

A submission from Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board as contribution to the current consultation document, White Paper: Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards



Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB) welcomes the publication of the QQI White Paper on the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards. MSLETB is committed to the shared mission of enhancing a quality culture in Further Education and Training in Ireland and has set such a goal for itself in its current strategic plan (2018-2022).

MSLETB appreciates the opportunity to make a formal response to this white paper and wishes to offer the following comments and observations:

1.3 The policy will not seek to prescribe detailed measures for the conduct of reviews. This is to allow sufficient flexibility for detailed arrangements to be discussed, agreed and adapted as required and as appropriate.

MSLETB is in favour of the holistic approach to quality for the sector and the approach of using a single review model that is flexible enough to deal with the diverse nature of the ETB sector. However, MSLETB does recommend the development of detailed guidelines to direct ETBs in their obligations under this proposed policy. It is also the view of MSLETB that clear guidelines are needed for ETBs to engage efficiently with the review process.

2.1.5 QQI quality assurance reviews should... be capable of accommodating that diversity and should not impede the enhancement of individual mission, diversity and effectiveness.

MSLETB agrees with this statement that a 'one-fits-all' approach for review would not be appropriate.

2.1.8 ...opportunities will be provided to build capacity within the ETB sector in participating in external review.

MSLETB is encouraged to see that QQI will support ETB staff who will be participating in the preparation for reviews and await further discussion and information from QQI.

2.2 Emphasising the learner and the learning experience in reviews.

MSLETB are heartened to see that the learner and learning experiences are integrated into the policy, self-evaluation reports and the review teams.

2.3 It is also intended that the outcomes of the initial reviews will inform future thematic reviews of specific aspects of ETB quality assurance.

MSLETB agrees that it is appropriate that enhancement themes should inform a review but would like further clarity on how QQI will decide which themes it will adopt for any given review cycle.

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

MSLETB again would like to stress the importance for clear guidelines, particularly in relation to the content and length of the self-evaluation reports to ensure that they are analytical in focus and do not contain any unnecessary information. Will there be an opportunity for ETBs to enhance their

quality procedures following the completion of the self-evaluation report and before the appointment of the external expert team of peer reviewers?

3.3 QQI intends to engage further with stakeholders on the detail of the criteria in refining the Terms of Reference for the review.

MSLETB welcomes the opportunity to engage with QQI on the detail of the criteria in refining the Terms of Reference for the review and is interested in taking part in further sectoral discussions around same. In relation to references made to the mission and strategy of an ETB, do QQI intend to examine the suitability of an ETB's mission statement?

3.5.1 The ETB will be given a formal opportunity within the post-review timeline to check the factual accuracy of the review report. The ETB will also be invited to provide a formal response to the review report. The report and response will be approved through QQI governance and published.

MSLETB is supportive of the principles of clarity and transparency outlined but would welcome reassurance from QQI that there will be a mechanism in place whereby a review team's comments around 'significant areas of concern' which have subsequently been addressed appropriately by an ETB, will be removed once QQI is satisfied. MSLETB would be concerned that any such comments, subsequently addressed, would remain in the public domain until the next review cycle.

In relation to good and innovative practice being evident in an ETB, MSLETB is of the view that this information should also be documented to disseminate among all ETBs in order to enhance best practice across the sector.

MSLETB looks forward to the publication of the policy by QQI.

Contact: Fiona Kieran, Quality Management System Team Lead - fionakieran@msletb.ie

On behalf of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board

Publication: Yes