Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

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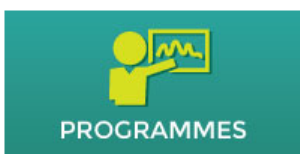# QUALITY ASSURANCE SUPPORT SERVICE
NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue

Welcome to the Fifth Edition of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Assurance Support Service Newsletter.

There have been many Quality Assurance developments ongoing within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and the Quality Assurance Support Service in recent months, including: Quality Improvement Planning, establishing governance structures, developing the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, finalising assessment procedures, QA working groups etc.

We hope that this newsletter will give you an update on recent developments. As always please contact the QA Support Service offices in FET Centre, Clonroad Campus or your QA Support Officer for any further detail or information.

We would particularly like to welcome Victoria Hook to the QA Support Service family as QA Support Officer. Victoria joins us from Core Skills provision in County Clare and brings a wealth of experience to our service. I know that all of our centres join me in welcoming Victoria and look forward to working with Victoria in the future.

Alan Hogan
Quality Assurance Officer

CONTENTS

1. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Support Service is hosting a series of seminars to inform and guide staff about the new single version Assessment Procedures which will be implemented across all Further Education and Training Centres in Limerick and Clare from September 2019. These seminars will be taking place in the Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Limerick on the 29th and 30th August, and on the 2nd September 2019.

Note that these procedures will be adopted by Limerick College of Further Education FET Centres from September 2020, with LCFE staff attending training in 2020.

The purpose of the seminars is to give staff an overview of the new Assessment Procedures, to outline how they will be implemented and to provide answers to some of the anticipated questions that may arise. Staff will also be presented with scenario-type activities and participate in workshops.

As detailed in Quality Assurance Newsletter #4 February 2019[1] "The framework for these procedures was developed by an ETBI working group through consultation and reflection on best practice across the Further Education and Training sector. Adopting common assessment procedures will assure consistency and standardisation of practice across all Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Centres and will help ensure that learners receive an equivalent experience across our provision."

List of Assessment Procedures

- 01_Assessment Malpractice Procedure
- 02_Compassionate Consideration Procedure
- 03_Short-Term Extension Procedure
- 04_Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure
- 05_Appeals Procedure – Results or Process
- 06_Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
- 07_Examinations Procedure
- 08_Secure Storage Procedure

Summary of Key Points from Assessment Procedures

- Procedures will apply to both Further Education Provision and Training Provision.
- Procedures will NOT apply to Craft Apprenticeship programmes as per SOLAS QA provision.
- Procedures will be available according to provision categories -
    - Part-Time Provision
    - Full-Time Provision
- The only differences between the provision categories are –
    - Timelines
    - Provision Naming Conventions
- Procedures and associated forms will be available in Quality Assurance / Assessment Resources / Assessment Procedures in StaffCONNECT
- Procedures will be available for learners to view on our Further Education and Training website - http://learningandskills.ie/our-courses/quality-assurance/

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[1]
https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Communication/QA%20Newsletter/19_02_13_Quality_Assurance_Newsletter_Issue_4_Feb_2019.pdf

Procedure Specific

01_Assessment Malpractice Procedure

- Learner Malpractice incorporates both Plagiarism and Unacceptable Behaviour
- A process of Learner Malpractice Investigation is defined, including the responsibility of the assessor checking for Reliability of Learner Evidence, followed by a formal investigation if required.
- Sanctions are clearly defined in the procedure -
    - Assignment marked as zero and written warning to learner
    - Entire module marked as zero and submitted
    - Results not submitted or cancelled
- These sanctions are dependent on the severity of the malpractice.

02_Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances Procedure

- Extenuating circumstances are situations or events which unexpectedly interfere with a learner's ability to complete or sit an element of assessment.
- Learner may apply to defer (to complete the assessment activity on another occasion) or to repeat (to be allowed to sit the assessment activity on/at an alternative sitting).
- Examples of extenuating circumstances are defined.
- Compassionate consideration application form and process are available.

03_Short Term Extension Procedure

- Assessment deadlines are planned in advance of assessment and adhere to the assessment plan for the programme or module.
- Learners **must** be made aware of assessment deadlines including submission dates for assessment evidence and dates of practical assessments (e.g. examination, skills demonstration, etc.) prior to, or as soon as is feasibly possible, in the programme or module (e.g. assessment plan, notice boards, etc.).
- The term "missed assessment deadline" refers to:
    - Failure to submit assessment evidence on or in advance of agreed assessment deadline, and/or
    - Failure to attend a practical assessment (e.g. Examination, Skills Demonstration, etc.).
- The term "short-term extension" refers to a defined timeframe: an assessment deadline will be extended within this timeframe in the case of extenuating circumstances. The recommended maximum acceptable extension is two (2) working days.

Where a learner attempts to submit assessment evidence after a deadline, the Learning Practitioner **must not accept the assessment evidence** unless there are proven extenuating circumstances and either a Short-term Extension Application or Compassionate Consideration Application have been granted.

04_Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure

- In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair, e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation.`
- Any adaptation of the assessment should facilitate the learner to demonstrate his/her achievement of the standards without altering the standard.
- Reasonable accommodation in assessment will only be accommodated when a learner can demonstrate with appropriate evidence/documentation that, because of a specific need, s/he cannot compete on equal terms, under standard assessment conditions, with his/her peers.
- Examples of adaptations of assessment are included in the procedure.

05_Appeals Procedure – Results or Process

- Assessment Result Appeal - An assessment result appeal refers to the appeal of an approved result. In such cases, the learner is not satisfied with an assessment result: the learner believes the marks awarded are not representative of the quality of the work submitted for assessment.
- Assessment Process Appeal - An assessment process appeal refers to the appeal by a learner to the provider based on the assessment conditions and/or process: the learner believes the assessment conditions and/or process negatively impacted his/her assessment performance.
- Assessment Results Appeals and Assessment Process Appeals are processed through the Limerick and Clare ETB Appeals Office, as managed by the Quality Assurance Support Service.

06_Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

- RPL is defined as "Recognition of prior Learning (RPL) can "be used by the learner to gain entry to a programme; gain exemptions within a programme; gain credit towards an award: a learner may gain a credit towards an award using previous certification and/or attain an Award: a learner may be awarded a Major or Minor Award on the basis of previously acquired learning for which they do not have a formal certificate" (CEDEFOP, 2011, p7)."
- Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body such as (QQI) or other recognised universities, colleges/institutes and awarding bodies.
- Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) (non-certified Learning) is: formal, informal and non-formal learning acquired through life or work experience; learning achieved from non-accredited bodies; or certifying bodies outside of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
- RPL procedure will be made available to specific projects and programmes initially, i.e. TOBAR project with the Defence Forces, National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme.

07_Examinations Procedure

- Examination refers to any theory based, oral, aural, online or practical examination which occurs on a specific date and for a specific duration. All other assessment techniques, including assignment, collection of work, learner record, project and skills demonstration are not informed by this document.
- Defined in the procedure
    - Permitted assessment resources which learners require in an examination as informed by the programme.
    - The Examination Supervisor pack – a set of documentation which is available to support supervision of examinations.
    - Roles and Responsibilities
        - Examination Supervisor
        - Programme Co-ordinator
        - Assessor
        - Learner
    - Guidelines are defined on Planning, Conducting, and Concluding Examinations.

08_Secure Storage of Assessment Materials, Records and Learner Assessment Evidence Procedure

- Materials Definition
    - Assessment Materials - any documentation associated with the planning of an assessment (pre-assessment).
    - Assessment Records - any documentation which demonstrates evidence that the assessment has taken place (post-assessment).
    - Learner Assessment Evidence - any assessment evidence, created by the learner, which forms part of a module or programme assessment.
- Secure storage, transport, retention and disposal of materials are defined.
- Roles and responsibilities for programme co-ordinator, assessor and learner are defined and available in the procedure.

2. JUNE 2019 CERTIFICATION PERIOD

External Authenticator Planning and Briefing

Centrally recruited and allocated by the Quality Assurance Support Service based on certification estimates provided by each individual Further Education and Training centre, the management of the External Authenticators for the June 2019 certification period was as logistically challenging as ever.

An External Authenticator Briefing, hosted by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board QA Support Service, was held this year on Saturday 11th May 2019 at the Clayton Hotel, Limerick for the External Authenticators recruited for the June 2019 Certification period.

Overview of June 2019 Certification Statistics	
Number of Centres presenting for Certification	24
Total Number of Portfolios	13,223
External Authentication Process	
Number of External Authentication Locations	11
Number of External Authenticators	27
Total Number of External Authenticator Days	84
Total Cost of External Authentication Process	€35,147
Grade Change Summary	
Number of Grade Changes	59
Percentage Grade Changes	0.45%
Appeals Summary	
Number of Appeals	44
Number of Successful Appeals	13

Locations for External Authentication

1. FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis, County Clare
2. FET Centre, Scariff Campus, Scariff, County Clare
3. FET Centre, Ennistymon Campus, Ennistymon, County Clare
4. Ennis Community College, Ennis, County Clare
5. Croom College of Further Education, Croom, County Limerick
6. FET Centre, Shanagolden Campus, County Limerick
7. FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus, Kilmallock, County Limerick.
8. FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus, Limerick City
9. FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus, Limerick City
10. Limerick College of Further Education, Limerick City
11. Mary Immaculate College, Limerick City

Breakdown of Certification Statistics

|	Co. Clare	Co. Limerick	Limerick City	LCFE (Day & Night)
No. of EAs	14	9	9	16
No. of Portfolios	1,775	1,098	612	9,738
No. of Grade Changes	6	23	0	30
No. of Appeals	3	0	0	41

QQI Infographics

QQI Infographics provides a visual representation of awards data that, through simple clicks, can easily be filtered on a variety of variables including year, gender, age-band, county, field of learning, award-type, and award level.

The data is 'disaggregated' which means

- Where learners achieved several minors as part of a component certificate each minor is counted separately
- Where a learner achieved a major, special purpose or supplemental award the individual components are not counted.

The data in QQI Infographics is updated every two months to reflect new certification results data, thereby providing an up-to-date analysis of awards made.

Infographics for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board provision is available via the following link - https://infographics.qqi.ie/Provider/Details/PP00106
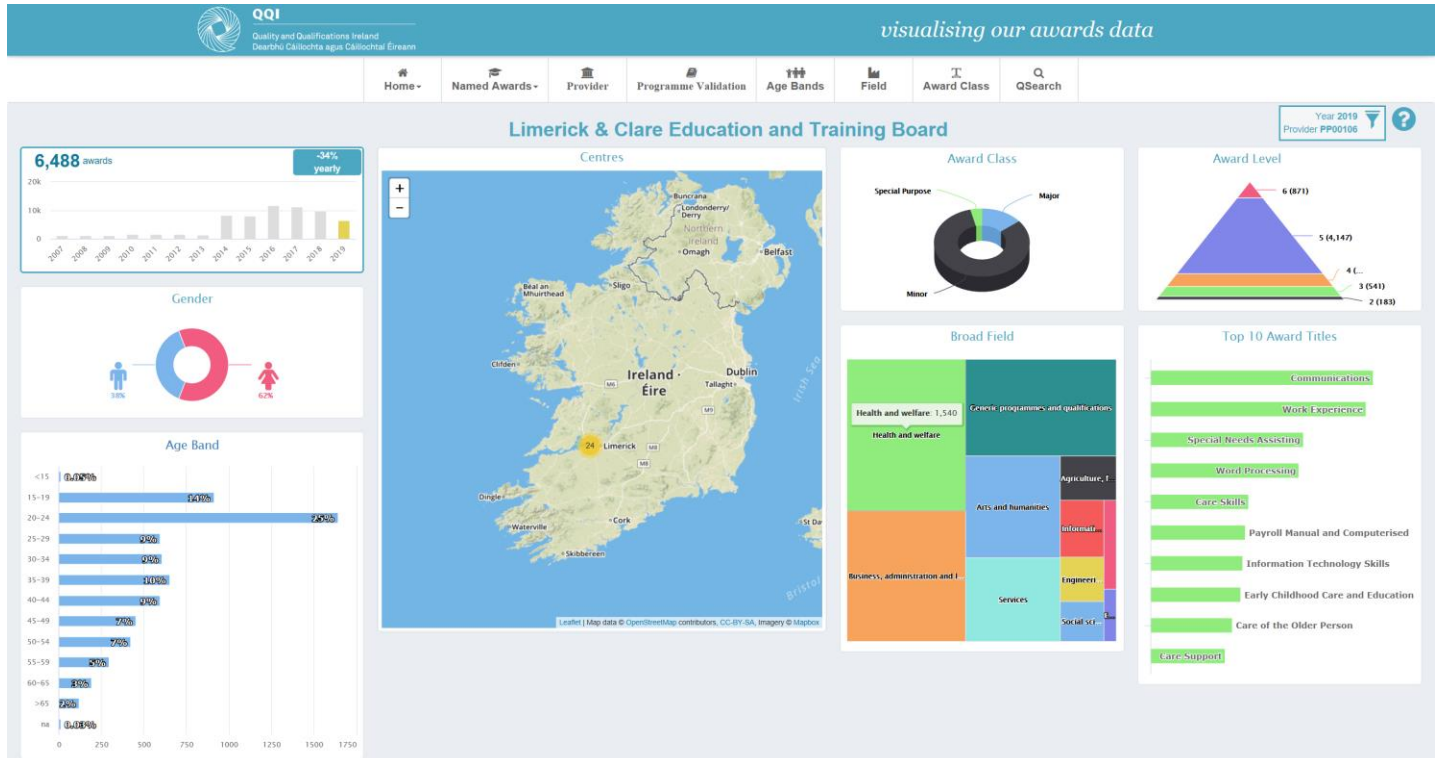
Summary of External Authenticator feedback as presented to Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance)

This feedback does not include External Authenticator feedback from the following centres –

- FET Centre, Raheen Campus
- FET Centre, Shannon Campus
- Limerick College of Further Education

Topic (in order of frequency)	Examples of feedback from External Authentication
Feedback	• Evidence of verbal feedback taking place should be provided. • Written feedback should be provided which can then be revisited at next feedback opportunity to see if advice was taken and to note progress. • More evidence should be provided of constructive feedback i.e. what can be done to achieve criteria.
Integration	• Integration can give learners greater opportunities to consolidate their learning and can help to reinforce the learning process. • Integration of multiple assessments and modules is possible with clear planning and mapping of the assessment evidence.
Borderline marks	• Teacher/Tutor is best placed to make the decision on the appropriate grade for the learner. Marks near borderline between grades will be reviewed by External Authenticator and may be adjusted.
Referencing	• It is good practice to encourage learners to reference in text in order to link theory to practice and to include a bibliography. • Professional Development (PD) is recommended for all teachers/tutors in order to streamline this aspect of learning. • Reference teacher/tutor notes appropriately as to source. • Avoid over reliance on internet as reference source – encourage learners to use some textbooks as this avoids "copy & paste" activity.
Briefs	• Clear parameters on *how l*earners are expected to present evidence i.e. word count, length of presentation, performance etc. • Review use of briefs amongst assessors – similar briefs could be used across part-time classes where they are undertaking the same programme. • Ensure that briefs have correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.
Digital Evidence for Skills Demonstrations	• Ensure digital evidence is audible and accessible, especially where the Skills Demonstration accounts for a large part of the module. It provides extra evidence of demonstrations, particularly at Level 4-6.
Structured questions	• Ensure that structured exam questions are divided into a number of related parts requiring the learner to demonstrate more in-depth knowledge and understanding of a topic.
Practical Subjects	• Have a video or story board of the evidence as it's not always possible to have the artefacts present, it can be difficult to get the true image from the photographs
Use of Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) at L4 and L5	• Consider how they are prepared and structured. Ensure that the format does not make it easy for learners to guess correct answer.
Use of current paperwork	• To include (all) Learner Marking Sheets and correct version of descriptor.

3. ANNUAL QUALITY DIALOGUE MEETING WITH QQI

As detailed in the subsequent note of the Dialogue Meeting between QQI and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board on the 14th May 2019 - QQI's previous dialogue meetings with the ETB occurred in the context of the re-engagement process. This involved the completion of an executive self-evaluation of quality assurance (QA) by the ETB and a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to address identified areas for improvement. The ETB's QA procedures were subsequently approved by QQI: however, it was noted that the development and maintenance of these procedures is a dynamic process. They will evolve as the ETB continues to integrate its legacy services and procedures; in response to new or updated guidelines that may be published by QQI (e.g. the Quality Assurance Guidelines on Blended Learning); or to reflect changes in the ETB's operating context, e.g. becoming a co-ordinating provider of an apprenticeship programme.

The purpose of the dialogue meeting was to discuss the continuing development and evolution of the QA infrastructure within the ETB since its formal re-engagement with QQI and its progress in addressing the identified areas for improvement in the QIP."

In attendance at the Dialogue Meeting were Chief Executive George O'Callaghan and members of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Council. Representing QQI were Dr Padraig Walsh, Chief Executive; Karena Maguire, Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Communications; Angela Lambkin, Head of Information; Roisín Morris-Drennan, ETB Monitoring & Review.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's key achievements to date in respect of its original QIP and the ETB's quality improvement plans for 2019 were outlined.

- Governance & Management of Quality
- National Hairdressing Apprenticeship
- Marking Seminar
- Tobar Project – Recognition of Prior Learning
- Supports for Learners
- Information and Data Management
- Public Information & Communication
- Other Parties involved in Education & Training
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

A further extract from the meeting note of the Dialogue Meeting "Centre Quality Improvement: QQI commended the ETB's quality improvement activities at centre level. These involve meetings with centres to consider local quality improvement planning on the basis of issues arising from IV and EA reports, RAP meeting minutes and appeal examiner feedback; changes in programme delivery and staffing; professional development requirements; and centre-led, ETB-led and national quality initiatives. The ETB and centres have found that the process has a positive impact on the development of a quality culture and facilitates engagement at a centre level. This approach also enables the ETB to identify issues that emerge across the organisation that may need to be addressed at an individual, centre, programme or ETB-level as required."

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE GOVERNANCE

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALITY COUNCIL, PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND QA SUBGROUPS

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has formalised the establishment of the Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Governance structures, including the establishment of a Quality Council.

The role of the Quality Council is to oversee all Quality Assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of the Further Education and Training provision offered by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

It protects, maintains and develops the standard of Education and Training provision and related activities. In doing so, the Further Education and Training Quality Council is ensuring, as far as possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience.

To fulfil its responsibilities, the FET Quality Council requires assistance from sub-groups of governance to which it has delegated certain roles; although overall responsibility will be retained by the FET Quality Council.

The FET Quality Council has established two governance sub-groups.

The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) will focus on the review and recommendation of quality assurance policies and procedures, and the oversight of the implementation and review of agreed quality assurance processes.

The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) will address programme development, approval and implementation matters, including teaching, learning and assessment governance functions.

A Quality Assurance Governance folder is available on StaffCONNECT[2], this contains Terms of Reference, Membership, Meeting Agendas and Minutes.

The inaugural meeting of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Quality Council was held on 25th February 2019. Attendees as per picture above were –

- Paul Patton   Director of Further Education and Training
- Alan Hogan   Quality Assurance Officer
- Hanorah Lyons   Quality Assurance Support Officer
- Triona Lynch   Further Education and Training Manager
- Pat Maunsell   Principal, Limerick College of Further Education
- Arlene Douglas   Director of Adult Education, Limerick College of Further Education
- Colin Cummins   Training Services Manager, Raheen Campus
- Brendan Ryan   Learning Technology Development Officer
- Bernie Kelleher   Quality Assurance Support Service Administrator

Quality Council Sub-Group (Quality Assurance) met on 5th March 2019 and again on 28th May 2019.

Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) met on 2nd April, 30th May and 3rd July 2019.

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[2] https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Communication/Quality%20Assurance%20Governance

Working Groups have been established as a result of the Quality Council Sub-Group meetings –

- Results Approval Panel Procedure and Assessment Policy Development
- Programme Consolidation Level 1 and Level 2 Programmes
- Review and update programme development, delivery and validation policy.

Recommendations and Reports to Quality Council from Quality Assurance and Programme Governance sub-Group Meetings included: -

- Hairdressing Apprenticeship Programme recommended for approval by Quality Council for submission to QQI for validation.
- Programme Requests to Programme Governance Subgroup for approval to deliver
  - 2nd April 2019, 17 Submitted.
  - 30th May 2019, 5 Submitted.
  - 3rd July 2019, 21 Submitted.
- Consolidation of Level 1 programmes from September 2019, with agreed plan to adopt national Level 2 programme as single version Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board programme from September 2020.
- Addition of LCEN (Limerick Community Education Network) centres as Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Centres.
- Grade amendment Form for Work Experience Levels 4, 5, 6. Recommendation from Programme Governance Subgroup that this additional form (to ensure that the QBS accurately reflects the unsuccessful candidate when skills demonstration is not successfully achieved) is not adopted due to increase in paperwork required.
- Choice option available to learners in exam questions is to be retained.
- Review of consolidated feedback from External Authentication Reports and Results Approval Panel Reports.
- Youthreach Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan reports, FET Centre Kilmallock Road Campus, FET Centre Kilrush Campus.

5. WORKING GROUP UPDATES

ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WORKING GROUP – RESULTS APPROVAL PANEL

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board 2019 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as related to the Quality Assurance Area *Documented Approach to Quality Assurance* lists the following action - "Review existing Results Approval Panel procedures, develop Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board single procedure for Results Approval Panel"

A Working Group Meeting was held on 3rd May 2019, with representatives from all provision areas across Limerick and Clare. Outlined to the working group were the differing Results Approval Panel procedures from the former legacy providers now constituting Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board - Limerick City; Limerick County; County Clare; Limerick College of Further Education; Raheen Campus / Shannon Campus (former TQAS procedures); Ennis Community College PLC; Ennistymon Vocational School PLC.

Considered also were the Programme Governance Subgroup Assessment Responsibilities -

- Receiving and considering quantitative and qualitative analysis reports from Results Approval Panels and making any recommendations arising to the Further Education and Training Quality Council on teaching, learning and/or assessment matters
- Reviewing analyses of Internal Authenticators and External Authenticators reports and making recommendations to the Further Education and Training Quality Council

Model of Integrated Results Approval Panel was presented for discussion –

- Chairperson and panel members appointed to Panel
- Individual centres prepare documentation and present centre results to panel
- Each centre presents short oral presentation (good practice identified by External Authenticator, issues or concerns identified, areas for improvement from External Authenticator, suggestions for improvement)
- Presenters excused and panel review all presented documentation
- Results Approval Panel makes decisions on outcome of assessment, verification and authentication and reach agreement
- Decisions and observations recorded on Results Approval Panel report
- Approval of submission of results to QQI and issuing results to learners

Actions which are now required to implement procedure:

- Working Group to approve draft procedure
- Consultation with centres
- Develop operational guidelines to implement procedure
- Submission to Quality Council for approval
- Implementation for December 2019 Certification process.

WORKING GROUPS UPDATE – LEVEL 1/2 PROGRAMME CONSOLIDATION

Level 1 Programmes
There are two Programmes available at Level 1 – P1GL0 General learning and P1CO0 Communications. There was previously no Programme Descriptors on StaffCONNECT for either programme (Validation approval was historically via an application form process) – these Programme Descriptors are now being created and will be available from September 2019 on StaffCONNECT.

As these Level 1 programmes were originally developed by and validated for County Clare VEC Adult Education Service, only one version of Level 1 programmes exists within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

It was the recommendation of the Working Group that these single versions of Level 1 programmes become the single Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board programmes. Module updates to these programmes will therefore now be to the single Limerick and Clare programmes.

This recommendation has been approved by the Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) and comes into effect from 1st September 2019.

Level 2 Programmes
All three regions have different modules approved for their respective Level 2 – P2GL0 General Learning programmes and all modules have different content and design.

The Further Education Support Services (FESS) had coordinated the national shared curriculum development process, which included Level 2 Programme and associated Module Descriptors.

It is the recommendation of the Working Group that Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board adopt these national programmes and modules as the single Limerick and Clare Level 2 programme.

Actions and Timelines –

- Autumn/Winter 2019 - Module descriptors will be reviewed by QA, Core Skills co-ordinators and a small subject matter expert group of teaching staff
- Spring 2020 - Modules ready for Programme Governance approval
- September 2020 - All three regions will work from this set of module descriptors, which will be standalone modules.

6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019 – SUMMARY OF PLANNED ACTIONS

Governance and Management of Quality

- Implementation of Quality Assurance Governance structures, Quality Council and associated Sub-Groups.

*2019 QIP identifies **39** individual actions across each of the **11** Quality Areas listed in the Core Statutory QA Guidelines*

Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

- Development of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board policies, to include Communications, Equality, Admissions and Assessment policies.
- Development of assessment procedures as part of overall assessment policy, specifically to include Internal Verification, External Authentication and Results Approval Procedures.
- Replacement of TQAS Assessment policy and procedures with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board policies and procedures.
- Review and update programme development, delivery and validation policy.

Programmes of Education and Training

- Begin process of replacement of multiple version programmes with single version Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board programmes.
- Develop processes and procedures to implement RPL for advanced entry into the hairdressing apprenticeship programme.
- Schedule for programme review to be developed and approved by Programme Governance subgroup.
- Support for the development of the new National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme, including curriculum design, peer review, preparation of documentation for validation application.

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

- Review of current FET staff induction process with a view to an integrated approach with online/video elements included.
- Finalise and implement processes and procedures for staff mentoring.
- Development of eLearning staff resource videos distributed via Moodle, with badges associated.
- Ongoing QA professional development provided by Quality Assurance Support Service.

Teaching and Learning

- Ongoing participation in National and International networks and communities of practice.
- Continued process of annual centre Quality Improvement Planning meetings.
- Providing ongoing support and QA Input to Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Implementation groups and working groups.
- Continued centre and provision Quality Assurance support.

Assessment of Learners

- Exemplar bank for 4 identified Level 5 modules to be developed, approved and implemented.
- Continued central management of External Authenticators, reviewed and optimised procedures.
- Continued management of central learner appeals procedures updated to reflect GDPR requirements.
- Prepared analysis reports for each Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training certification period for consideration by appropriate QA governance.

Supports For Learners

- Development of Plain English information to learners for inclusion in learner handbooks and induction materials.
- Continued support for rollout of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme, developing mentor training resources, systems for tracking and monitoring apprentice progression and centre consistency, support for National Programme Board and National Examinations Board.
- Referencing and Academic writing handbooks, developed by national working group, implemented across Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Centres.

Information and Data Management

- Scoping the feasibility for the implementation of CRM/Database QA management system, particularly in relation to FET Centre programme management.
- Identified critical quality indicators, established methods of highlighting, prioritising and responding.

Public Information and Communication

- Continued broadening of social media communication, highlighting QA initiatives. Twitter feed embedded on QA SharePoint site and external learningandskills.ie QA page.
- Initial QA video trialled on SignageLive, continued communication to learners and staff via video screen platform.
- Continued publication of QA newsletter, Issue 4 February published, two more planned for 2019.
- Reviewed and updated content on website, reflecting QA governance, quality council meeting minutes, quality Improvement reports and plans.

Other Parties involved in Education and Training

- Agreed MOU between Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and LCEN centres, facilitating the incorporation of LCEN centres as Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board centres.
- Continue relationship between Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and Mary Immaculate College, supporting IV, EA, RAP, Appeals and certification process.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

- Review of current Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board centre learner feedback processes. Aligned with statutory self-evaluation process, implement Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board wide self-evaluation process.
- Centre and provision compliance to agreed policies and procedures assured through Quality Assurance Support Service monitoring process – application in the content of assessment policy and assessment procedures.

7. MODULE UPDATES FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

MODULE DESCRIPTORS UPDATED

Module Name	Module Code	Updates
Breads, Pastry and Desserts Co. Clare	3N0522	Code corrected in module descriptor
Business Administration	5M2428	Table layout corrected
Digital Media Technology Co. Limerick	4N1858	Error corrected in Learner marking sheet for Skills Demonstration
Digital Presentation	5N0563	Code corrected in module descriptor
Horticultural Science Co. Clare	4N0682	Error corrected on page 12 of module descriptor
Irish Tour Guiding	6N20229	Percentage weighting for simulated tour corrected
Medical Terminology	5N2428	Page break removed on page 2 of module descriptor
Payroll Manual & Computerised	5N1546/6N4005	Module descriptors updated based on National Workgroup feedback
Reception Skills	4N1867	Co. Limerick (national) descriptor to be used going forward
School Age Childcare	5N1781	"Practitioner" changed to "Programme" on page 15 of module descriptor
Work Experience Supervisor Report	5N1356/6N1946	Heading inserted into last question in the table
Work Experience Support Files		Logo updated to new Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board logo

PAYE MODERNISATION – PAYROLL MANUAL AND COMPUTERISED MODULE UPDATES

The new PAYE Modernisation System was implemented on January 1st, 2019. Following national and local Education and Training Board consultation, updates have been applied to the following Module Descriptors to reflect the new real time reporting system:

5N1536 Payroll Manual and Computerised

- Learning Outcomes 4, 6 and 7 have been changed
- Some associated Assessment Activities and Marks have been changed
- Appropriate Indicative Content has been updated.

6N4005 Payroll Manual and Computerised

- Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 11 have been changed
- Some associated Assessment Activities and Marks have been changed
- Appropriate Indicative Content has been updated.

OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID MINOR AWARD DEACTIVATED

The Occupational First Aid (OFA) 5N1207 award has been deactivated since the June 2019 certification period. The final date for certification of Occupational First Aid (OFA) 5N1207 was 12 June 2019. Providers no longer have access to return learner results on QBS for this award.

This action is a result of the Health and Safety Authority's (HSA) decision to no longer recognise the component OFA award as meeting the requirements for occupational first aid in all workplaces. Instead, the HSA now recognises the Pre-hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) First Aid Response Education and Training standard (FAR).

DEACTIVATION OF UNUSED/LITTLE USED AWARDS

QQI is responsible for ensuring that all awards standards for FET are fit for purpose and relevant. Starting in 2019, QQI has stated that it will annually analyse the levels of certification for each CAS award to identify those that are long established and yet are either unused or little used. This is required to ensure the integrity of the CAS and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

QQI recently published a list of awards that it intends to deactivate, and all providers had until Monday 10 June 2019 to advise if the withdrawal of any of the awards presents a problem.

Based on centre feedback, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board QA Support Service returned to QQI a list of Unused and Little Used Awards that are requested to be retained. This is being followed up with a meeting with QQI to discuss the retention request.

8. NATIONAL EXTERNAL AUTHENTICATOR PANEL UPDATE

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) on behalf of the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) has been establishing a new national panel of External Authenticators (EA) for Further Education and Training provision.

The External Authenticator provides independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with QQI requirements and reports on consistency of assessment results with national standards.

In collaboration with the Further Education Support Service a number of information briefing sessions have been held at venues throughout Ireland. During these Briefing Sessions the requirements for the role and the application process are discussed. This External Authenticator Panel will serve those services in Education and Training Boards providing provision leading to QQI awards.

Progress to Date

- 1,100 people have attended the national briefing sessions.
- Over 1,000 applications were received to join External Authenticator panel.
- Approximately 500 External Authenticators will have completed training by the beginning of September.
- The Further Education Support Service (FESS) is developing autumn/winter 2019 training dates for new External Authenticators. These training days will also consider the training needs for existing External Authenticators that applied to become members of the new national panel.
- The External Authenticator list will be available to ETBs in autumn 2019. There will be a three-year initial timeline for the list – until 2022.
- Payment rates where applicable for EAs agreed with the Directors of FET from September 1st, 2019 for national panel members as follows: the EA rate will be €250 per day for programmes leading to awards at NFQ levels 1-6 and the travel and subsistence rate will be the DES rate. Release arrangements will be by local arrangements per ETB.
- Each ETB will be obliged to host local briefings for External Authenticators as they recruit them from the national panel.

Outline of External Authenticator Training

The role of the External Authenticator within the Quality Assuring Assessment Process

- Understanding the Standard (NFQ Levels 1 -6)
- QQI Common Awards (CAS)
- Overview of ETB provision (FE, training and apprenticeship programmes)
- Assessment techniques and related documentation
- Preparation for External Authentication process
- The External Authentication process within Further Education and within Training
  - Making the Judgement
  - Sampling Learner Portfolios
- Overview of the External Authentication process within apprenticeships
- Professional Award Type Descriptors (PATD)
- Overview of ETB apprenticeship programme outcomes and module outcomes
- Report writing activities and dealing with likely scenarios

9. CHILDCARE PROGRAMMES

QQI has published and is consulting on new Early Learning and Care (ELC) awards to replace the existing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) awards.[3] These are open for public consultation with stakeholders until 30 September 2019. The new standards (at NFQ Levels 5 and 6) will replace the current Early Childhood Care & Education standards published in 2011.

One of the major changes is that the new standards will be based on the NFQ Professional Award-type Descriptors. 5M2009 and 6M2007 will be retired and will not be replaced by CAS award specifications. This will have a significant positive impact for a sector which saw nearly 25,000 major awards (including those at Levels 5 and 6) in the last 7 years. For example, it will help facilitate the development of efficient progression pathways between different tertiary ELC qualifications in the NFQ.

No minor awards standards will be specified. Intakes for the new awards will be from 2021, so new programmes will need to be developed and validated in time for that intake. There may also be professional development requirements for existing teaching staff in advance of intake for the new awards.

The following awards will be deactivated

- 5N1770 Early Care and Education Practice
- 5N1763 Approaches to Early Childhood Education
- 5N1769 Creative Arts for Early Childhood
- 5N1775 Equality and Diversity in Childcare
- 5N1779 Infant and Toddler Years
- 5N1781 School Age Childcare
- 5N2005 Irish for Preschool Services
- 6N1942 Child Development
- 6N1944 Early Childhood Curriculum
- 6N1945 Childhood Social Legal and Health Studies
- 6N1932 Early Learning Philosophy
- 6N1933 Early Learning Environment
- 6N1935 Early Childhood Literacy and Numeracy
- 6N1936 Early Childhood Arts and Culture
- 6N1972 Creative Studies for Special Needs
- 6N1973 Supervision in Early Childhood Care
- 6N1974 Equality and Diversity in Childcare
- 6N2023 Child Psychology
- Additionally, the NFQ 4M2014 Early Childhood Education and Care Support will be deactivated, but all associated components will still be available for certification.

The proposed new awards are being reviewed by the ETBs, with a collaborative programme development model being developed for the sector.

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[3] https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Changes-on-the-way-for-awards-standards-in-Early-Learning-and-Care.aspx

10. REFERENCING HANDBOOK SUMMARY

Through regular contact with teaching personnel as well as from the experience of external authenticators, it became apparent that referencing was a challenge for many Further Education and Training (FET) learners. The Further Education Support Service (FESS) developed and delivered a workshop for teaching personnel on Developing Learners Academic Writing Skills and from that came a request for the development, production and publication of writing and referencing handbooks to support the sector. A request was issued through the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) Quality Assurance (QA) Forum for interested Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to nominate personnel who would work on such resources. The development of this referencing handbook has been led by the Further Education Support Service (FESS). [4]

The working group included:

- Mary Sheehy - FESS
- Christine Wray - FESS
- Treasa Brannick O'Cillin - City of Dublin ETB
- Fiona Fay - Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB
- Máire Lynch - Limerick and Clare ETB
- June Neylon - Cavan and Monaghan ETB
- Tina O'Donnell - Donegal ETB
- Carol O'Donovan - Tipperary ETB
- Alan O'Gorman - Waterford and Wexford ETB
- Carol Quinlan - Cork ETB
- Siobhan Magner - ETBI

All relevant FESS materials were made available to the process. The ETBs involved were generous in making their referencing-related materials available for consultation and the handbook was consulted on locally within the ETBs prior to being finalised.

The content of the handbook includes –

- Harvard referencing system
- What is referencing?
- Why reference?
- What needs to be referenced?
- What does not need to be referenced?
- What is plagiarism?
- Why is plagiarism taken so seriously?
- How can you avoid plagiarism?
- How to reference: a three-step process
    - Step 1: Source and record
    - Step 2: Making an in-text citation
    - Step 3: Building your list of references
- How to reference different sources
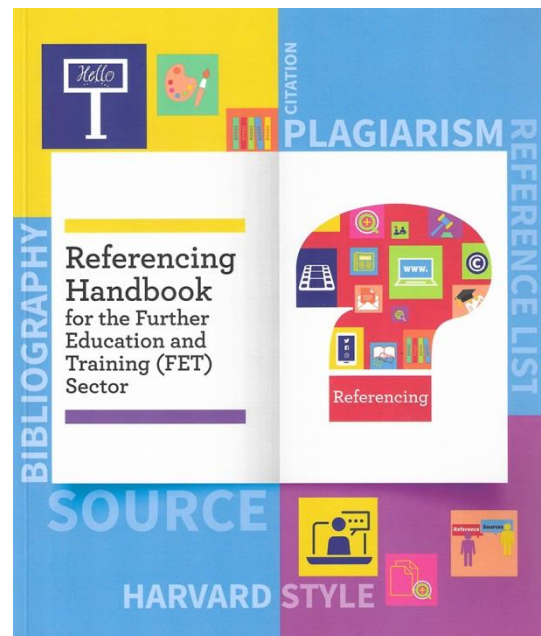
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board QA Support Service has commissioned the printing of the Referencing Handbook for staff.

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[4] https://www.fess.ie/images/stories/ResourcesForTutors/Referencing_Handbook_files/Referencing_Handbook_February_2019.pdf

11. NATIONAL HAIRDRESSING APPRENTICESHIP

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Development Team pictured above at QQI offices following 31st July validation panel event.

Following an extensive and rigorous independent validation panel process, the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Programme has been recommended to the QQI Programme Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) for validation approval.

Significantly, the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Programme will be the first "post-2016" apprenticeship developed by the ETB sector to be recommended for approval without any specific validation conditions. The validation panel highly commended the quality of both the programme documentation and associated quality assurance procedures as exemplars of innovative best practice.

http://hairdressingapprenticeship.ie/

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Development Team, Industry Representatives and Collaborating Provider representatives at 8th/9th July validation panel.

National Hairdressing Apprenticeship
The journey so far ...

Proposal Submission
2017
Sept 2017
3 hairdressing industry representative bodies submitted proposals to the Apprenticeship Council of Ireland.

Nov 2017
2 proposals were accepted.

Programme Development
2018
- **Jan:** Invitation to IHF and other representatives to join the Hairdressing Apprenticeship Consortium Steering Group (CSG).
- **Feb:** Initial meeting of the CSG.
- **Mar - May:** Collaborating Providers briefing.
- **May:** Submission of Occupational Skills Profile to the Apprenticeship Council of Ireland.
- **June:** National Consultation Workshops.
- **June - Oct:** Programme Development and Review.
- **Sept:** 2 Day Writers Symposium
- **Oct:** 2 day Peer Review Conference

Document Review
2018
Oct 2018 - Jan 2019
CSG review of validation document.

Mock Panel
2019
Feb 2019:
Mock validation panel peer review.

Feb - July:
On-going collaboration with CSG, employers and collaborating providers.

QQI Validation Meeting
2019
Independent panel meeting Limerick and Clare Education and Training board (LCETB) National Apprenticeship in Hairdressing 8th and 9th July 2019

Clayton Hotel, Ballsbridge

National Hairdressing Apprenticeship
www.hairdressingapprenticeship.ie

powered by
PIKTOCHART

12. FEATURED ARTICLE: In conversation with Razan Abdelwahed

The quality of teaching and learning in further education in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is highlighted in this interview with PLC student Razan Abdelwahed, as she talks about her learning journey, new experiences and her hopes for the future.

Razan was one of a group of PLC learners who took part in an end of year exhibition titled 'Beyond Chaos' in the Courthouse Gallery in Ennistymon. For Razan it was a wonderful experience to showcase her work in a local gallery. For her and her family, it was a very proud moment and one she will never forget

Razan, (pictured above with Bairbre Geraghty, PLC co-ordinator, FET Centre, Ennistymon Campus) arrived in Ireland in 2016 and moved with her family to Ennistymon. She enrolled in Ennistymon Vocational School for the last two months of 5th year and then went on to do her Leaving Certificate. She found the Leaving Certificate a challenge, but with great determination and a lot of hard work she passed all her subjects. "When I did my Leaving Cert, I had zero English. I couldn't even speak with my teachers and say what I needed and what I didn't understand. I couldn't even communicate with my friends in school. So, it was very hard for me. But I say to myself that I will pass and I passed." After completing her Leaving Certificate, Razan accepted a place on the PLC art course at the Ennistymon School of Art.

Razan did not study art in school in Syria: "Art in Syria wasn't very important in our schools". Like any other child she drew pictures, "Like a child would draw the sun with a house and a river beside it". The PLC art course allowed her the freedom to experiment and try new materials. Everything was a first; as part of the course she completed her first oil and acrylic painting. She worked with clay for the first time and like many first attempts it didn't go to plan. "My original piece broke in the kiln. The camel head was destroyed in the oven. I just found the ear. I came back with the ear in my hand and I was so upset but I sat down and started to work with the clay." Razan had no plan or idea of what to make, the piece evolved and became one of her favourite pieces - 'The Girl's Head'.

One of the many benefits to creating works of art is the ability to forget about the world outside and focus on the here and now. Travelling from Syria to Ireland was a very emotional and traumatic period in Razan's life. "I came from a very hard situation; I left a lot of people behind, sisters, nephews, nieces, all of them, and came to another country, another language, another culture, another religion".

In addition to this, her brother passed away in the war in January. "Art helps me a lot. When I'm painting, I forget everything. I'm just here in the moment. I don't want to think about anything else. It has helped me to know myself and what I can and can't do."

According to Razan, in addition to helping her process the changes in her life, completing the course in the PLC has helped her improve her level of English. Initially she found it difficult to have a conversation with others, she was very conscious of the fact that she had "weird English", she felt isolated and thought that people did not want to speak with her because of this. But the opposite was true, the other learners did want to speak with her, and she was encouraged to talk with them and the teachers. As part of the PLC course Razan had to participate in class discussions, talk about her own work to the group in critique sessions, and complete a formal presentation in English – things she would never have dreamed of doing. She received great support from the learners and the teachers at the School of Art. "It's given me confidence to speak with other people" and she has also learned that "it's ok to make mistakes."

Razan is the winner of the Clare Garda Division Youth Award and the National Individual Garda Division Youth Award for her voluntary work in the community. She works with Syrian women as a translator and helps Syrian children in the homework club and summer camps. She also volunteers in the Family Resource Centre in Ennistymon.

According to Razan, she has embraced every opportunity because if "I'm going to live here I want to be part of the community and give something back".

13. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LIMERICK CITY LCEN CENTRES

1993-2019 LCEN CELEBRATING 26 YEARS

Adult education update.
There is a wide range of classes starting this September 2019 that is suited for those that just want to get out and learn a new skill or those who want to advance to a QQI certification.
If you are returning to learning as an adult you are embarking on a pathway to

Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN)

Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN) member organisations (Our Lady of Lourdes including Limerick City CDP OLOL, Southill FRC, Northside FRC including Limerick City CDP St. Munchin's, ADAPT, Moyross and St. Mary's), who have their own individual Quality Assurance, worked closely in the past with Limerick City Adult Education Service and then with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board over the past number of years. There has been a representative of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board on the LCEN QQI sub-group who has maintained the link between the groups. The LCEN QQI sub-group has also worked with part-time provision in the FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus in the provision of Level 3-6 QQI programmes in community settings and for the recruitment of learners. Each centre uses Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Assessment Templates, Programme descriptors and module descriptors.

Recognising our common history as providers of further education and training in Limerick City, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and the following named LCEN centres are now further endorsing their co-operation through the process of a Memorandum of Agreement.

The full centre list is as follows:

- ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services
- Limerick City Community Development Project
- Moyross Adult Education Group
- Northside Family Resource Centre
- Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services
- Southill Family Resource Centre
- St Mary's Community Adult Education Group

Each of the listed centres has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, relinquishing their existing provider status with QQI and becoming Further Education and Training Centres of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

This changeover has been approved by the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Council and QQI and will come into effect from 1st September 2019.

14. QQI WHITE PAPER: Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards

QQI's White Paper on the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards (ETBs)[5] outlines the proposed approach to the first review of quality assurance within the ETBs to be completed under section 34 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012). As the inaugural reviews will constitute the first such activity of its type in this sector, this will be a unique and discrete review event.

Figure 1: National Context for Quality Assurance

Proposed Methodology

a. Publication of Terms of Reference;

b. Completion of an inclusive self-evaluation report by the ETB;

c. Appointment of an external expert team of peer reviewers. The Review Team conducts:

    I. an external assessment of the self-evaluation and related material; and

    II. a site visit to explore and gather evidence about quality assurance within the ETB via interviews with key staff and learners and external stakeholders;

d. Production and publication of a report by the Review Team, outlining findings and recommendations;

e. A follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

15. PRIVATE SECURITY AUTHORITY QUALITY AUDIT

PSA – Private Security Authority Inspectors visited QA Support Services offices on 10th April 2019.

Folders were prepared by the three centres delivering courses – Raheen Campus, Shannon Campus and O'Connell Avenue Campus

- 4N1114 – Door Security Procedures
- 4N1118 – Guarding Skills

Verbal feedback from the visit was very positive and highly commended.

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[5]https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/White%20Paper%20Inaugural%20Review%20of%20Quality%20Assurance%20in%20Education%20and%20Training%20Boards.pdf

16. SOLAS QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE MONITORING

SOLAS has established a Quality Assurance Services Unit - http://www.solas.ie/QAS/Pages/default.aspx

SOLAS as an approved Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Co-ordinating Provider is required to have a quality assurance system in place that addresses the issues of data collection, curricula development, tutor training and support services. SOLAS is committed to ensuring its responsibilities as a Co-ordinating Provider are in adherence with QQI requirements and the SOLAS Collaborating Providers are in compliance with the SOLAS quality assurance systems. In this regard SOLAS has established a dedicated Quality Assurance Services (QAS) Unit.

The purpose of the QAS Unit is to operate and manage a systematic monitoring service that validates the effectiveness of the SOLAS quality assurance systems for pre-2016 apprenticeship programmes, Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) and Quarry Skills Certificate Scheme (QSCS) programmes.

The Quality Assurance Services Monitoring and Authentication Guide for Pre-2016 Apprenticeship Programmes and Construction Skills Certificate Scheme & Quarry Skills Certificate Scheme is accessible via the following link - http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/QAS%20%20Monitoring%20and%20Authentication%20Guide%20%20v1.pdf

17. YOUTHREACH QUALITY ASSURANCE UPDATE

CEIP REPORTS AND UPDATE OF ALIGNMENT OF CEIP PROCESS WITH ETB QA GOVERNANCE

A Quality Framework Initiative (QFI) for Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres was established in November 2000. The overall aim of the Quality Framework is to improve the quality of work in centres. This was originally achieved through exploring specific Quality Standards within the framework, by either an Internal Centre Evaluation (ICE) or a Centre Development Planning (CDP) Process

At the 2014 National Association of Youthreach Co-ordinators (NAYC) annual conference, a working group was set up and given a mandate, to review and update the original Quality Framework/Quality Standards, guidelines and support material. During 2014-2016 the working group reviewed and updated the Quality Framework process to reflect current needs and legislation. The original ICE and CDP processes that were central to the Quality Framework were incorporated into a new process called CEIP - Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Assurance Responsibilities
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board as a provider has responsibility for its own Quality Assurance (QA) and it must be assured that all QA initiatives are co-ordinated and ultimately managed by the QA Support Service via the Quality Council to the FET Steering Group to the Chief Executive. "An ETB is responsible for the design, development, approval, monitoring, and review of all programmes, including programmes leading to QQI awards." Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Education and Training Boards, May 2017)

National Developments
A meeting was held on the Quality Framework Process on 20th May 2019 between Tony Dalton, (Laois Offaly ETB Director of FET, Chair of FET QA Strategy Group and QA Network) with the QF Working Group NAYC/National Co-ordinator. A Sub-group of the Quality Framework Working Group has been established to begin mapping the alignment of the Youthreach CEIP process with ETB Quality Assurance responsibilities.

The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board QA Officer briefed Youthreach Quality Framework Facilitators at a 2-day workshop in Athlone on 31st May on "Updates on new developments within QA for ETBs"

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Developments
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board QA Support Service and QA Governance now incorporates the Youthreach CEIP process, with Youthreach CEIP reports being reviewed by the Quality Assurance sub-group and recommended to the Quality Council for approval.

Any relevant QA issues raised in CEIP reports will input into the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Improvement Planning (QIP) process and incorporated into individual centre QIP meetings with Quality Assurance Support Service.

Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR

LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board