINISTERS

14. ETI will provide advice to the DfE Minister on request; the Chief Inspector may request a meeting with the Minister, as and when appropriate.

## PARLIAMENTARY, PRESS AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

15. DfE and ETI officials will co-operate to ensure that they provide appropriate and timely support for Ministers and others conducting Assembly business, including legislation. DfE and ETI will keep one another informed of their plans for media announcements.

## COMPLAINTS

16. Complaints about the work of ETI are a matter for the Chief Inspector to deal with in line with ETI's published Complaints Procedure. Any complaints about DfE or their staff, received by ETI staff in the course of their duties, will be referred to DfE, making it clear to the complainant that these are a matter for DfE. Likewise, any complaints about ETI staff, received by DfE staff, will be referred to ETI, making it clear they are a matter for ETI. Any difficulties in the operation and interpretation of this memorandum will be dealt with by senior officials of DfE and ETI, at grade 3 level. If, following consideration at this level, it remains unresolved it shall be subject to final resolution at Permanent Secretary level within DfE and the Department of Education.

## REDUCING BUREAUCRACY

17. DfE and ETI will continue, with other key stakeholders, to seek to minimise bureaucratic burdens placed on organisations across the education and training sectors. ETI will seek to reduce the business associated with inspection where it is possible to do so without jeopardising the quality and effectiveness of the inspection process.

## EXCHANGE OF DATA

18. DfE and ETI will work together to agree common data requirements and to share relevant data so that DfE receives regular and timely advice about inspection findings and so that ETI has timely access to performance and other data to support its responsibilities, to minimise data collection burdens on those being inspected, and to remove duplication of requests for data.

## OTHER DOCUMENTS

19. Within the framework of this Memorandum, DfE and ETI will agree separate arrangements for such matters, including protocols for ETI working with other Inspectorates and information access and exchange. Such agreements may include third parties.

## REVIEW

20. DfE and ETI may agree at any time to make amendments to this Memorandum. In addition, DfE and ETI will review the Memorandum annually and update it in the light of experience of its operation in practice.



**Noelle Buick**  
Chief Inspector  
Education and Training  
Inspectorate



**Eugene Rooney**  
Deputy Secretary, Skills and  
Business Development Group  
Department for the Economy

Date: 10 August 2017

Date: 14 August 2017









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