



FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

QUALITY ASSURANCE NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue



QAI AWARD

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Quality Assurance Review
(QAR) Process

Welcome to the Sixth Edition of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Assurance Newsletter.

2020 will mark a significant milestone in the Quality Assurance arrangements between Limerick and Clare ETB and QAI, as for the first time, QAI will be conducting an external Review of Quality Assurance.

This process requires an evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of our quality assurance procedures, incorporating a self-evaluation report and a subsequent external review panel visit.

All FET staff will be involved, with extensive consultation with stakeholders during February and March, so please be aware and input into the process where you can.

This process is introduced within this Newsletter, along with a broad series of articles detailing ongoing and planned activities in the areas of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Development.

Thank you to everyone who provided us with feedback and ideas for the newsletter throughout the year and, as always, you can contact qa@lcteb.ie with any suggestions.

Alan Hogan
Quality Assurance Officer



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Featured Article: National
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1. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines¹ defines Quality Assurance as “the **processes** that seek to ensure that the learning environment (including teaching and research) reaches an acceptable threshold of quality.”

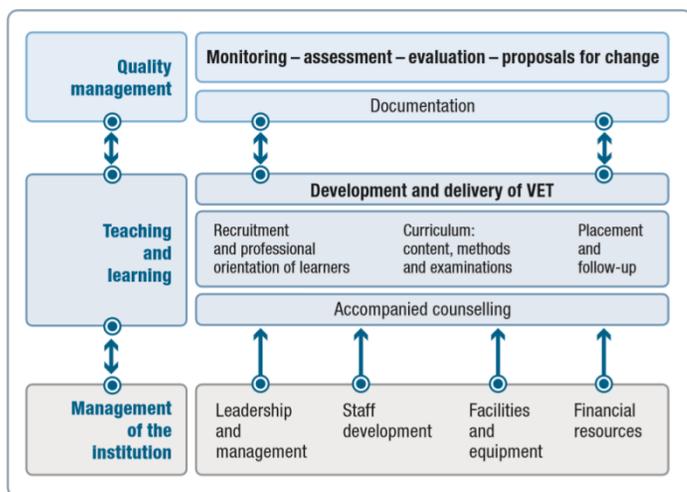
The policy goes on to quote the UNESCO definition of Quality Assurance as “...an ongoing, continuous **process** of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of ... [an] education system, institution or program.”

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, QQI is required to develop and publish guidelines for providers for the quality assurance (QA) of their programmes and services. The 2012 Act, in turn, requires providers to “have regard to” QQI’s QA guidelines when developing their QA procedures. QQI have provided an excellent interactive guide to the Quality Assurance Guidelines - <http://www.qqi-qaguidelines.com/>

QQI approved Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s Quality Assurance procedures via the 2018 Re-engagement processes, incorporating an agreed Executive Self Evaluation Report and Quality Improvement Plan.

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines articulates all provider’s responsibilities in relation to Quality Assurance – “Quality and its assurance is the primary responsibility of the provider.... provider-owned quality assurance refers to the mechanisms and procedures developed and adopted by providers to achieve and maintain a desired level of quality in educational provision, research and related services.”

Figure 2. Main areas for quality within a VET institution



Source: Cedefop.

CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training “Handbook for VET providers, supporting Internal Quality Management and Quality Culture”² provides a useful guide to the various layers of a Quality Assurance system within a Further Education and Training institution. (VET, or Vocational Education and Training as it is referred to in Europe).

The handbook goes on to describe the relationship between an effective **Quality Management System** (“Quality Management monitors, assesses and evaluates input, output and outcomes of its impact on quality of services within the organisation”) and the **Quality Culture** (“Quality Culture builds on quality management and is understood as the interaction between a well-functioning, professional Quality Management System (QMS) and committed staff members who, guided by professionalism, demonstrate quality-oriented behaviour.”

Thus, the main factors of a quality culture are individuals’ roles and commitment in producing quality in VET.”

Another useful tool that Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board considers when developing approaches to Quality Assurance is the EQAVET Building Blocks. EQAVET, European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, supports the implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation³ by working collectively to build a shared understanding of quality assurance and development among member countries and social partners through exchanging experiences and generating new insights that can influence policy and practice at national and local levels.

1. Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance	Central to providers’ implementation is a culture which supports and values quality assurance.
2. Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances	The EQAVET Recommendation covers all aspects of VET provision. VET can be supported by building on existing quality assurance arrangements.
3. Develop a culture of self-assessment	A culture which encourages reflection and self-assessment will lead to improved quality of provision.
4. Support staff training in relation to quality assurance	VET is dependent on the knowledge, skills and competences of staff. VET can be enhanced if staff have an increased awareness of quality assurance .
5. Use data and feedback to improve VET	VET has to both meet employers’ and learners’ needs. Key to any quality assurance system is the way data on performance is systematically collected and used by VET providers to modify and improve provision.
6. Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders	VET is based on effective partnerships. These exist between government, social partners and national stakeholders ; employers and VET providers; and learners and society. They create the foundation stone of the VET system which gives it strength, relevance and acceptability.

¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Policy%20on%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

² https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3068_en.pdf

³ <https://www.eqavet.eu/What-We-Do/Policy-Documents/2009>

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR) PROCESS

In 2018, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board completed a re-engagement process, and QQI formally approved Limerick and Clare ETB's quality assurance procedures. The primary responsibility for the quality assurance of ETB provision lies with the ETB and it is therefore responsible for operating, monitoring and reviewing its quality assurance arrangements on an ongoing basis. The quality cycle also includes an external dimension in the form of monitoring and periodic review by QQI. The first such review of ETB quality assurance procedures is due to take place on a scheduled basis across the sector in 2020-2022 (known as the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in ETBs). The Terms of Reference for the review are available [here](#)⁴ and a Handbook outlining the procedural arrangements for the review is available [here](#)⁵.

The key phases of the process are as follows:

1. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Division will undertake a comprehensive and inclusive self-evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures. This will result in the production of a self-evaluation report by Limerick and Clare ETB. **All FET Staff will be involved in this process through various methods. FET learners, parents, employers, community partners, and other partners will also be consulted during this self-evaluation process, which will take place during February and March 2020.**
2. **QQI will appoint an external review team** to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of Limerick and Clare ETB's quality assurance procedures. This will include reviewing the self-evaluation report and discussing Limerick and Clare ETB's quality system with a broad range of ETB staff, learners and stakeholders over the course of a **week-long visit to Limerick and Clare ETB.**
3. The review process will result in the **production of an independent review report by the QQI review team**, which will make a number of findings, commendations and recommendations on the operation of Limerick and Clare ETB's quality assurance system.
4. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board will be asked to provide a formal response to the report, which will be included in the published report.
5. Limerick and Clare ETB will then prepare an action plan to address the issues identified in the review.
6. A year after submission of the action plan, Limerick and Clare ETB will provide a follow-up report on its progress against the actions outlined in its action plan.

This is the first review of its kind for the FET sector, and a significant milestone for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. Maud Baritaud, FET Research, Planning & Evaluation Officer has been appointed to design and coordinate this process. A Quality Assurance Review Task Group has also been set up with representatives from FET full-time and part-time provision, management, administration, development and support services, to oversee and guide the self-evaluation process, and draft the self-evaluation report.

Your active participation is essential to this process. All FET Coordinators will be briefed on 28th & 29th of February 2020, and information posters will be distributed to each FET Centre to highlight how staff and learners can get involved.

If you want to know more, please don't hesitate to contact Maud Baritaud (maud.baritaud@lceetb.ie).

⁴ <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Pages/Review-Terms-of-Reference-Inaugural-Review-of-Quality-Assurance-in-ETBs.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Pages/Review-Handbook-Inaugural-Review-of-Quality-Assurance-in-ETB.aspx>

3. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES



The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training QA Support Service hosted a series of seminars to inform and guide staff about the new single version Assessment Procedures in the Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Limerick on the 29th and 30th August, and on the 2nd September 2019.

The purpose of the seminars was to give staff an overview of the new Assessment Procedures, to outline how they would be implemented and to provide answers to some of the anticipated questions that may arise. 223 staff attended over the course of the three seminars, with a summary of the feedback – “very informative, good to have guidelines to follow”. Many found the scenario section of the seminar very helpful. “All the information presented was useful, but the suggestions in relation to the various scenarios were most useful”.



The eight new procedures were implemented across Further

Education and Training Centres in Limerick and Clare from September 2019.

These procedures will be adopted by Limerick College of Further Education FET Centres from September 2020. The FET QA Support Service and LCFE Centre Management are developing an implementation plan for the Limerick College of Further Education.

As outlined in the Assessment Procedure Seminars, QA Support Service have developed two documents:

1. Assessment Procedures – Tracking Form

This will be used by Provision Co-ordinators to track the number of applications submitted by learners. This Excel file is available on StaffCONNECT for co-ordinators to download and store it locally. The QA Support Service will request the data in this file at the end of the academic year to monitor and evaluate the number, type and the outcome of the applications.

2. Assessment Procedures Feedback Form

This will allow staff to give feedback on the Assessment Procedures directly to the QA Support Office. This is a Microsoft Form, feedback can be entered directly into this form and submitted to QA (no information is stored in the form). The [feedback form](http://bit.ly/374gfDC)⁶ is available in StaffCONNECT.



⁶ <http://bit.ly/374gfDC>

4. WIDE RANGE ACHIEVEMENT TEST, FIFTH EDITION (WRAT5)

The Equal Status Act 2000 (Section 4) requires education and training establishments to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of learners who have a disability (Government of Ireland, 2000).

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. The grounds include; learning difficulty; deaf or having a hearing impairment; blind or visually impaired; physical difficulty (including mental health and/or behavioural difficulties along with physical difficulties); and any grounds covered by current legislation.

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.

The Reasonable Accommodation Procedure was implemented in September 2019 by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Division. This procedure is one of the suite of eight Limerick and Clare ETB Assessment Procedures, developed by a national working group, with implementation supported by the Limerick and Clare ETB QA Support Service. It outlines examples of relevant evidence/ documentation necessary for application for reasonable accommodation in assessment which include but are not limited to:

- Medical Report
- **Wide Range Achievement Test, fifth edition (WRAT5)**
- Educational Psychologist Report
- Occupational Therapist Report
- Guidance Counsellor Report

While many of our learners (particularly those coming through the post primary system who may have received Reasonable Accommodation as part of their assessment to date) have access to appropriate evidence, the HEA Fund for Students with a Disability does not cover “assessment or diagnosis of a disability”. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training did not want to place an undue financial burden on others. In order to be as inclusive as possible and to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners, the Further Education and Training team reviewed a number of options which could be administered within centres by trained staff.

The Wide Range Achievement Test 5 was chosen from the list outlined by the DES in Circular Letter 0058/2019 (Revising Circular 0035/2017) as the age range is appropriate for Further Education and Training Learners (5 – 94) and WRAT 5 can be used as evidence within the Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examination (RACE).

All of our Further Education and Training Centres have been offered WRAT 5 training through the Professional Development Support Service and WRAT 5 packs have been purchased and are available through the Active Inclusion Support Service to support learners who are applying for Reasonable Accommodation but do not have access to the relevant evidence / documentation necessary to support their application.

5. RESULTS APPROVAL PANEL (RAP) PROCEDURE

The new single-version Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Division Results Approval Panel Procedure was implemented for the December 2019 Certification period.

Following development of the procedure by a working group, recommendation by the Quality Council subgroup (Quality Assurance) and approval by the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Council, this new procedure replaces all the pre-existing legacy Results Approval Panel procedures.

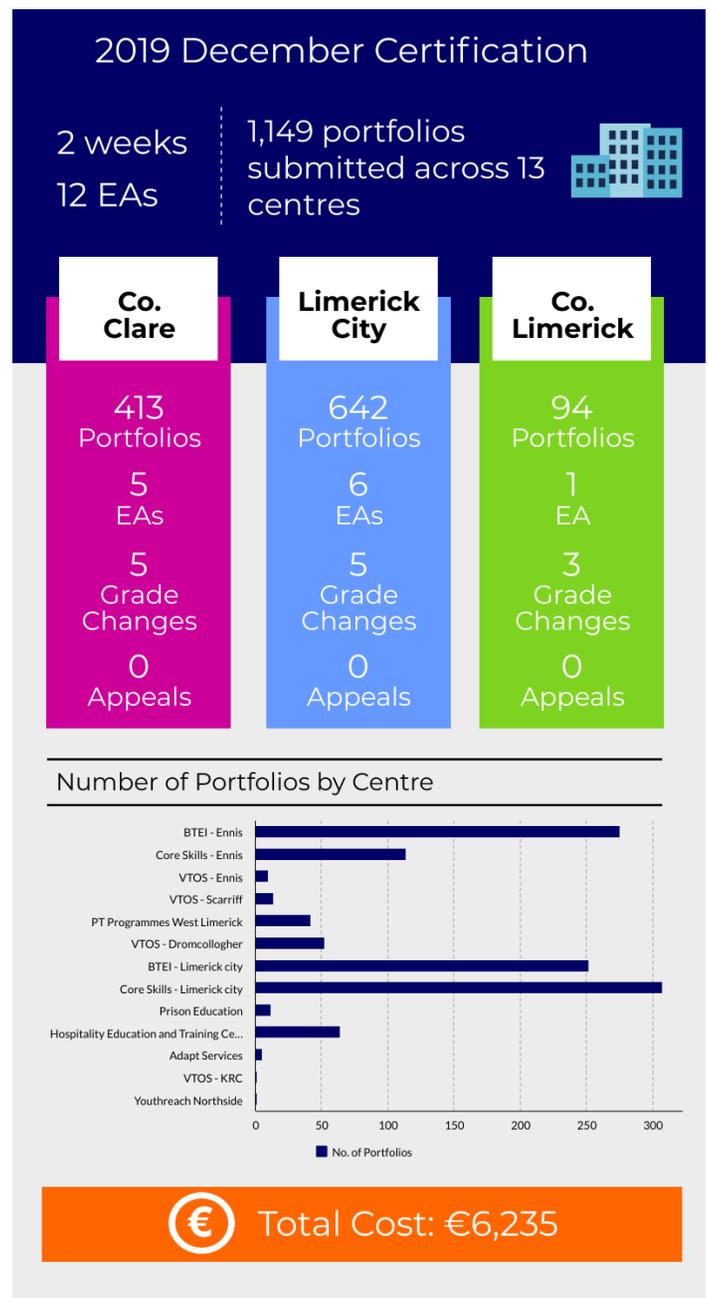
The purpose of this procedure is to detail how Limerick and Clare ETB will ensure that appropriate decisions are taken with regard to the outcomes of the assessment, verification and authentication processes in programmes leading to QQI awards. The purpose of the Results Approval Panel is to ensure that results are fully quality assured and signed off by the Provider prior to submission to QQI.

Core concepts of single RAP procedure

- Chairperson and panel members are appointed to the Panel
- Individual centres/departments prepare documentation and present results to panel, including “Summary Report to Results Approval Panel” document
- Each centre presents 5-10-minute oral presentation (good practice identified by External Authenticator (EA), issues or concerns identified, areas for improvement from EA, suggestions for improvement)
- Results Approval 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

December 2019 RAP Summary

- Briefing on new RAP procedure to all Centres presenting for certification was held on 25th November 2019.
- Results Approval Panel took place in FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus on 4th December 2019.
- Results Approval Panel – Triona Lynch, Leesha Foley, Sean O’Carroll.
- 12 Centres Presented for Certification via new process.
- Review of effectiveness of new process has been carried out following Results Approval Panel.
- Preparation and scheduling for largest certification period in May/June 2020 is ongoing.



6. CENTRE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING MEETINGS

QA Support Service are scheduling Centre Quality Improvement Planning meetings with each of the 42 Further Education and Training Centres during January/February 2020.

These individual centre quality improvement plans will inform and in turn be informed by the Limerick and Clare ETB Quality Improvement Plan and form the basis for the continued development and enhancement of the overall quality assurance system. The inputs to these individual centre quality improvement plans include:

- Review of recent Certification period - Internal Verification reports / External Authentication reports / Results Approval Panel meeting minutes / Appeals Examiner feedback.
- Assessment Procedures Tracking Forms - Use and tracking of new assessment procedures
- Planning for next authentication period – Estimates, IV process and training needs, EA Process, RAP Procedure and process, Appeals
- Changes to programmes or modules being delivered by the centre in 2020.
- Changes/updates in staff by centre in 2020.
- Curriculum Review Input requests via Module Revision form
- QA Professional Development requirements of centre.
- QA needs/supports/queries/inputs as identified by centre.
- Quality Assurance Updates
 - QQI QA Inaugural Review
 - Handbooks – Referencing and Academic Writing
 - QA Professional Developments
 - QA Induction for new teaching staff (Jan & Feb/Mar)
 - WRAT 5 Training
 - Academic Writing and Referencing Skills (March)
 - New RAP procedure

County Limerick		County Clare	
1.	FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus (Part-time)	23.	Ennis College of Further Education
2.	FET Centre, Abbeyfeale Campus (Part-time)	24.	Ennistymon Vocational School
3.	FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus (VTOS)	25.	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus (BTEI)
4.	FET Centre, Shanagolden Campus (VTOS)	26.	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus (Core Skills)
5.	FET Centre, Dromcollogher Campus (An t-Ionad Glas)	27.	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus (VTOS)
6.	FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus (Coláiste Íosaef)	28.	FET Centre, Scarriff Campus (VTOS)
7.	Croom College of Further Education	29.	FET Centre, Kilrush Campus (VTOS)
8.	FET Centre, Shanagolden Campus (Youthreach)	30.	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus (Youthreach)
9.	FET Centre, Hospital Campus (Youthreach)	31.	FET Centre, Kilrush Campus (Youthreach)
10.	FET Centre, Cappamore Campus	32.	FET Centre, Tuamgraney Campus (Youthreach)
Limerick City		33.	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus (Comm Ed.)
11.	FET Centre, O'Connell Ave. Campus (BTEI)	Training Centres	
12.	FET Centre, O'Connell Ave. Campus (Core Skills)	34.	FET Centre, Shannon Campus
13.	FET Centre, O'Connell Ave. Campus (Comm Ed.)	35.	FET Centre, Raheen Campus
14.	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (VTOS)	LCEN Centres	
15.	FET Centre, O'Connell Ave Campus (Youthreach)	36.	Adapt Domestic Abuse Services
16.	FET Centre, Watch House Cross Campus (Youthreach)	37.	Moyross Adult Education Group
17.	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (Youthreach)	38.	Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services
18.	Limerick College of Further Education (Full Time)	39.	Northside Family Resource Centre
19.	Limerick College of Further Education (Part Time)	40.	Southhill Family Resource Centre
20.	Prison Education Service	41.	St Mary's Community Adult Education
21.	Mary Immaculate College	42.	Limerick City CDP
22.	Hospitality Education and Training Centre		

7. 2019: TWITTER HIGHLIGHTS

January



15th January

Fantastic day for the Level 6 Apprenticeship in Professional Hairdressing with the approval by the Consortium Steering Group of the programme for submission to QQI for validation. @QQI_connect @LimClareETB_FET @SOLASFET

18th January

Supporting quality assured provision to @LimClareETB_FET 25,000 learners in 33 centres at 300 locations across Limerick and Clare, the @QA_LimClareETB Support Service provides regional Quality Assurance support to the authority's centres, colleges and schools. #Quality #FET

23rd January

Statutory, Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for ETB sector, supplement to Core QA guidelines, addresses specific responsibilities of ETBs as "significant public body providers in Education and Training sector".

<https://bit.ly/2Dtm3C> @LimClareETB_FET @QQI_connect

February



12th February

Mock Panel event for Hairdressing Apprenticeship in FET Centre, Raheen Campus today. Final preparations for validation panel, thorough discussions and feedback, really worthwhile event!

@LimClareETB_FET @ETBIreland @QQI_connect @SOLASFET

25th February

The inaugural meeting of the @LimClareETB Further Education and Training Quality Council, formalising the establishment of Quality Assurance Governance structures to develop, protect and maintain standards of Education and Training programmes



March



4th March

Congratulations to members of 12 Infantry Battalion receiving their @QQI_connect certs at an award ceremony in Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick as part of joint Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) project between @LimClareETB_FET and @defenceforces. @SOLASFET @LimClareETB

20th March

Delighted to welcome Joanne Whitelock, Donegal ETB QA Officer to QA Support Service offices in Ennis today. Great exercise in collaboration and information sharing, critical to the development of the sector. @QQI_connect @DonegalETB @LimClareETB @ETBIreland



May



11th May

Limerick and Clare ETB QA Support Service were delighted to host a briefing session this morning for all External Authenticators engaged in upcoming certification across LCETB FET centres.

#QualityImprovement @LimClareETB_FET @QQI_connect @SOLASFET @ETBIreland

14th May

Delighted to host @QQI_connect for the Annual Dialogue meeting with @LimClareETB_FET Quality Council. Very informative and useful process.

31st May

Looking forward to presenting on Quality Assurance to the Youthreach Quality Framework Facilitators conference in @GlassonHotel this morning. @QQI_connect @ETBIreland @SOLASFET

July



31st July

Quite a day for @LimClareETB_FET and the Irish hairdressing industry! The Level 6 National Hairdressing Apprenticeship has been recommended to @QQI_connect for validation by independent panel! Well done to all involved! @SOLASFET @ETBIreland @LimClareETB

August



21st August

Plenty of new resources available to @LimClareETB_FET staff for the new academic year - Referencing Handbook + Quality Assurance newsletter printed and ready for distribution at Assessment Procedures seminars. #ThisisFET #FET_QA

29th August

Seminar on implementation of new Assessment Framework procedures, assuring standard assessment processes across all @LimClareETB Further Education and Training Centres. @PaulPatLCETB @_alanhogan @QQI_connect @SOLASFET @LimClareETB_FET



November

4th November

The scene all set this morning for the Collaborating Providers briefing for the new National Hairdressing Apprenticeship. Great turnout and engaging discussions, thanks to all! @LimClareETB_FET @LimClareETB_QA @QQI_connect @ETBIreland @SOLASFET

19th November

Delighted to be invited to The Netherlands to participate in an EQAVET study visit, to reflect on the Dutch system of FET Quality Assurance and learn from European best practice. @QQI_connect @SOLASFET @LimClareETB @LimClareETB_FET @LimClareETB_QA@QQI_connect @ETBIreland



20th November

An historic day for @LimClareETB at the first day of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship. A game changer for apprentices, employers and education providers. Congratulations to all involved in this, huge achievement! @QQI_connect @SOLASFET @ETBIreland #ThisisFET

27th November

Delighted to have the opportunity to showcase @LimClareETB_FET processes for Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship at the @rpl_network conference today. @SOLASFET @ETBIreland @QQI_connect @LimClareETB @LimClareETB_QA #thisisfet

28th November

Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN) Centres now centres as part of @LimClareETB_FET Quality Assurance. An agreement built on shared values and a commitment to quality teaching and learning. Proud to represent @LimClareETB at this historic event. @SOLASFET @QQI_connect



8. LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2 PROGRAMME CONSOLIDATION

The working group met twice in October 2019 to review work carried out so far.

Staff have been identified to work on the review of the Cork ETB modules and the current Level 1 and Level 2 Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board modules. A template has been agreed and will form the common layout and design of all Level 1 and Level 2 module descriptors.

A Workshop led by QA Support Service was delivered on 4th December 2019. Initially this was to focus on Level 1 work but as the same staff are involved in both Level 1 and Level 2 processes, it was decided to deal with both levels jointly from here on. This workshop was attended by the main working group and the staff involved in the processes. It included an overview of standards on levels 1-6 of the NFQ with a particular focus on the learning outcomes at L1 and L2, QQI Grading Criteria, Blooms Taxonomy, documentation including Component Specifications, Programme Specifications, Module Template design and layout, Assessment Techniques and useful information for designing assessments. Those involved in the process gave an update on current progress and plenty discussion took place around the historical context, the processes and the planned outcomes.

The following timelines for both Level 1 and Level 2 Programme Development were also agreed:

Week of 3rd February - Review of Drafts. This meeting will include input on alternative approaches to assessments.

Week of 2nd March - Further Review of Drafts

Week of 30th March - Final date for completion of all reviews

April / May - External Evaluation (organised by QA), Programme Governance (approval)

September - All L1 and L2 modules uploaded to StaffCONNECT

9. MODULE DESCRIPTORS UPDATED

These descriptors were updated in September/October 2019.

Module Name	Module Code	Updates
Digital Media Technology (Co. Limerick)	4NI858	Correction of typing error on Learner Marking Sheet 3, Skills Demonstration.
Child Development	5NI764	Correction of total marks on Learner Marking Sheets.
Digital Presentations	5N0563	Correction of module code.
Entrepreneurial Skills	5NI951	Changes to Section 11b and Section 11c with associated changes to Marking Sheets.
Safety and Health at Work	5NI794	Correction of marks awarded for structured questions, Section 11c.
Physics	5NI460	Mapping of LOs and Marking Sheets.
Research and Study Skills	5N3113	Revision to Section 10, part 10. Revisions to Section 11c and associated changes to Marking Sheet 2.
Infection Prevention and Control	5N3734	Section 11c Assessment – Examination criteria changed, associated Marking Sheet changed. Appendices: Updated page 19.
Reception and Frontline Office Skills	5NI407	Changes to Sections 11b and 11c with associated revisions to both Individual Learner Marking Sheets.
Computer Applications (Limerick city)	4NI112	Section 5 - Indicative Content updated. Section 6 – Assessment requirements changed. Marking Sheets changed accordingly.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SESSIONS

QA Induction for New Teaching Staff

Several training sessions have been organised for 2020, the first of which is QA Induction for New Teaching Staff. This training is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 focusses on the role of the assessor, an overview of QQI and QA in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, standards and preparing for assessment. In Part 2 attendees select if they wish to attend the Level 1 – 3 or the Level 4 – 6 session. The content for Part 2 is as follows:

Level	Content
1 – 3	Writing assessment briefs and giving feedback
4 – 6	Writing assessment briefs, marking schemes, exam questions and giving feedback

QA Support Service have delivered this in a number of formats over the past number of years and following consultation and feedback, it has been decided to revert to the original two-part model. This puts less pressure on those attending to absorb all the information, facilitates discussion on the day and then allows for reflection on and use of the learning from Part 1 in the classroom. Teaching staff should then be ready to prepare assessment instruments when it comes to Part 2.

All are required to attend Part 1 (in one location). Teaching staff then choose the most appropriate session for Part 2. The dates are outlined in the tables below.

Part 1		
Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, 14 th January	1.30 – 4.30 pm	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis
Wednesday, 15 th January	1.30 – 4.30 pm	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (KRC)

Part 2			
Date	Time	Level	Location
Tuesday, 25 th February	10 am – 12 noon	1 – 3	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis
Wednesday, 26 th February	10 am – 12 noon	1 – 3	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (KRC)
Wednesday, 4 th March	10 am – 1 pm	4 – 6	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis
Thursday, 5 th March	10 am – 1 pm	4 – 6	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (KRC)

If a member of the teaching staff has not previously attended these sessions and is new to the delivery of QQI modules, they are required to attend. To register for this training please complete the following form - [QA Induction for New Teaching Staff – Registration Form](#).⁷ It is important that all attendees get permission from their line manager to attend.

Academic Writing and Referencing Skills

Two fantastic resources have been developed for the FET sector - the Referencing Handbook and the Academic Writing Handbook for Learners. These resources are now available from the QA Support Service; please email qa@lcebtb.ie to request copies.

As part of the roll out of these resources the QA Support Service has organised a training session titled – **Academic Writing and Referencing Skills**. This session is aimed at those teaching learners at levels 5 and 6. The session will assist teachers to facilitate learners to “develop the academic and vocational language, literacy and numeracy skills” in line with validated programmes. The dates are as follows:

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, 12 th February	10 am – 1.00 pm	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis
Thursday, 13 th February	10 am – 1.00 pm	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (KRC)

To register for this training please complete the following form. It is important that all attendees get permission from their line manager to attend. <https://qasupportservice.eventbrite.ie/>

⁷ <http://bit.ly/2u6hROY>

Internal Verification Training

Train to become an Internal Verifier (IV) for your centre by completing this hands-on workshop. This training is beneficial for all teaching staff and will help further enhance your understanding of the requirements of the IV process.

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, 24th March	10 am – 12.30 pm	FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis
Wednesday, 25th March	10 am – 12.30 pm	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (KRC)

To register for this training please complete the following form. It is important that all attendees get permission from their line manager to attend. <https://qasupportservice.eventbrite.ie/>

11. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LIMERICK COMMUNITY EDUCATION NETWORK (LCEN)

The individual centres that constitute the Limerick Community Education Network, namely Adapt Services, Moyross Adult Education Group, Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services Group, Northside Family Resource Centre, Southill Family Resource Centre, St. Mary's Community Adult Education Group, and Limerick City CDP will, as part of this MOU agreement, now come under the Quality Assurance remit of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

This relationship will assure access to validated programmes of education and training as part of a quality assured governance and assessment process, ensuring learner certification and providing continued support for the provision of quality teaching and learning.

The change in status of the LCEN centres as individual providers to being centres of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board will ensure that the centres will retain the facility to return learner results to QQI for certification following quality assured assessment processes. Through this partnership, the LCEN centres will be able to continue their invaluable work of providing education and training opportunities to the communities of Limerick City.

The relationship between Limerick and Clare Education Training Board, stretches back to City of Limerick VEC and the Adult Education Service LCAES. Since 2006, when CLVEC then LCEN had Quality Assurance approved by FETAC processes, there has been a very close relationship between the two organisations. There has always been a strong partnership approach, sharing information which has enabled a consistency of approach. Examples such as - Sharing of curriculum, quality assurance policies and procedures, templates, assessment resources, etc has assured an ongoing consistency between the Quality Assurance of the two organisations.

Critical has been the support and guidance of Quality and Qualifications Ireland, who fully supported this initiative. In their letter of confirmation to Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Walter Balfe, Head of Quality Assurance, quoted the QQI "Programme and Awards Executive Committee" The PAEC is part of the governance structures of QQI that ensures programmes and awards are appropriate and consistent. The letter states "The PAEC acknowledges the cooperation demonstrated by the centres and the Education and Training Board and commended all involved for their commitment to quality assured training for the learners served by the centres"

At a learner certification event in Southill Hub on the 28th November 2019, Paul Patton, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Director of Further Education and Training, formally presented signed Memorandums of Understanding to representatives from each of the LCEN centres. (pictured above)



12. HAIRDRESSING APPRENTICESHIP



Introducing the first registered apprentices on the newly validated National Hairdressing Apprenticeship at their induction briefing day in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Raheen Campus. This was a historic day for the industry after almost two years from the initial proposal to the first intake of apprentices.

The National Hairdressing Apprenticeship was developed by a consortium of industry and education providers and as a statutory apprenticeship, is governed by the Industrial Training Act, 1967. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board are the co-ordinating provider and for the first time, all 15 of the other Education and Training Boards have signed

memorandums of understanding to be collaborating providers, making this the first national post-2016 apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship is a minimum of three years in duration with a ratio of 80:20 on-the-job and off-the-job work-based and Further Education and Training centre-based training and education. On completion, graduates from the programme will be awarded a QQI Level 6 Major Award on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The roll-out of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship means that for the first time in Ireland there is now a nationally recognised standard for the hairdressing industry.

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Integration

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) was integrated into the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme from the early stages of design. TEL principles were built into the programme validation document which was submitted to QQI and formally validated in September 2019, in the individual module descriptors and sections such as the teaching and learning strategy and the assessment strategy.

The TEL team worked closely with the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship development team and encouraged all ideas/inputs that could use TEL to enhance the user experience.

As well as being integrated into the programme itself, TEL was used to assist programme, curriculum and assessment development.

Some examples of how TEL was used include the following:

- Moodle **hairapp.ie** site developed with access for apprentices and teachers of the programme that includes an Office 365 account and an Outlook email address
- Moodle and instructional design for development of teaching and learning resources and assessments
- Ms Teams (part of the Office 365 suite) for collaboration between NHA team members
- H5P for development of interactive video tutorials
- Online assessment of learners via Moodle **hairapp.ie**
- Intelliboard Moodle plug-in to allow data analysis of all instances of the programme nationally by designated users
- Potential teachers of the apprenticeship programme were given a one-day workshop in using and incorporating resources such as Kahoot! and Zetings into their classrooms, along with training on Moodle basics

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Process

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board as co-ordinating provider of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, is committed to utilising RPL as an instrument for determining standard access equivalences and for the award of credit or exemptions to apprentices with qualifications or prior experience in the Hairdressing field of knowledge.

For the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used to gain:

- Access or entry to the Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme where the applicant does not meet the standard entry requirements
- Advanced Entry onto Stage 2 of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Programme
- Certification of the Level 6 Certificate in Hairdressing award.

There are two main categories within RPL

1. The recognition of learning which has already had formal certification within the Further Education and Training system in Ireland or abroad, often referred to as Certified Learning
2. The recognition of learning which has been gained through experiences in the workplace, usually referred to as Experiential Learning.

The National Hairdressing Apprenticeship is mapped to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The programme is considered in terms of credits, modules and stages. A stage is equivalent to one academic year of a full-time course.

NFQ Level	
Stage 1 = 70 Credits	Level 5
Stage 2 = 75 Credits	Level 6
Stage 3 = 80 Credits	

The RPL system allows for learning to be measured and recognised regardless of where it was gained. This means that an apprentice can be granted exemption from Stage 1, or credits for the full Award where they can show that they have achieved sufficient prior learning.

RPL for non-standard access to the programme is by means of an application form and a suitability interview with set criteria to be met.

RPL for advanced entry into Stage 2 of the programme is by means of an application form, a completed competency checklist signed by the employer, in the case of applicants without the QQI Level 5 Hairdressing Major Award, a theory test to assess theory-based learning outcomes and a suitability interview for all applicants. All advanced entry applicants will also complete a short course to fill any skills gaps in areas such as health and safety and IT.

The application for RPL against the Major Award is structured as a portfolio. A portfolio is a collection of information and documentation which supports an application and provides evidence of the learning.

Support is provided to potential apprentices who wish to apply through the Hairdressing Apprenticeship National Co-ordinator.

It is expected that RPL at award stage will be in demand from workplace mentors and experienced hairdressers. This was of particular interest to employers at the national consultation workshops, writer's symposium and peer review conferences during the development of the apprenticeship. This will over time enable workplace mentors to attain the award that they are assisting in delivering.

RPL applications for certification against the major award will go through the *Four Stages of RPL for Certification*:

1. Identification – identifies the knowledge, skill and competencies of the applicant
2. Documentation – measures what the applicant knows and can do against set criteria
3. Assessment – applicant will build a portfolio of evidence
4. Certification – portfolio of evidence is mapped to the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) of the validated programme. This portfolio of evidence will go through the same rigorous authentication process (IV/EA/RAP/Appeals) as all other awards presented for certification.

13. DEACTIVATION OF UNUSED AND LITTLE USED CAS AWARDS

QA Support Service met with Alga Mulhall and Paul Brady (Research and Standards QQI) on 4th September 2019 to discuss the requests made by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to retain certain CAS awards. Subsequent to this meeting QQI published a list of almost 200 CAS Awards which have been deactivated as of October 2019. Please see [QQI Deactivation of unused/little used CAS awards⁸](#) for more information.

All such module descriptors have been removed from StaffCONNECT. However, they remain listed in some award structures on the individual Programme Descriptors so provision should take care when planning future delivery. This list does not include Occupational First Aid 5NI207 which was deactivated following June 2019 certification. QQI will review CAS awards annually in light of numbers submitted for certification.

14. CONSOLIDATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE HOURS

Following queries raised at June 2019 Certification period, QA Support Service reviewed the number of work placement hours listed on Level 5 and Level 6 healthcare, childcare and other vocationally similar programmes along with the requirements for other more generic programmes.

The following was agreed at the December 2019 Programme Governance meeting and approved by Limerick and Clare ETB Quality Council:

- 60 hours work placement for generic programmes
- 120 hours for all childcare/healthcare/nursing programmes

Such changes will come into effect from September 2020. QA Support Service are currently reviewing the work placement requirements in specific Level 5 healthcare modules, particularly for those modules delivered as stand-alone, without simultaneous delivery of formal Work Experience module.

15. ACADEMIC WRITING HANDBOOK

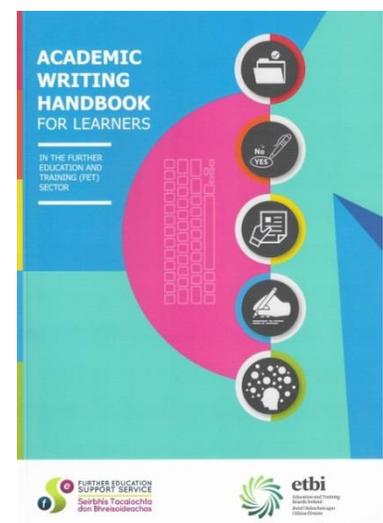
Following on from the success of the Referencing Handbook, the Further Education Support Service (FESS) along with representatives from ETBs and support from ETBI, have developed another resource for learners and those working in FET. The Academic Writing Handbook was published in October 2019 following much consultation with staff working across FET. While primarily aimed at learners undertaking study at Levels 5 and 6, the handbook may also prove valuable for learners and those delivering courses at other levels on the NFQ. As stated in the Introduction “by developing and improving writing skills, learners can develop good academic practices for drafting and writing assessment work. Well-written assessment work will consequently improve overall grades attained”.

The handbook is divided into steps with handy tips interspersed throughout to further enhance the user-friendly layout and design. The steps include:

- Step 1** Let's get started on the draft
- Step 2** Now get writing the draft
- Step 3** Reviewing the draft
- Step 4** Editing and proofreading the draft
- Step 5** Presenting and submitting finished written assessment work.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board QA Support Service has commissioned the printing of the Academic Writing Handbook for staff. Hard copies are currently available from QA Support Service office.

Both handbooks are available on StaffCONNECT - [Academic Writing Handbook⁹](#), [Referencing Handbook¹⁰](#) and also on www.fess.ie



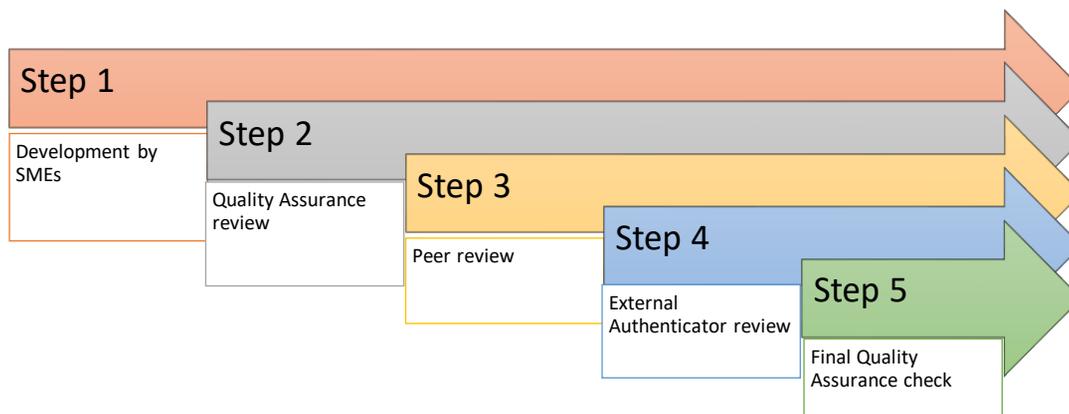
⁸ <https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Deactivate-unused-and-little-used-CAS-awards.aspx>

⁹ <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Academic%20Writing%20Handbook%202019.pdf>

¹⁰ https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Referencing_Handbook_2019.pdf

16. CENTRE BEST PRACTICE IN QUALITY ASSURANCE: National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Assessment Development

In order to quality assure all assessments developed for the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship a 5-step process was devised to ensure 'fair and consistent assessment of learners.



Step 1 – Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were engaged to write the assessments. These SMEs were provided with *Development of Assessment Documentation Training* by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s QA Support Service.

Step 2 – A member of the QA Support Service carried out a detailed QA check on each developed piece of assessment. These were then returned to the assessment writers for correction.

Step 3 – Once the corrected assessments were returned to the assessment development team, they were then sent for peer review. The peer review team made recommendations for amendments and then returned the assessments to the assessment development team.

Step 4 – The recommended amendments/corrections were carried out by the assessment development team and the assessments were then sent to EAs (External Authenticators) for review. The assessments were then once again returned to the assessment development team. If the EAs made further recommendations for amendments, these were done by the assessment development team.

Step 5 – The assessment bank was given a final check by Quality Assurance.

This significant body of work was tracked and managed by the assessment development team who designed an **Assessment Development Management System** in Ms Excel to track development and progress during each step.

INTEGRATED ASSESSMENTS															
#	Modules	Assessment Type	Paper A	Paper B	Paper C	%	LOs	Writers	Peer Review	EA Review	QA	Amendments	Final QA Layer	Amendments	Sent to TEL
1	Cutting 1	Practical Exam 1	Complete	Complete	Complete	70	LO1 - LO3	Patsy and Noreen	x	Completed by Anita Exam A	x	x	Completed by Patsy	x	In 'Ready for Moodle' folder in
	70					LOs 1, 2, 4									
	10					LOs 2, 3, 5									
2	Health and Safety	Practical Exam 2	Complete	Complete	Complete	50	LO1 - LO4	Noreen	x	Completed by Anita, Paper A and C	x	x	Completed by Patsy	x	In 'Ready for Moodle' folder in Teams
	70					LO1 - LO4									
	10					LOs 2, 3, 5									
3	Client Consultation	Safety Audit	Complete	N/A	N/A	5	LO3	Patsy	x	Completed by Fiona Holden	x	x	Completed by Patsy	x	In 'Ready for Moodle' folder in
	40					LO3									
4	Styling and Finishing 2	Practical Exam 3	Complete	N/A	N/A	40	LO1 - LO3	Noreen	x	Completed by Anita	x	x	Completed by Patsy	x	In 'Ready for Moodle' folder in
	70					LO1 - LO4									
	70					LO3									
5	Team Leadership	Assessment - Community Fundraising Event	Complete	N/A	N/A	40	LO2, LO4	Patsy	x	With EA	x	x	x	x	x
	40					LO2, LO5									
6	Customer Service and Retail	Practical Exam 4	Complete	N/A	N/A	60	LO1	Noreen	x	Complete	x	x	Completed by Patsy	Completed	In 'Ready for Moodle'
	60					LO1 - LO3									
	30					LO1 - LO3									

17. QQI UPDATES

2nd September 2019 - Development of Broad Standards for QQI FET Awards NFQ Levels 1-4¹¹

QQI published a call for tenders to award a contract for the Coordination of the Development of Broad Standards for QQI Further Education and Training Awards at NFQ Levels 1-4.

QQI maintains awards standards for a wide range of further education and training qualifications. Currently, QQI's existing awards standards at Levels 1-4 in the NFQ are all within CAS. While the use of broad standards is well established in higher education and for apprenticeship qualifications, it is not yet common in further education and training. The broad standards and the associated guidelines can be used by programme developers to guide the development of detailed minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) and minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs). These outcomes are approved when programmes proposed by providers are validated by QQI.

24th October 2019 - Quality in Higher and Further Education and Training¹²

QQI reports which make for essential reading are the annual snapshot of quality in both the HE and FET sectors. "Quality in Irish Further Education and Training" reflects QQI's observations on quality assurance developments within the sector arising from the quality reporting undertaken by the Education and Training Boards. This demonstrates considerable activity in a range of areas across the sector to further develop and integrate quality assurance mechanisms and enhance the delivery of further education and training. Report published as part of the QQI Insights series which aims to shape a fuller understanding of quality and qualifications in education and training, to inform and influence policy in education, training and employment, and to play a role in driving future transformation across the education and training sectors.

14th November 2019 - QQI launches National Academic Integrity Network¹³

Contract cheating often consists of companies, regularly referred to as "essay mills" selling learners bespoke assignments, essays and even theses which learners then submit for assessment as their own work. Companies advertising such services claim that their products are "plagiarism free" in that they are original pieces of work and reassure learners that they are not breaching plagiarism restrictions by using them. Risk of detection is lower as such products are harder (or even impossible) to detect by the anti-plagiarism software commonly used by colleges. A new provision has been included in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2018 to provide QQI with statutory powers to prosecute those who: assist learners to cheat by completing, in whole or in part, any piece of work required of the enrolled learner for their programme of study, or sit an exam or facilitate the sitting of an exam by someone other than the enrolled learner or provide answers for an exam; advertise cheating services; or publish advertisements for cheating services.

5th December 2019 - Call for Tenders - Evaluation of the overall comparability of the Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate qualifications (NFQ Level 6)¹⁴

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the stage agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. One key function is to support and promote a qualifications system that benefits learners and other stakeholders. As part of this work, QQI has published a call for tenders for the evaluation of the overall comparability of the two major award types at Level 6 in the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)/Level 5 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF):

- the Advanced Certificate (AC); and
- the Higher Certificate (HC)

This request for tenders is the first stage of a two-phase project to review these award-types and their effectiveness in differentiating further education and training (FET) from higher education and training (HET) as originally intended. This move towards greater clarity about NFQ awards at Level 6 will prove valuable to further education and training institutions and higher education institutions alike.

¹¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Call-for-Tenders---.aspx>

¹² <https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Quality-in-Higher-and-Further-Education-and-Training.aspx>

¹³ <https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/QQI-launches-National-Academic-Integrity-Network.aspx>

¹⁴ <https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Call-for-Tenders---Evaluation-of-the-overall-comparability-of-the-Advanced-Certificate-and-Higher-Certificate-qualification.aspx>



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