AUDIT TOOL
'Gateway document'

Developed as part of the project "Validation of a Steiner-Waldorf teacher education programme: auditing the programme", funded by ESCalate

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Introduction

This document is the first outcome of a development project, funded by ESCalate, to audit the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School's Teacher Training Programme for possible validation by the University of Stirling. The purpose of the project was to develop an audit tool that would allow potential partners in a collaborative agreement to decide whether any particular educational programme offered outside HEIs would be suitable for validation by a particular HEI. This document, however, is for generic use, by any Higher Education institution and any potential partnership organisation.

With the continuing expansion of Higher Education (HE) in the UK and the concomitant pressure on resources, HE institutions (HEIs) are increasingly looking at other ways to extend their provision and, wherever possible, increase income. One possibility for achieving this is to validate already existing educational provision of organisations external to the HEI. Furthermore, with the increased emphasis on lifelong learning and learning for work, external organisations that offer educational programmes have come under increasing pressure from their students to offer nationally recognised credit for study, so that students are able to progress onto higher levels of study and evidence their learning and qualifications within the global job market. One option for such organisations is to link with HEIs and work towards the validation of their programmes against national credit frameworks.

The validation process consists of negotiations between a HEI and a potential partner organisation in order to establish a Collaborative Agreement. Validation means that the HEI formally acknowledges the academic value and quality of an educational programme by the partner institution and agrees to award formal credit to students who successfully complete the external programme. Validation should be clearly distinguished from accreditation, which generally refers to the recognition of an educational programme by a professional body, such as the General Teaching Council or the Chartered Institute of Accountants.

Thus, validation provides a potential 'win-win' situation because it:
• broadens the HEI's course offer
• increases access to HE through the award of nationally recognised credit
• raises the value of external provision to students
• raises the status of external provision of partner organisations
• provides a possible source of revenue for HEIs
• may impact positively on recruitment in the partner organisations
• is cost-effective for the HEI, because most aspects of course design and operations will usually be the responsibility of the partner organisation
• is cost-effective for the partner organisation, because many aspects of quality assurance can be subsumed under those already in place in the HEI

**Key concept:** Validation refers to the formal recognition by an Institution of Higher Education of an educational programme delivered by another organisation, through the award of formal credit to students who successfully complete that programme. For example, the University of Stirling has validated a Probationer Training course at the Scottish Police College, so that students who successfully complete this programme are awarded a Certificate in Higher Education from the University of Stirling.

This is distinct from accreditation, which refers to the formal recognition of an educational programme by a professional regulating organisation. For example, the University of Stirling itself offers a programme of Initial Teacher Education, which is accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland as a programme which qualifies those who successfully complete it to teach in a secondary school in Scotland.

However, there is a risk to the HEI, associated with the validation of external programmes, namely the decreased control over academic quality by the HEI of courses on offer in other organisations.
Quality in HE is assured through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which publishes a Code for the Assurance of Quality and Standards in Higher Education. This Code is divided in 10 sections, each dealing with a particular aspect of HE provision. Each Section contains a number of general principles or precepts, followed by more specific precepts. The precepts are followed by brief explanations of their meaning.

The Code was written after extensive consultation with HEIs and identification of good practice across the HE sector. It does not lay down policies, procedures and practices but accepts that the precepts can be applied in many different ways. Thus, the particular policies, procedures and practices of HEIs in the UK vary across the country. Quality in HE is therefore not synonymous with uniformity. It is important that both partners in a validation agreement keep this in mind.

**About the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (from www.qaa.ac.uk)**

"Our mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. We do this by working with higher education institutions to define academic standards and quality, and we carry out and publish reviews against these standards. We were established in 1997 and are an independent body funded by subscriptions from UK universities and colleges of higher education, and through contracts with the main UK higher education funding bodies."

For the purpose of validation, HEIs will want to make sure that any external programmes they validate comply with the QAA Code, as well as with their own specific policies, procedures and practices. The potential partner organisation, who delivers the programme, needs to be able to evaluate to what extent it is compliant with the QAA Code. However, this process of initial evaluation may seem insurmountable, given that the QAA code contains a total of 173 precepts!
To help them overcome this initial hurdle, both HEIs and potential partner organisations need a user-friendly tool to enable them to make an initial assessment of the extent to which external programmes might lend themselves for validation by the HEI. This document was designed to provide that.

**How we designed this 'gateway' document**

The project team consisted of two members of academic staff at the University of Stirling and two members of teaching staff at the Edinburgh Steiner Teacher Training Institute (ESTTI, formerly ERSS TTC), which is part of the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School. These met regularly to discuss progress. In addition, about halfway through the project and again near the end of the project, we consulted extensively with an academic member of staff from another University, where a programme similar to that of ESTTI is currently offered. Finally, application of the tool to the ESTTI programme generated feedback on its usefulness and resulted in the brief case examples included in the audit tool.

**The audit tool**

The project specifically looked at programme validation only. So those sections of the Code which address other aspects of the validation process, such as the nature of the potential partner organisation, were excluded from the audit tool. As this was also a very small project (140 hours over six months), we decided to select just three sections of the Code, relevant to programme validation. Therefore, the audit tool became a ‘Gateway Document’, providing an entry into the process of validation, rather than a comprehensive tool covering every aspect of validation. It has the purpose of showing potential partners the way forward. The tool thus offers guidance on the first steps towards validation. The tool should prove useful in identifying initial areas for development of a programme and in developing an understanding of how to interpret the rest of the QAA code in order to audit the programme comprehensively.
Validation Process

HEIs may already have in place policies and procedures that govern the establishment of collaborative agreements with other educational providers. These policies and procedures will have been designed to comply with Section 2 of the QAA Code. HEIs will also have policies and procedures in place to address all the other sections of the Code. It is therefore crucial that HEIs point potential collaborators in the direction of their specifically relevant policies, procedures and quality framework.

For example, the University of Stirling has its own internal “Academic Quality and Standards Handbook” (document 2 below) which shows how it has interpreted and applied the QAA Code. Potential partner institutions may have their own procedures in place for assuring quality of academic standards, some or all of which may well be already compliant with the Code. However, while some HEIs would consider this to be acceptable for setting up a collaborative agreement, others may prefer or insist that the partner adopt some of the specific policies and practices current in the HEI. This would need to be clarified as part of the negotiations, so that both the HEI and the potential partner are clear about what is required.

For example, the University of Stirling has validated a Certificate in Higher Education (Policing). Most courses offered by the University are modular, but the Police course is not. This was considered acceptable within the QAA Code and also by the University of Stirling, despite the difference.

Key documents required for validation negotiations

The key document on which this tool is based is the


This is the overarching framework for academic quality assurance in HE. The Code should be used in conjunction with the audit tool at all times, because the tool itself is not comprehensive. In order to use the audit tool effectively, further key documents
may have to be obtained, specific to the collaboration envisaged. For example, for the validation of the ESTTI programme by the University of Stirling, the following additional documents are required:

2. Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF)
3. University of Stirling quality Handbook
4. Benchmarks for initial teacher education
5. Programme Validation Framework document, as used in validation of Police course

Document (2) outlines the credit framework for Scotland and similar frameworks are in existence in the rest of the UK. Therefore, the appropriate credit framework, applicable to the specific partners, would be required. Document (3) provides essentially an insight into how the University of Stirling has implemented The Code. Each HEI will have its own quality framework, based on the Code. The relevant subject benchmarks (4) may also be needed, depending on the subject area and the nature of the course. As the ESTTI programme does not seek accreditation at this stage, but validation only, the benchmark statement for initial teacher education were used as a point of reference only. Document (5) was an informal list of headings used for the preparation of validation documents by the Scottish Police College.

Reference to documents 1, 2 and 4 can be found on the QAA website, whereas the internal quality handbook or comparable documentation (3, 5) will need to be provided by the particular HEI.

The following section contains the actual audit tool, providing a restatement of the selected original precepts in the form of questions, explanation, interpretation and some short case examples of how we applied those precepts to the ESTTI programme.
AUDIT TOOL

QAA Code SECTION 6: Assessment of Students

The section on Assessment was chosen because assessment is an essential element in the awarding of credit and qualifications. Any institution of Higher Education will wish to satisfy itself that the courses they validate treat students fairly and assess them in a rigorous, valid and reliable manner. The key elements in this are transparency of procedures, validity of assessment criteria and reliability of grading procedures. Furthermore, assessment cannot simply be an afterthought to programme design. It needs to form an integral part of the course and be developed in such a way as to satisfy both the requirements for the qualification and for maximising student learning and progress. This generally means that course designers will need to be quite explicit about what the intended learning outcomes are and how these will be assessed.

This section of the Code has 19 precepts in all, covering key aspects of assessment design, implementation, review and development. While the numbering of precepts is continuous, in actuality the General Principles subsume some of the remaining precepts, for example precepts 4-19 are really sub-precepts of precept 1. As in much of the Code, the emphasis is on procedures, rather than content. For example, Precept 7 deals with the implementation of clear marking criteria, but nowhere does the code make suggestions for what those criteria should be.

General principles:

Precept 1 actually consists of two related, but separate precepts, which can be restated as questions as follows:

A. Does your institution have effective procedures for designing, approving, supervising and reviewing the assessment strategies for programmes and awards?

Interpretation: This question concerns assessment strategy for programmes and awards, rather than individual pieces of assessment. An example of an assessment strategy would be continuous formative assessment throughout the programme,
with a summative assessment at the end of each term and assessments being equally divided between the vocational and academic elements of the programme. A procedure is effective when, within strict limits of time, space and human resources, following it results in the required outcome.

**Sub-questions:**

- **What are your institution's procedures for**
  (a) designing assessment strategies?
  (b) approving assessment strategies?
  (c) supervising (=monitoring) assessment strategies?
  (d) reviewing assessment strategies?

For example, individual members of staff or staff teams might design the assessment strategy. 'Assessment strategy' could be a fixed agenda item on annual programme board meetings, whose role would be to approve, supervise and review the strategy. Minutes of this board's meetings would then form a record of these processes. Course teams would be required to submit annual programme reviews in which they would, amongst other things, comment on the assessment strategy in place and on any changes planned or proposed.

**Case Example:** At ESTTI there are essentially three levels of programme operation/management:

1. **Programme co-ordinators**
2. **Core tutors (includes level 1)**
3. **All tutors (includes levels 1 & 2)**

At level 1 and 2 at last one meeting takes place every term. At level 2 discussions take place about all pedagogical aspects of the programme, including assessment strategies, and decisions are made, which are then implemented by co-ordinators (level 1) and disseminated to all core staff (level 2). The meetings are minuted, providing an audit trail of the decision-making process. Thus all four functions of design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies are addressed through these committees. However, ESTTI needs to record these procedures within its programme documentation and ensure that all staff are familiar with them.
• Are these procedures appropriate for your institution, in terms of time, space and human resources, in other words are they effective?

For example, the number of committees involved in these processes will depend on the size of your institution and the nature of its management structures.

Case Example: ESTTI is a very small organisation and therefore it is appropriate that the number of meetings is kept small. At the University of Stirling, programme boards are usually held once a year, while exam boards are held every semester. Currently, the ESTTI meetings cover curriculum, evaluation and student progress. Therefore ESTTI could consider having separate termly meetings to discuss student progress only and reduce the number of programme meetings to one per year.

B. Does your institution have effective procedures for the consistent implementation of assessment practices which ensure an award is pitched at the appropriate level and student performance is judged against this?

Interpretation: This precept is about ensuring that assessments accurately reflect the level of study and judge students fairly at that level of study. This will require consultation of both the relevant subject benchmarks (see Introduction) and the relevant qualification framework. For example, a post-graduate programme of initial teacher education would be pitched at level 11 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. The assessments on this programme would need to reflect this level within the benchmarks for initial teacher education.

Sub-questions:
• Are assessment tasks and associated criteria effective in measuring student attainment of the intended learning outcomes? In other words, is there 'strategic alignment' between the learning outcomes and the assessments?
• Are assessment policies and practices responsive and do they provide for the effective monitoring of the validity, equity and reliability of assessment? In other words, how does your institution ensure that assessments are aligned to learning outcomes (validity), are judged without bias (equity), and are judged consistently across course teams (reliability)?
**Specific principles:**

Assessment Panels and Boards
There is just one precept under this heading, Precept 4, is interpreted here as an example.

Precept 4
Does your institution have effective, clear, and consistent policies in respect of the membership, procedures, powers and accountability of assessment panels and boards of examiners? Where there is more than one such body, are the relative powers of each clearly defined?

**Interpretation:** Assessment panels and boards of examiners are the final gatekeepers of qualifications and awards and will formally award grades to students. Any grades given to students during a term or semester are provisional, until formally confirmed and recorded through the relevant exam board. Generally speaking, each course of programme of study will have its own exam board, or at least its own allotted time within a broader exam board meeting. This precept should be read in conjunction with the QAA Code of Practice on External Examining. HEIs will have detailed policies and procedures in place for running exam boards and may require the involvement of their own academic members of staff in such exam boards. If not, then this precept requires your organisation to have a set of policies, which answer the following sub-questions:

**Sub-questions:**
- What is the membership of the panel/exam board? For example, Chief Examiner, External Examiner, Course staff, Secretary.
- How does the panel/exam board operate? For example, how often does it meet, who chairs the meetings, who records the minutes, how are final grades decided and awarded?
- What are the exact powers of the panel/exam board? For example, can it over-rule grades, how does it deal with inconsistencies in grades and/or feedback?
- To who is the panel/exam board accountable and how is its business reported?
AUDIT TOOL SECTION 7: Programme approval, monitoring and review

The section on ‘Programme approval, monitoring and review’ was chosen because it provides an example of how the relevance of each section of the Code may depend on the specific parameters of the potential partnership, in particular the size and nature of the partner organisation, its course(s) and the degree to which procedures and policies are already in place. So for example, if the partner is a large educational organisation, such as a College, it is likely that detailed policies and procedures are already in place. If, on the other hand, the partner organisation is relatively small, then it is likely that such policies and procedures are less well developed. The HEI will wish to assure itself of the strengths of the policies and procedures already in place, and may either require these to be developed further, or for the particular course or programme to be submitted to its own procedures for approval, monitoring and review. This needs careful examination and consideration by both partners with respect to organisational infrastructure, human resources, time and finances.

This section of the Code has 9 precepts in all. It also has an Appendix (no. 3) with a list of guiding questions concerned with Academic Review. There are four “General precepts” and five specific ones, most of which are listed under ‘Monitoring and Review’. For the purpose of this audit tool, we have selected one precept from the General Precepts and one from the more specific precepts. It should be noted that, despite the title of this section of the code (‘Programme approval, monitoring and review’), there is also a specific precept on programme design, which precedes those on approval, monitoring and review.

General precept (or ‘principle’) no. 2 was selected for interpretation here, because it is specifically relevant to issues regarding the location of responsibilities within a partnership agreement. It requires a careful examination of responsibilities, both within the partnership and within each partner organisation.
General precept:

A. How does your institution ensure that the overriding responsibility of the academic authority (e.g. senate or academic board) to set, maintain and assure standards is respected and that any delegation of power by the academic authority to approve or review programmes is properly defined and exercised?

Interpretation: This precept refers directly to standards and quality, which include academic standards but cast a much wider net on the cycle of programme design, approval, monitoring and review. This precept essentially asks how these standards are effectively implemented (‘respected’). How does the institution make sure that all people and bodies involved in design, approval, monitoring and review are familiar with these standards? And if any of the standard-setting authority is delegated to other bodies, how does the institution monitor the effectiveness of those bodies in setting and implementing standards? As mentioned above, the degree to which this precept needs to be taken into account by the partner organisation in a collaborative agreement depends on its specific nature. If a partner organisation has the infrastructure to meet the requirements of this precept, the HEI may nevertheless require that specific programmes are approved, monitored and reviewed by itself.

Sub-questions:

(a) Who (or what body, what organisational structure(s) in your institution has the power and responsibility to set, maintain and assure standards and quality?
(b) How is that infrastructure communicated to staff and bodies within your organisations?
(c) Is any aspect of this overall responsibility delegated to other bodies in your organisation?
(d) If so, how does your organisation monitor and review this delegated power?

For example, in a large educational institution, there may be committees in each department with the power/responsibility to set standards and thus there may be differences between departments with regards to these standards, or the manner in which they are implemented. In a collaborative agreement, a small partner organisation may meet the requirements of this precept as applied to the design of its
courses, but for the purpose of validation, programme approval and some aspects of monitoring and review may need to be carried out through the HEI partner.

**Case Example:** In terms of the ESTTI, the academic authority is currently the core group of tutors, most of whom are teachers at the school and who have delegated authority from the College of Teachers, which governs the learning and teaching side of the school. The group of core tutors reports back to the College of Teachers through an annual report. For validation, this arrangement may need to be adapted to ensure that the academic standards are overseen by the University of Stirling. Thus, an annual report from the ESTTI programme team, meeting the requirements of the University might be required to be submitted to the Institute of Education’s Learning and Teaching Quality Enhancement Committee for approval.

**Specific precept:**

Precept 8 was selected because it focuses on aspects of programme review relevant to course teams, in contrast to the above general precept, which looks at much more overarching procedures.

**Does your institution periodically review the continuing validity and relevance of programme aims and intended learning outcomes?**

**Interpretation:** This question refers to the **validity** and **relevance** of the programme’s aims and learning outcomes and requires your organisation to periodically review these aspects of the programme. Programme aims and learning outcomes are valid when they are meaningful in the context of the subject area and subject benchmarks. For example, a valid aim for a programme of initial teacher education could be to prepare students to teach children with confidence and creativity. The specific learning outcomes might involve competencies in lesson planning, classroom management, subject knowledge and child psychology. The programme remains relevant only if trainee teachers find that their competencies have adequately prepared them for a real classroom environment. A programme that would not include actual teaching practice in real classrooms would raise questions about its validity. The precept requires your organisation to review the aims and learning
outcomes of its programmes to ensure that they continue to be both valid and relevant.

Sub-questions:

- Are external examiners invited to comment on the knowledge or competencies of students by submitting written reports?

**Case Example:** ESTTI currently does not involve an external examiner, who takes a broad overview of students' knowledge and competencies. However, it has excellent working relationships with professionals in the field of Steiner Education, who are involved in national discussions around issues of SW teacher education. The ESTTI could put in place a system whereby such external examiners were involved in exam board meetings. Alternatively, an exam board could be established using the existing systems at the University of Stirling. Programme validity and relevance is regularly monitored through the various levels of programme management, mentioned earlier, through the involvement of ESTTI staff in national debates on Steiner education and Teacher Education (Steiner Waldorf School Fellowship Teacher Education Circle) and a general awareness of the requirements for mainstream ITE programmes. ESTTI may be required by the University of Stirling to report annually on the continuing validity and relevance of its programme, through its Programme Review procedures.

- Are there opportunities for accrediting, professional or other external bodies to report on the validity and relevance of the course?

**Case Example:** There are currently no nationally agreed competency statements for Steiner teacher education. However, professionals of other Steiner teacher training courses in the UK, who are part of the Teaching Education Circle for Steiner Education regularly meet to describe, reflect, compare and feedback on each other's provision. Validation of the ESTTI programme may provide an initial benchmark for the establishment of national standards against which other programmes could then be mapped. This process is likely to be accelerated if state funding for SW education becomes more widely available throughout the UK.

- What account is taken of staff and student feedback—particularly at the end of each course?
Does your institution actively seek feedback from former students and their employers?

Is there a process to record and implement any changes, which are suggested by the results of a review process?

Who is responsible for implementing the changes identified?

An example of written feedback might be a questionnaire given to students after placement learning, or at the very end of a course. External bodies might be called upon to observe students on placement, or in the classroom, while external examiners might be asked to look at a sample of student work and staff feedback on that work. Feedback from former students might be sought both from those who made use of their professional qualification, and from those who did not.

Case Example:
On the ESTTI course, each teaching day concludes with an ‘echo session’ where students meet with tutors and course co-ordinators to discuss their thoughts and feelings about what they have learnt. There are also regular formal and informal progress meetings between tutors. However, no formal minutes are currently taken at these meetings. In order to meet this requirement, some of these meetings would need to be formalised, while minutes of meetings would need to become part of the course review process. These minutes would then need to be discussed at level 2 meetings and decisions made on appropriate adjustments to the programme. These would then be implemented through the programme co-ordinators. ESTTI may be required to incorporate the University of Stirling’s Module Review and Programme Review processes for this purpose.

AUDIT TOOL SECTION 9: Placement Learning

This section was chosen because placement learning is often an integral part of vocational qualifications, and qualifications leading directly to employment in the professions. Any institution of Higher Education will wish to satisfy itself that the partner organisation that offers the validated course fully prepares both its students, staff and placement providers for the experience of placement learning.

Key elements include:
• the breadth and quality of learning opportunities provided by the placement experience
• the continuity of assessment strategies and criteria between classroom and placement
• communication between the institution and the placement provider

If placement learning is to feature as part of a course, then course designers must consider these questions from the outset. As with assessment, placement learning cannot be regarded as an afterthought. Its purpose and significance with respect to the course as a whole must be determined in the first stages of programme design.

This section of the code has eight precepts in all, covering key aspects of placement objectives, documentation, communication, assessment and review. We have selected one precept from the General Principles and one from the more specific precepts. However, while the numbering is continuous, in actuality the General Precepts rule all subsequent precepts, so that for this section, precepts 2-8 are sub-precepts of precept 1.

**General principles:**

Precept 1 consists of three related precepts, each of which is introduced by the preposition ‘Where placement learning is an intended part of a programme of study, institutions should ensure that…’ The first of these precepts can be restated as a question as follows:

A. Where placement learning is an intended part of a programme of study, has your institution ensured that its responsibilities for placement learning are clearly defined?

**Interpretation:** This question refers to the definition of the institution’s responsibilities. A responsibility is a task or commitment, which the institution is expected or required to undertake. Placement providers—the individuals or organisations with whom or with which students are associated during their placement—may have separate responsibilities. An example of a responsibility might
be that the institution agrees to arrange placements on behalf of students. Later precepts are more specific about the responsibilities institutions are expected to undertake. In this precept, however, the emphasis is on the need to have any responsibilities clearly defined. This means they need to be written down and available to the relevant staff and students.

Sub-questions:

- Are the responsibilities of all parties well documented?
- Do all parties—including students and placement staff—have access to written documentation, which itemises their responsibilities? This documentation could, for example, constitute part of the course handbook.
- Is there a standard document sent to providers which explains what opportunities the student should be provided with?

**Case example:** The ESTTI course involves several blocks of classroom practice. ESTTI always arranges placements on behalf of students. Normally students are placed with classes inside the institution to which the course is attached (the school), although students do have the option of placements at other schools, in Scotland, across the UK or even abroad. However, the exact responsibilities of the ESTTI in organising such placements, the responsibilities of the school of providing the placements and the responsibilities of students in carrying out such placements need to be documented in more detail.

- Do the assessments of students' placement learning comply with the arrangements for other assessments on the programme? For example are the criteria for assessing placement learning clear, are there clear moderation procedures, which are well documented?

For example, graduating students who wish to register with professional bodies such as the Royal College of Nursing or the General Teaching Council must demonstrate that their qualification exposed them to certain experiences over a certain period of time. Course designers must ensure that placement providers are made fully aware of the practical experiences required by students during their placement and that the assessment of their placement learning is as rigorous, valid and reliable as other
assessments on the programme. This will mean involving placement providers in the design of some aspects the course.

**Case example:** Students on the ESTTI course are not currently required to meet standards laid down by government or by professional registration bodies such as the General Teaching Council. However, among the community of Steiner/Waldorf teacher training courses, a measure of coordination is provided by the previously mentioned Teacher Education Circle (TEC). Under the auspices of the TEC there is an informal agreement about the minimum required time that Waldorf student teachers should be on placement in a classroom. For example, first year students should spend a minimum of six weeks observing in a classroom. Currently, during their placements students are assessed both by one of the course coordinators and by the observing class teacher, with a Class Teacher Assessment Form, which is also used for peer appraisal among teachers in the school. ESTTI should consider documenting exactly what students can expect from placements and how they will be assessed. It should further formalise the use of the Assessment Form and moderation procedures similar to those on the taught elements of the programme.

**Precept 3:**

**B. Can your institution assure itself that placement providers know what their responsibilities are during the period of placement learning?**

**Interpretation:** This question is effectively a sub-precept of the precept 1. It is the duty of institutions to make sure that placement providers are aware of what is expected of them. Institutions should communicate in writing with the placement provider, who should receive copies of all course documentation. To ensure continuity and transparency, the provider may be involved in some aspects of the design, moderation and review of assessment strategies (see Section 6: Assessment). During placements, students and staff in the placement organisation need to record their experiences and evaluations in writing.

Sub-question:
- What is the role (if any) of the provider in assessing learning outcomes?
A learning outcome is what a student is expected to learn from a course. Learning outcomes might include theoretical knowledge—such as how something works—or practical skills, which must be perfected to a certain level of competence. The provider might, for example, assess practical skills, while the institution might assess theoretical knowledge. Whatever the respective roles, they must be transparent. The institution would also be expected to:

- inform the placement provider in writing of what they will have to do to help students achieve their learning outcomes
- make clear to the provider what the student will need to experience during the placement in order to achieve practical learning outcomes
- make clear to the provider whether they will be expected to assess the competence of students, and, if so, according to which criteria, and how often and in what form

**Case example: ESTTI normally places students within the school. The teachers in whose classes the students are placed are therefore colleagues of the course co-ordinator, who assesses student placements. The process has therefore been informal, given that no formal credit is awarded for completing the programme. The assessment of classroom practice is formative, both through the Class Teacher Assessment Form and oral feedback from the class teacher to the programme coordinator. In addition, students are required to record their placement experiences in a journal, which serves as a repository for the student’s lesson plans, child observation notes, artistic work, classroom observation notes and diary of self evaluation through reflection. In this way students can demonstrate that they have received the opportunities and experiences they are entitled to, as well as highlight areas of strength and weakness upon which further professional development can be based. The use of this document ensures course requirements are met. ESTTI should consider formalising and documenting their assessment arrangements for placements, detailing the responsibilities of the programme co-ordinator, the class teacher and the student and including the requirements of class teachers in their role as assessors. It should then make sure that staff and students are familiar with these requirements.**