



QFI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

CONSULTATIVE FORUM



11 MAY 2017

MEETING REPORT

Introduction

The purpose of the Consultative Forum is to contribute to the development and implementation of an enhanced further and higher education and training and qualifications system, through consultation and dialogue.

The seventh meeting of QQI's Consultative Forum took place on 11 May 2017 at the Fitzwilliam Hotel, St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. As the last meeting of the current membership, the central theme of the meeting was the Review of the Consultative Forum and Membership.

Over 30 delegates from stakeholder organisations and QQI executive staff attended the Forum. See appendix 1 for a list of attendees and appendix 2 for the agenda.

QQI Updates

Padraig Walsh, CEO, QQI provided the Consultative Forum with updates on key developments of the executive as follows:

1) Policy Development Programme

In 2017 QA Guidelines the Education and Training Boards and Research Degrees were published. We also published Procedures for Focused Reviews by QQI of the Implementation and Effectiveness of Provider QA Procedures (2017).

2) Validation and Reengagement

Since the last forum a huge amount of work has happened in the area of reengagement and we have reached out to all existing regulated providers.

We have agreed QA procedures with some 22 HE providers which will allow us to go through institutional reviews with them. The review cycle with these will run from this autumn until 2022.

We also have close to 500 FE providers, including those in the community and voluntary sector. Since February 2017 and we have had 11 national briefings to providers offering QQI awards and turnout has been over 80%.

3) English Language Education

In April we held the first Initial Access to ELE Programme Validation briefings. These briefings are a requirement for any ELE school interested in submitting the following ELE programme(s) for validation:

- ~ QQI CELT award (NFQ Special Purposes Award Level 7)
- ~ International foundation Year (NFQ Level 5)

We have been working constructively with the Department of Education to identify the legislative amendments necessary to the Education and Training Act (2012). Once the legislative changes proposed have been approved, QQI will be able to introduced the International Education Mark (IEM).

4) Legislation

The draft Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Bill has just been approved by Government and will go on to the Joint Committee on Education and Skills. The proposed changes will strengthen and improve QQI's approval processes for provider's quality assurance procedures and give QQI greater powers to monitor and oversee standards across the sector.

The amended Act will give QQI the power to 'list' awarding bodies and to include their qualifications in the National Framework of Qualifications to allow awards made by private, professional and non-national awarding bodies, where appropriate, in the Framework.

Theme: Review of the Consultative Forum and Membership

Laura Carrigan, QQI gave a presentation on the mission, purpose and Terms of Reference of the QQI forum.

The forum mission is to contribute to the development and implementation of an enhanced further and higher education and training and qualifications system through consultation and meaningful dialogue between QQI and stakeholders.

The purpose of the forum is to advise QQI on organizational and operational matters underpinned by QQI policy and to advise QQI on work which impacts on stakeholders (communications, pre-policy, strategy statements and work plans).

The Terms of Reference were reviewed after two years and the membership of the forum is now due for renewal. It is intended that QQI will send invitations to new forum members over the coming months.

Forum members were invited to make suggestions for other organisations that they would like to see represented in the next term and consider and discuss the following questions.

- 1) What for you have been the main benefits of involvement with the forum?
- 2) What suggested improvements do you have for the forum in the future?
- 3) What issues and developments does your organisation have relating to QQI's functions?

Members then provided feedback on their discussion, as captured below.

Benefits of the forum

- » Opportunity to see and hear first-hand the issues facing others
- » Insights into how things work in QQI/ the chance to hear directly from QQI staff and to have an open dialogue with them
- » Open dialogue - your voice and your input is heard and can make a difference
- » There are many challenges of the new system – this is a useful way to find out more
- » The forum gives a chance to engage and network with other groups – it is a unique forum in that the whole of the Irish education and training sector is represented
- » The themed approach to meetings is good – short sharp focus
- » Trust has been built up through the forum – keep the continuity of staff (secure tacit knowledge)
- » The format has worked well – a mixture of updates from QQI and group discussions.

Suggested improvements to the forum

- » There is a need for greater communication from QQI between meetings
- » A chance for greater engagement with stakeholders
- » More consistent approach to the themes of the meetings and possibly involving members in the choice of forum themes
- » Increase the number and type of employer representation
- » Allow time for a short presentation from members at each meeting
- » The group should focus on things that can only be addressed through discourse

- » Have the room set up to facilitate different conversations
- » As well as updates on what has happened – also inform on what future developments are planned in QQI which will impact stakeholders
- » QQI is a very complex organisation and greater clarity is needed on the many roles, not just within the forum but within the wider education and training sector.
- » Need a follow up from QQI on how the feedback has been implemented

Conclusion

The meeting provided a useful opportunity for QQI to hear from members directly about the benefits of the Consultative Forum and their suggestions for future meetings. Overall feedback was positive and members expressed the unique nature of the forum and the opportunity it afforded them to meet with such a diverse group of stakeholders and engage in dialogue directly with QQI.

Many expressed interested in continuing to be members of the forum and felt the meetings were an important communication channel with QQI.

The QQI executive will contact members in the coming months to invite them to the next term two year term of the forum.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Consultative Forum will take place November 2017.

Appendix 1: List of Attendees

Katherine Moore
ACCA

Hilary Tierney
AIEB/ NSETS

Benjamin Hendriksen
AONTAS

Roger Acton
CIMA

Philip O'Sheridan
City and Guilds

Wendy Ross
Department of Education and Skills
(Higher Education)

John McGuigan
Department of Employment and Learning
Northern Ireland (HE)

Dr Michael Mulvey
Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)

Damien Owens
Engineers Ireland

Sally Murtagh
Home and Community Care Ireland

Sally-Anne McIver
Irish Council for Overseas Students

Paul Heaney
Irish Interprofessional Association

David O'Grady
Marketing English in Ireland

Therese Dillon
Marketing English in Ireland

Inez Bailey
National Adult Literacy Association

Shane Hogan
National Disability Authority

Attracta Halpin
National University of Ireland

Janet Dawson
NEBOSH

Anne Weadick
Royal College of Surgeons

Catherine Collins
Skillnets

Fiona Hartley
SOLAS

John Mulhern
Teagasc

Dr Joseph Ryan
Technological Higher Education Association of
Ireland (THEA)

QQI Staff

Dr Pdraig Walsh, CEO

Laura Carrigan

Barbara Kelly

Orla Lynch

Tina Medjber

Deirdre Miller

Deirdre Scanlon

Roisin Sweeney

Ross Woods

Appendix 2: Copy of the Agenda

CONSULTATIVE FORUM | 11 MAY

AGENDA

10.30 **Registration**

11.00 **Welcome**

Dr Padraig Walsh, CEO, QQI / Forum Chair

11.10 **Updates from QQI**

1. QA Guidelines Update
 2. English Language Education
 3. Validation and Reengagement
 4. Legislation
-

THEME: Review of the Consultative Forum and Membership

11.30 **Presentation on the Terms of Reference of QQI Forum**

11.40 **Table Discussion**

Questions for Consideration

1. What for you have been the main benefits of involvement with the forum?
 2. What suggested improvements do you have for the forum in the future?
 3. What issues and developments does your organisation have relating to QQI's functions?
-

13.00 **Close and Lunch**

AGENDA