



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
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Memorandum of Understanding between

the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)

and

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
(DAERA)

1st April 2017 - 31st March 2018

Memorandum of Understanding between ETI and DAERA

INTRODUCTION

1. DAERA is responsible for the provision of education and training in agriculture and related subjects¹ in Northern Ireland and with the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) provides courses for full-time and part-time participants up to degree level. CAFRE provides a range of courses including those relating to: agriculture, environmental conservation, equine, farriery, floristry, food, food supply management, horticulture, land-based engineering and technology, rural and countryside management and veterinary nursing.
2. The ETI is a unitary Inspectorate responsible for the provision of inspection services and information about the quality of education, youth and training to a range of government departments and agencies.
3. The ETI is led by the Chief Inspector who is responsible directly to the Permanent Secretary at DE for the management of ETI and is accountable to the Minister for Education, through the Chief Inspector's published, bi-ennial report, for the activities undertaken in that period.
4. The memorandum sets out a framework to govern the working relationship between ETI and DAERA, and to clarify and formalise the respective roles of each organisation. The memorandum is not a statutory or contractually enforceable document, and is not intended to constrain ETI to operate only within those areas for which it is currently responsible, nor does it limit the power of the Minister with responsibility for agriculture and rural development in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, ETI and DAERA agree to abide by its terms.
5. It is agreed that ETI and DAERA 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 dialogue involving the Chief Inspector at Ministerial, Permanent Secretary and senior management levels. ETI also maintains working relationships with other government departments and public bodies which are not the subject of this memorandum. On matters of mutual interest, ETI and DAERA officials will keep one another informed of planned correspondence and similar communication with other government departments and public bodies, as the situation demands, to help ensure mutual understanding and, where relevant, effective joint working.

¹ Section 5, *The Agriculture Act (NI) 1949 (as amended)*

STATUS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

6. To maintain the effectiveness and integrity of its service, ETI's status and accountability framework must reflect the need for inspectors' professional evaluations about the quality of education and training provision to be made and published independently of DAERA and its Minister.
7. The ETI will evaluate the quality of the education and training provided by CAFRE, for the purpose of promoting improvement and to inform DAERA about the effectiveness of its education and training policies and provision and to inform future policy decisions. Evidence from inspections may also be used to assure Government and the public of the quality and standard of services provided by CAFRE.
8. On education and training policy initiatives, DAERA may invite ETI to provide an independent professional assessment of the effectiveness of the existing or any proposed new policy, and ETI will advise DAERA accordingly. ETI will plan and implement its annual programme of work, operating through a Service Level Agreement, agreed in advance with the DAERA Deputy Secretary, Service Delivery Group. The Minister for agriculture and rural development or Permanent Secretary at DAERA may, from time-to-time, invite ETI to carry out special assignments, as appropriate.
9. Inspection provides a key source of up-to-date information on the condition of existing education and training provision and services, and DAERA may draw on this source in support of evidence-informed policy making, by seeking appropriate advice from ETI when new policies are being developed or consideration is being given to major changes in existing policies. When DAERA is evaluating policy, consideration will be given to baseline inspection visits and the monitoring of progress of initiatives. DAERA will agree with the Chief Inspector, the nature and extent of ETI involvement, and consequent financial and human resource implications, as part of the annual agreed work programme of ETI and the costing of planned implementation.

FINANCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY

10. The ETI is subject to the normal financial disciplines which apply to all who work within the public service in Northern Ireland, including the need to ensure financial regularity, propriety and value for money, and to operate within running cost controls as determined by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). ETI is subject to audit by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.
11. The work of ETI will be costed in accordance with a system of charges defined in the Service Level Agreement.

WORK PROGRAMME AND STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

12. The ETI will develop a part of its annual work programme – embodied in its Business Plan – as part of its Service Level Agreement with DAERA.

SHARING VIEWS AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES, ETC

13. A representative of ETI will meet separately with DAERA personnel at least once a year, to share views and identify common priorities.

INSPECTION FRAMEWORKS

14. The ETI will conduct inspections in accordance with the quality indicators set out in the Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF). It will consult DAERA about revisions to inspection models and frameworks and accompanying guidance.

PUBLICATION OF REPORTS AND ADVICE

15. Where appropriate, the ETI has the responsibility to publish inspection reports and other reports, including making them available on its website. ETI will send a final draft of all reports to the appropriate person(s) at DAERA and to the appropriate supplier or organisation(s) being inspected. The draft will be principally for information and for briefing of Ministers, but also permits the identification of factual error. Drafts will be supplied in electronic format. ETI will request any comments within five working days; if no comments are returned it will be assumed that there are no issues. 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 or departments, for example where an inspection of CAFRE includes aspects of the curriculum funded by other departments, such as work-based learning and/or apprenticeships provision (Department for the Economy) 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 the relevant senior departmental officials on the day before publication.

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 DAERA or their staff, received by ETI staff in the course of their duties, will be referred to DAERA, making it clear to the complainant that these are a matter for DAERA.

Likewise, any complaints about ETI staff, received by DAERA 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 initially at Grade 3 level within DAERA and ETI, with relevant Permanent Secretaries providing final arbitration and resolution as required.

EXCHANGE OF DATA

17. The ETI and DAERA will work together to agree common data requirements and to share relevant data so that DAERA receives regular and timely advice about inspection findings and 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

18. Within the framework of this Memorandum, DAERA 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

19. The DAERA and ETI may agree at any time to make amendments to this Memorandum. In addition, DAERA 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



Norman Fulton
Deputy Secretary
Food and Farming Group
Department of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs

Date: 20 July 2017

Date: 27 / 7 / 2017

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