

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

Home Office (Tier 4) Educational Oversight Inspections

Frequently Asked Questions

July 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Organisations are also asked to refer to the Home Office guidance¹ for information on the arrangements for Educational Oversight

1. What is the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)?

The ETI is part of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and provides independent inspection services for the department and other government departments, including the Department for the Economy (DfE), the Department for Communities (DfC), and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). It also carries out inspections in agreement with a number of external bodies including the Criminal Justice Inspection.

The key purpose of the ETI is to promote improvement in the interest of all learners through the development and use of effective quality improvement systems by education and training organisations, which are used to underpin a high quality education provision and raise standards and achievements. The ETI carry out inspections across a range of statutory, voluntary and community and private organisations including pre-schools, primary and post-primary schools, further education colleges, private training providers, youth and initial teacher education institutions.

The ETI has been approved by the Home Office to provide Educational Oversight in Northern Ireland (for provision up to and including level 3 only).

2. When does the Northern Ireland application process for (Tier 4) Educational Oversight inspections begin?

For organisations that have already been inspected, applications can now be made for full educational oversight inspections or annual monitoring review inspections in 2020/21. For organisations that haven't previously been inspected, applications can now be made for full educational oversight inspections in 2021.

3. Are details of the inspection process for (Tier 4) Educational Oversight inspections available?

The inspection framework and other documentation and arrangements that relate to (Tier 4) Educational Oversight and annual monitoring review inspections are available on the ETI website² and in the organisation InsPIRE portal³. Please consult the website/portal for all the latest available documentation.

¹ [Sponsor a Tier 4 Student – Guidance for Educators](#)

² [Home Office – Support Material](#)

³ When inspections restart post Covid-19, all will be largely paperless through the ETI InsPIRE system. Each organisation will have access to an InsPIRE portal, which is always available. Upon notification of an inspection the organisation's portal will link to a live inspection area specific to the inspection activity, which will provide access to all relevant guidance and materials, a repository for uploaded materials, along with communication access to the Reporting Inspector. The inspection team can access the live inspection area through a Virtual Inspection Room in InsPIRE.

4. Is ETI the only Educational Oversight body in Northern Ireland?

In Northern Ireland, the ETI carry out inspections on any education provision up to and including level 3 only. Inspections above level 3 (higher education) are carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education.

5. How does an organisation in Northern Ireland know whether to apply to the ETI or the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education?

If most of the qualifications offered by an organisation are up to and including level 3, including English language programmes, application should be made to the ETI. For those organisations whose education provision is predominantly higher education focused (i.e. level 4 and above) application for (Tier 4) Educational Oversight should be made directly to the [QAA](#).

6. How soon after applying will the ETI inspect the organisation?

The ETI will contact the organisation as soon as possible after an application has been made to discuss inspection arrangements.

7. Will the ETI provide guidance on the inspection process?

Yes. All relevant information and guidance are available on the ETI website and in the organisation InsPIRE portal. The reporting inspector (RI) responsible for the inspection will contact the organisation, shortly after the application process is complete to notify them that an inspection is to take place, and to make arrangements to carry out a pre-inspection visit. During the visit the RI will talk to management and relevant staff about what happens during and after an inspection and will arrange for any information or data needed by the ETI to be submitted prior to the inspection.

8. What will be the focus of the ETI inspections?

The focus will be on determining the overall quality of educational provision provided by the organisation. Further details of the inspection process and the inspection framework, including the quality indicators used for inspection, are published on the ETI website and in the organisation InsPIRE portal. As part of the inspection process, the organisation is asked to undertake a self-evaluation of its provision, based on the quality indicators contained in the inspection framework, and submit it to the ETI prior to the inspection. The ETI will provide a report on its findings from the inspection to the organisation inspected and will publish it on the ETI website (www.etini.gov.uk). Under the Home Office guidelines, organisations will also have to submit a financial sustainability management and governance check proforma as part of their application.

9. Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at Risk will form part of the inspection process. If the arrangements are not sufficiently robust and do not comply fully with the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, the Home Office will be informed and relevant information may be shared with other relevant agencies⁴.

10. Will there be a charge for the inspections?

Yes. Further details on the charges are published on the ETI website (see footnote 2) and in the organisation InsPIRE portal.

11. Does the ETI normally charge for inspections?

No. Education Oversight inspections and annual monitoring review inspections are outside the formal inspection process normally carried by the ETI. As a result, an inspection fee will be charged. Information on fees is available on the website and in the organisation InsPIRE portal.

12. What is an Annual Monitoring Review Inspection?

The Home Office also requires the ETI to carry out an annual monitoring review of the quality of the provision offered by any organisation which has attained Educational Oversight. The review takes place over three days and involves a desk-based exercise and a one-day visit to the organisation. A short report will be published at the end of the inspection. An application form and information on the fees payable for an Annual Monitoring Review inspection are available on the ETI website and in the organisation InsPIRE portal.

13. What is a Quality Improvement Planning Inspection?

This is a risk-based inspection for established organisations that have had two full education oversight inspections and demonstrated a high level of capacity for improvement.

14. Who in the ETI do I contact for further information?

Organisations are asked to contact Inspection Services Team at the address below, to inform ETI of their intention to apply for Educational Oversight.

⁴ The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland and AccessNI.

Ref: Home Office
Inspection Services Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
Co Down
BT19 7PR

Tel: 028 9127 9726
Fax: 028 9127 9721
Email: eti@education-ni.gov.uk

15. Why contact Inspection Services Team?

The ETI seek to find out how many organisations intend to apply for Educational Oversight inspections and annual monitoring review inspections, which will provide important information for inspection scheduling. Organisations will be asked initially to indicate an intention to apply, but there is a possibility that they may choose not to progress with a full application at a later stage.