QIP Progress Reporting and Planning 2020

Part 1: Key areas of focus prioritised by Limerick and Clare ETB for quality improvement activity in 2019

1. Governance and Management of Quality
   - Quality Assurance governance structures fully established and operational in 2019. There were three Quality Council meetings, five Quality Council sub-group (Programme Governance) meetings, and three Quality Council sub-group (Quality Assurance) meetings.

2. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
   - There has been improved standardisation of policies and procedures across the FET Division, and the setting up of clear platforms to access same.
     i. Assessment templates, assessment procedures, external authentication, appeals and results approval panel process have all been developed to align the legacy providers within the ETB to a single common set of processes.
     ii. The SharePoint approach to the sharing of QA policies and procedures is effective as a one-stop shop to access all relevant documentation. 91% of FET staff surveyed for the QAR consultation reported they know where to find policies and procedures relevant to their work. Overall 69% of respondents agree their awareness of QA has improved over the last few years (65% of teaching staff; 88% of FET Coordinators and 78% of FET Managers/Support service staff).

3. Programmes of Education and Training
   - Curriculum development and quality assurance support for the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship has been continuing through 2019 and beyond – reviewing initial offering, developing additional resources, engaging and developing collaborating provider quality assurance etc.
   - Further education curriculum regularly updated based on feedback from learning practitioners, with review and update formally managed and governed.

4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
   - Quality Assurance induction professional development a mandatory requirement for new staff, delivered regularly by the QA Support Service.
   - Professional Development coordinator manages the comprehensive suite of education and training programmes for staff, with regular PD schedules communicated.
   - Whole of staff PD event held in Sept 2019, introducing and workshopping the suite of new LCETB Assessment Procedures.

5. Teaching and Learning
   - Support for quality assurance in teaching and learning has been extensive via ongoing responsibilities of the Quality Assurance support officers. Centre quality improvement planning meetings directly link teaching, learning and assessment plans within each provision to feedback from international, national and ETB inputs, feedback from IV/EA/RAP/Appeals, curriculum development and centre plans and competencies etc. All CQIP meetings documented and communicated and form a very strong link between provider QA and centre teaching, learning and assessment.

6. Assessment of Learners
   - Two main areas of focus in relation to assessment of learners
     - i. Centralisation of certification and authentication processes. Standard guideline documentation on IV, centralised recruitments and management of EA, new common documented process and central management for RAP meetings, centralised office for appals – all of these initiatives directly support consistency in learner assessment.
     - ii. Adoption by the ETB's FET Colleges/Centres of standardised procedures in relation to assessment – assures consistency of process across Colleges/Centres.

7. Supports For Learners
   - Development of learner information –
     - i. Development of plain English information to learners for inclusion in learner handbooks and induction materials.
     - ii. Continued support for rollout of 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.
     - iii. Referencing and Academic writing handbooks, developed by national working group, implemented across the ETB's FET Colleges/Centres.

8. Information and Data Management
   - Manual processes remain for the analysis and monitoring of data. Remains plan for automation of risk analysis and critical indicators, but this remains as a manual exercise in extrapolating data.
   - Ongoing management of all internal and external information channels, data/documentation and curriculum management via StaffCONNECT site for all staff to access. Controlled version control for all restricted documentation a priority.

9. Public Information and Communication
   - Three Quality Assurance Newsletters published, February 2019 [1], August 2019 [2], and January 2020 [3] are an example of the ongoing focus and importance given to effective communication to staff, learners and stakeholders.

10. Other Parties involved in Education and Training
    - The continued support for existing MOU partners: the LCEN centres, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick remains an extremely important relationship, and we continue to engage, develop and support this relationship.
    - The emerging relationships with other ETBs as collaborating provider of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship has required quality assurance application and oversight n addition to the MOUs signed pre-validation.

11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
    - The commencement of the QAIR progress is a significant development in the area of evaluation, monitoring and review, and significant organisational efforts and resources have been applied, and will continue to be applied to the completion of this project.

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[1] https://learningandskills.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/19_02_13_Quality_Assurance_Newsletter_Issue_4_Feb_2019.pdf
[2] https://learningandskills.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/19_08_12_Quality_Assurance_Newsletter_Issue_5_Aug_2019.pdf
[3] https://learningandskills.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20_01_14_Quality_Assurance_Newsletter_Issue_Issue_6_Jan_2020.pdf

2. Limerick and Clare ETB's main QA improvement achievements in 2019

Significant progress was achieved against the agreed 2019 Quality Improvement Plan. Some examples of the work carried out in 2019 include:

- Governance and Management of Quality
  - Working Groups of the Quality Council were established and proceeded developmental work on: review of Programme, Delivery and Development policy; consolidation of Level 1 and Level 2 programme curriculum; development of single Assessment policy.
- Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
  - Assessment templates, assessment procedures, external authentication, appeals and results approval panel process have all been developed to align the legacy providers within Limerick and Clare ETB to a single common set of processes.
- Programmes of Education and Training
  - Curriculum development and quality assurance support for the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship – a significant focus of developmental and QA support work.
- Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
  - Extensive QA professional development offered, including mandatory QA induction training being introduced which has greatly improved the uptake in QA induction.
- Teaching and Learning
  - Centre Quality Improvement planning process reviewed, extended and embedded – providing a direct and documented link between organisational QA and teaching, learning and assessment at centre, programme and module level.
- Assessment of Learners
  - Implementation of standardised assessment procedures across FET Division – will assure consistency and standardisation of practice across Colleges/Centres.
- Supports For Learners
  - Assessment procedures and forms, published on https://learningandskills.ie/our-courses/quality-assurance/ website, clear, transparent and consistent process for application for reasonable accommodation in assessment.
- Information and Data Management
  - Strong organisational processes of records and documentation control – e.g. minutes of FET Steering Group, Quality Council and sub-group meetings all available to staff.
- Public Information and Communication
  - Development of learningandskills.ie website to incorporate information for staff, learners and stakeholders, publishing of 3 Quality Assurance newsletters, strong social media presence (as summarised in QA newsletter issue 6, 2019 twitter highlights article)
- Other Parties involved in Education and Training
  - Building exiting relationships, formalising MOU with LCEN centres and incorporating representatives in Quality Council sub-groups.
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
  - Extensive research and development towards conducting the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance.
  - Incorporation of Youthreach CEIP QA self-evaluation reports into the ETB's Quality Council structure.

3. Barriers or challenges encountered in implementing the actions outlined in the QIPs

Reporting on the individual QIP actions necessitates allocating "Delayed" or "Not Started" status to those not completed. To summarise the barriers to completing these actions –

Quality Area	Key Tasks/Activities	Status	Update	Barrier to Completion
Documented Approach to Quality Assurance	Development of Limerick and Clare ETB FET Communications, Equality, Admissions policy.	Delayed	Working groups began process of developing policies in each of these areas.	Ongoing development of policies, delayed with an initial focus on procedures and processes relating to assessment policy.
Documented Approach to Quality Assurance	Development of Limerick and Clare ETB FET Assessment policy.	Delayed	Extensive developmental and implementation work carried out at procedure, template and process level.	Delays in establishing procedures at an organisation level prior to development of an overarching policy to be applied across all legacy providers.
Documented Approach to Quality Assurance	Update procedures relating to Limerick and Clare ETB "Programme Development, Delivery and Validation Policy" as legacy Programme Group function and process evolved into newly formed Quality Council sub-group (Programme Governance)	Delayed	Working group is in progress of reviewing and redeveloping these policies.	Work is almost complete, just needs to be finalised and approved.
Programmes of Education and Training	Review multiple versions of programmes that exist at lower levels across the ETB's regions – particular focus on implementing single version level 4 programmes across all the ETB's regions.	Delayed	Working group focus on aligning level 1 and 2 programmes as an initial priority. Level 1 complete, schedule for completion of level 2 in place.	Delayed due to initial focus on level 1 and 2 programme alignment.
Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	Formalise tutor mentor process, trained tutors as mentor to new tutors, with roles and responsibilities agreed.	Delayed	Working group developed process for formalising tutor mentor process. Not fully finalised and implemented.	Delayed as further development of roles, training, remuneration etc. are resolved.
Assessment of Learners	Development of approved assessments (such as exemplar banks of exams) in order to apply standardisation and consistency to learner assessment.	Delayed	A number of exemplars of assessment were developed, per-reviewed and approved. Further development of exemplars required, with accompanying guidelines for use before introduction.	Development time and resources. Curriculum development is particularly time and resource intensive, with the internal subject matter expertise availability sporadic, leads to long lead times in project completion.
Information and Data Management	Explore development of CRM / Database for management of organisational Quality Assurance.	Delayed	Continued exploration of database for management of QMS system has yet to achieve a realisable solution.	No significant development. CRM partnership between LCETB and MSLETB on database to manage employer engagement should produce an avenue for exploration of this.
Information and Data Management	Development of process of analysis of critical indicators.	Delayed	Process of mapping and reporting critical indicators to Quality Council remains a manual process.	Resource alignment to other immediate projects.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	Development and implementation of learner feedback process, on an ETB-wide systematic basis, as part of overall ETB self-evaluation process.	Delayed	QAIR process engaged learner, staff and stakeholder feedback.	Have conducted a review and collation of existing centre feedback processes, will lead to LCETB wide process as an output of QAIR.
Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	Develop policy, procedure and process for monitoring ETB and centre compliance with Quality Assurance policy and procedure.	Delayed	Provider-wide self-evaluation process focus has been on the development of QAIR process and ongoing CQIP processes.	Centre Quality Improvement Planning process form current basis for centre monitoring and compliance – needs to be reviewed, expanded and formalised further.

4. Key areas of focus for quality improvement activity in 2020 and 2021.

1. Governance and Management of Quality
   - Continue to support Quality Council and its associated sub-groups and working groups.
   - Review of quality governance policy and process, in particular external stakeholder and learner representation.
   - Establishment of Programme Board and Examinations Board in the context of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship as it incorporates multiple collaborating providers.
2. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
   - Focus on developing policies and procedures to evolve from emergency remote teaching and learning, with blended teaching, learning and assessment as a contingency arrangement – to a controlled process aligned to a developed and approved Blended Learning policy.
3. Programmes of Education and Training
   - Management of dual further education and training curriculum – from locally managing training curriculum and assessment, to modifying further education module descriptors by separating individual candidate marking sheets as an aid to online assessment.
   - Development of exemplars of assessment – to continue development to align FE & T curriculum.
   - As coordinating provider of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, managing Programme Board and Examinations Board, reviewing and updating programme curriculum based on delivery and feedback.
4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
   - Specific focus in developing, increasing, supporting staff competencies in delivery of blended and online programmes
5. Teaching and Learning
   - Provide PD, TEL and QA support to provider and centre level initiatives, developing staff competencies and improving practice as identified through individual centre Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) meetings.
6. Assessment of Learners
   - Continued central management of External Authentication and Appeals process, processes reviewed, updated and expanded to incorporate Training Centre provision processes.
   - Implementation of new processes relating to assessment of apprentices in the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship – centrally managing process – external authentication, appeals, submission for certification etc.
7. Supports For Learners
   - Provision of specific induction, information, needs assessment, learner supports in centre – to provide support for learners in a Covid-19 Blended learning environment.
8. Information and Data Management
   - Management of Funding and Certification databases centrally via FET Operations Manager and Quality Assurance Support Service, with local centre responsibility for data entry and maintenance.
   - Analysis of critical indicators via Quality Council subgroups, Programme Governance and Quality Assurance.
9. Public Information and Communication
   - Information to Staff – Provision of QA, TEL and PD updates to staff, via meetings, seminars, emails, newsletters and StaffCONNECT.
   - Information to Learners – Establishment of Learner Charter, framework for Learner Handbook and associated policies.
   - Information to Stakeholders – Continued development and update of learningandskills Quality Assurance webpage.
10. Other Parties involved in Education and Training
    - Management of National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme as implemented across a number of collaborating providers.
11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
    - Complete and engage with Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance process.
    - Development and implementation of learner feedback process, on an ETB-wide systematic basis, as part of overall ETB self-evaluation process.
    - Develop policy, procedure and process for monitoring ETB and centre compliance with Quality Assurance policy and procedure.