



**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin  
*Cavan and Monaghan  
Education and Training Board*

## Feedback to QQI on

a. Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines

and

b. Towards a White Paper on Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines  
(Statutory QA Guidelines Developed by QQI for Education and Training  
Boards)

Submitted by: Louise Clarke

Director of Quality Assurance

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

## **Introduction**

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) has engaged extensively in the consultation process put in place by QQI towards the development of QA guidelines for the FET sector. Considerable time and resources were invested by CMETB in submitting feedback to QQI on policy documents and in partaking in a feasibility study around draft QA guidelines for the FET sector in 2015.

CMETB considers that all ETB's will need to establish a dedicated QA unit to respond to the QQI QA guidelines, whatever their format, and welcomes the opportunity to do this.

The documents under consideration at this time were circulated to CMETB's FET Management team for deliberation in December 2015 and a meeting of this group was convened in January 2016 to elicit feedback on the documents. This feedback is provided below.

## **Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines**

1. The above document is fundamentally different to the 'Towards a Framework for Quality Assurance within the ETBs' document, which was consulted in detail and through an external panel, within the FET sector early in 2015 and the rationale for this change is not clear.
2. The language and tone of this document would suggest that the core guidelines are based on the Higher Education model of single site, large centres. This does not reflect the nature and scope of provision within FET, where there is a diversity of provision from levels 1 to 6 on the NFQ and a considerable number of small, dispersed centres across all ETB's.
3. ETB's currently have a statutory and legislative remit to report, monitor and evaluate their provision in relation to staffing and finance amongst other areas to a range of bodies. The requirement to also monitor, evaluate and report to QQI on matters such as staff performance and aspects of finance needs to be clarified.

## **Towards a White Paper on Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines (Statutory QA Guidelines Developed by QQI for Education and Training Boards)**

4. The sector specific guidelines have an altogether different tone and use of language to that contained in the core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. The fact that the sector specific guidelines act as an addition to the core document means that the QA processes in ETB's will be complex. There appears to be some repetition of information in the sector specific guidelines that is already contained in the core guidelines. The rationale for the additional level of sector specific guidelines is not clear.
5. It is recognised that Core guidelines may need to be supplemented further by topical guidelines, these should not be overly prescriptive in content. Suggestions for topical guidelines were put forward to include collaboration between higher education institutions and ETB's/ETB centres and also guidelines around the in the context of an ETB's quality assurance relationship with second providers.
6. In relation to governance and management, while it is recognised that there is a need to have an integrated QA policy system in place within each ETB, it may be necessary to have

different procedures based on these policies for centres taking into account the diversity and dispersed nature of provision.

7. In relation to programmes of education and training, CMETB welcome the fact that QQI have acknowledged that well established QA mechanisms, that have thus far served the sector well, should be integrated into any new QA system. Guidance around the key points that a quality assurance system should incorporate is welcome and valuable (page 6).
8. In the context of ETB's, quality assurance reviews will to be difficult to administer based on the diverse and dispersed nature of the programmes delivered. Please see points 2 and 6 above.