

QQI Review Report 2021

Inaugural Review
of Cork Education and Training Board



QQI REVIEW

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Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important statutory functions is to ensure that the quality assurance procedures that providers have in place have been implemented and are effective. To this end, QQI conducts external reviews of providers of further and higher education and training on a cyclical basis. QQI is currently conducting the inaugural review of quality assurance in education and training boards. Cyclical review is an element of the broader quality framework for ETBs composed of: statutory quality assurance guidelines; quality assurance approval; annual quality reporting; dialogue meetings; the National Framework of Qualifications; validation of programmes; and, most crucially, the quality assurance system established by each ETB. The inaugural review of quality assurance in education and training boards runs from 2020-2023. During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of each of the sixteen education and training boards. On conclusion of the sixteen reviews, a sectoral report will also be produced identifying system-level observations and findings.

The inaugural review evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of each ETB with a particular focus on the arrangements for the governance and management of quality; teaching, learning and assessment; and self-evaluation, monitoring and review. These are considered in the context of the expectations set out in the relevant QQI statutory quality assurance guidelines and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures.

The review methodology is based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to review:

- a self-evaluation conducted by the provider, resulting in the production of a self-evaluation report;
- an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers (due to the government's restrictions due to COVID-19, the review team completed a virtual visit);
- the publication of a review report including findings and recommendations; and
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This inaugural virtual review of the Cork Education and Training Board was conducted by an independent review team in line with the Terms of Reference at Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the review team.

The Review Team

Each inaugural review is carried out by a team of independent experts and peers. The 2021 inaugural review of the Cork Education and Training Board was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. The review team attended a virtual briefing and training session with QQI staff on 20 April 2021 and the virtual planning visit to the Cork Education and Training Board took place on 21 April 2021. The main virtual review was conducted by the full team via Microsoft Teams between 14 and 18 June 2021.

Chair

Professor James Calleja has been involved in vocational education and training since 2001. Before his appointment as Principal and CEO of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology in June 2018, he served as Director of the EU Agency CEDEFOP from 2013 to 2018. From 2011 to 2013 he was Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Employment in Malta.

In 2005, he set up the Malta Qualifications Council where he served as Chief Executive up to December 2010. He is an Associate Professor and served as Council member of the University of Malta. Professor Calleja is a graduate of the Universities of Malta, Padua (Italy) and Bradford (UK) from where he obtained his Ph.D. He has participated in international events across Europe, North America, South-East Asia, Australia, Canada, Africa, South Africa, the Middle East and in the Mediterranean region.

Coordinating Reviewer

Keith Brumfitt has worked as an international consultant for the European Commission, its agencies and contractors for fifteen years. This includes providing expert advice to the ECVET and EQAVET networks; and supporting the European Network of Experts on graduate tracking in vocational and higher education. He is currently evaluating the French Centres of Vocational Excellence and is a Board member of an international body awarding vocational and higher education qualifications.

Before working as a consultant, Keith was a senior manager in three national agencies in the UK - he was the Director of a Sector Skills Body; a National Manager in the government's agency for teacher training, and the Principal Advisor for Vocational Qualifications in the government's qualifications regulator. He has also taught in universities, vocational colleges, a young offenders' centre and secondary schools.

Learner Representative

Bernadette Keenan is originally from Longford and now lives in Sligo. She joined the workforce after completing her leaving certificate, having turned down a place in art college in the UK. She has worked for various retail companies in management and training and eventually became self-employed.

After closing her business in 2018, she returned to education full-time and completed Social Studies at Level 5 and Community Development at Level 6 in Sligo College of Further Education. During her training Bernadette completed a placement with the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland where she secured full-time employment on completing her course.

Peer Expert

Dr Fionnuala Anderson has worked in the further education and training sector for more than 40 years. Her most recent post was Director of Further Education and Training in Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). She has held management positions in SOLAS/FÁS in operational and policy development areas. She has a degree, masters and doctorate in Education and Training Management.

Fionnuala led the development, implementation and review of quality assurance in DDLETB and was Chair of an ETB Ireland group shaping the development of quality assurance across all the ETBs. She has been a panel member in the validation of programmes in the higher education and the further education and training sector.

Peer Expert

Pamela Carney is the Development Officer with Cavan County Local Development, the local development company for county Cavan. Pamela has implemented social inclusion programmes for over 20 years across county Cavan including the current Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. This aims to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities through the provision of lifelong learning supports, capacity building and labour market supports in partnership with community and state sector organisations. Pamela recently completed QQI Level 6 modules in Information, Advice and Advocacy Practice and Family Rights Advocacy and is currently undertaking a Social and Civil Information (Welfare Rights) course.

Prior to their dissolution Pamela was a former Chairperson of County Cavan Citizens Information Service and a member of the Cavan Monaghan ETB Adult Education Board. She is a member of the new Regional Board, the North Connaught and Ulster Citizens Information Service and the Cavan Monaghan ETB Further Education and Training Board.

Industry Representative

Micheál Stapleton has worked in the hospitality industry for over 35 years in managerial roles including general manager level, management consultancy and business development positions. Micheál has also been a business mentor with Fáilte Ireland.

Micheál has a keen interest in people development and has worked with several third level institutions in course development and as external examiner



Section

1

Introduction and Context

Section 1: Introduction and Context

1. Cork Education and Training Board (Cork ETB) is one of sixteen ETBs established in 2013 by the Education and Training Boards Act. Cork ETB was formed from the amalgamation of the former County Cork and the City of Cork Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in July 2013, followed by the transfer of the SOLAS training function on 1 January 2014. Under the 2013 legislation, Cork ETB has statutory responsibility to provide, support, coordinate, administer and assess a wide range of education services. This is achieved by co-operating with other institutions and bodies, and by providing support to other agencies to deliver education and training programmes that cannot be met by mainstream education services in the region.

2. Cork ETB is the largest education provider in the region. In 2020 it supported 29,560 learners across its primary, post-primary and further education and training services. (The enrolments in 2019 were 35,557. The reduction in 2020 was due to the impact of the government's decisions in relation to COVID-19, e.g. the physical distancing restrictions placed on further education and training provision.) The staff complement of Cork ETB is 4,160 and this makes it one of the largest employers in the region.

3. Cork ETB has responsibility for two community national schools and 24 post-primary schools and colleges. In addition, at post-primary level, Cork ETB is joint patron/co-trustee of 12 community schools across the city and county. The Further Education and Training (FET) Service of Cork ETB is responsible for delivering full and part-time programmes to learners over the age of 18 (Some learners are younger, e.g. the Youthreach programme caters for learners aged from 16 upwards). In 2020, Cork ETB provided FET programmes to 13,792 learners. Cork ETB's FET services are delivered through a network of over 60 FET centres, including four large, standalone Post-Leaving Certificate Colleges, two training centres, 12 Youthreach centres and a range of centres of varying sizes across the county. Cork ETB providers offer FET through a range of programme types and locations including:

- Colleges of further education;
- Training services;
- Youthreach;
- Adult and community education;
- Cooperation with other institutions;
- Youth services

4. Cork ETB's FET services work with over 150 community groups and agencies in the delivery of FET programmes. This enables Cork ETB and the community groups to share information about learner and employer needs and provide appropriate services which reduce the potential for duplication and over supply.

5. Cork ETB's vision is to be a driving force of education and training in Cork, providing high quality services which are innovative, responsive and inclusive. The aim is for the ETB to offer a pathway for every learner.

6. Cork ETB identified the following guiding principles to inform all its operations:

- prioritising the needs of learners;
- delivering a high-quality service;
- acting with professional integrity;
- doing the right thing;
- treating people with dignity and respect;
- being fair, open and accountable;
- ensuring value for money;
- operating to the highest ethical, professional, moral and legal standards.

7. Cork ETB's focus for FET, as outlined in its Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA) with SOLAS for 2018 – 2020, is to maintain and improve the quality of its provision for local learners and business/employers. The ETB has sought to develop its services, with reference to the needs of the economy and the priorities of the National FET Strategy, in order to:

- provide individuals with relevant, high-quality courses;
- prepare individuals for entry into the world of work;
- develop and consolidate the skills of individuals in employment;
- facilitate progression to further studies;
- contribute to the development of individuals, communities and the economic and social well-being of the region.

8. The FET section of Cork ETB has identified four core priorities for its strategic direction (this is currently being reviewed in order to develop a new strategic plan):

- the quality of the learner experience;
- improving learner outcomes;
- programme development;
- staff development and support.

9. The current focus of the FET section's work is on ensuring the quality and consistency of experience for learners including developments relating to:

- access, transfer and progression (ATP) – learners have the right to access education and training options at a level, in a location and a manner which is appropriate to their requirements;
- appropriate learner support – many FET learners have complex needs which need to be fully addressed in order to avoid non-completion and /or failure to obtain their desired outcomes;
- improving the teaching and learning experiences for learners – all teaching staff have access to appropriate professional development opportunities in their area of specialist knowledge and pedagogical practice, innovation and development;
- provision of additional and alternative learning opportunities – the development of blended, online and distance alternatives to traditional course delivery has been accelerated in response to COVID-19;
- work with employers and businesses to develop and deliver new education and training options including: new apprenticeships, new traineeships, short courses and skills for people in employment, and modular courses that enable learners to engage flexibly with education and training to enter employment or develop in employment;
- improving the learner experience and environment – Cork ETB continues to invest in improving and enhancing facilities for learners and staff, and seeks to provide physical surroundings, resources and infrastructure which contribute to a positive and supportive environment for learning;
- development of partnerships with other stakeholders – the quality of the FET provision is directly linked to the quality of engagement with stakeholders. The ETB's self-evaluation report notes that there are opportunities and a need to make improvements and introduce new development in this area;

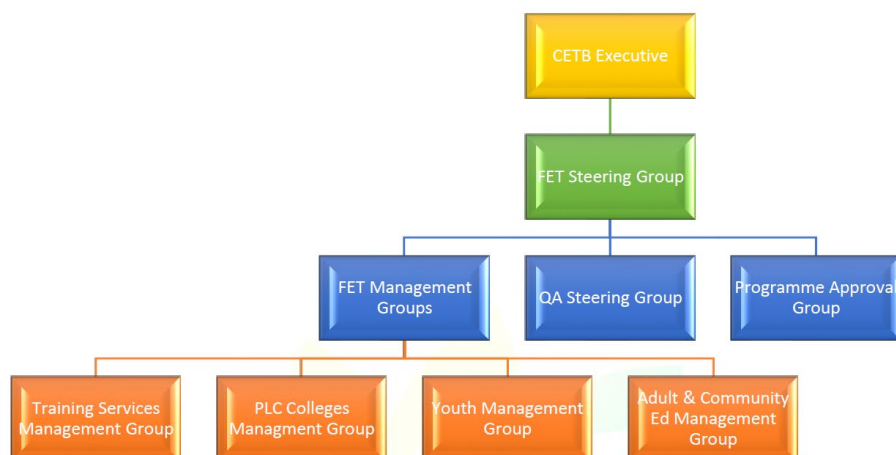
- improving course outputs and learner outcomes – significant emphasis continues to be placed on improving retention rates to meet the targets in the ETB's Performance Agreement with SOLAS;
- programme development – FET programmes and courses need to be developed and changed to meet the evolving requirements of industry and the economy. Cork ETB's Quality Assurance Office is engaged in the review of existing programmes and courses, and the development of new programmes.

10. The Quality Assurance Office was established in February 2016. It has overall responsibility for the management and coordination of quality assurance activities across all FET services. A senior member of staff is the designated Quality Assurance Officer and oversees the development, implementation and coordination of Cork ETB's quality assurance policies and procedures for FET. The Quality Assurance Officer is supported by four members of staff who have been seconded from the FET teaching team. The Assistant Process Coordinator supports the administration associated with programme development. The Quality Assurance Officer reports to the Director of FET and is supported by the Quality Assurance Steering Group.

11. In 2016 Cork ETB began to develop policies and procedures based on the three legacy agreements used by previous organisations. While there was considerable commonality across these agreements, the standardisation and development of common policies, practices and procedures has been a priority for the Quality Assurance Office. Initially the focus was on assessment – the development of a single set of policies and procedures for the management of all assessment-related activities. This has been followed by the development of additional policies and procedures for all areas of FET to ensure services are quality assured using the same approach.

12. The Quality Assurance Steering Group provides advice, oversight and governance for the quality assurance of FET provision, approves quality assurance policies and procedures, and monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of these procedures. The Quality Assurance Steering Group reports to the Further Education and Training Steering Group as shown in figure 1 from Cork ETB's self-evaluation report.

Figure 1 - governance arrangements for further education and training



13. The inaugural virtual review of Cork ETB took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and the associated government changes to regulations (e.g. 'lockdowns', social distancing, the 'work-from-home' rules) had a significant impact on Cork ETB's activities and services, e.g. see paragraph 51. This required the ETB to adapt and adjust its FET activity within a short timeframe. Since March 2020, the majority of FET activity has moved from face-to-face delivery to models that incorporate online and blended learning. In addition, the ETB has experienced the full and partial closure of centres. This led to significant challenges for staff and learners as everyone was forced to consider new ways of working, different approaches to learning, and the management of personal and professional challenges. These challenges included:

- limited access to devices to deliver or use online activities;
- poor and/or non-existent broadband services;
- new methodologies, approaches and modes of communication;
- changed assessment requirements for learners to enable them to complete their courses with minimal impact;
- increased isolation resulting in mental health and well-being challenges.

The review team recognised the considerable difficulties created by the government's changes to regulations and the impact that these had on producing the ETB's self-evaluation report and preparing for the inaugural review of quality assurance. Despite these difficulties Cork ETB's preparations and responses to questions and discussions during the inaugural review were professional, comprehensive and well-informed.



Section

2

Self-evaluation Methodology

Section 2: Self-evaluation Methodology

14. Following the publication of QQI guidelines ¹ and Terms of Reference for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in ETBs (December 2019), and extensive discussions between representatives from the sector and QQI on the direction and management of the review process, Cork ETB's Director of FET established the Review Oversight Group to oversee, manage and direct the review process. This group included representatives from across all the FET services, including staff involved in full-time and part-time provision, FET administration, ETB administration, the Quality Assurance Office, FET support services and the ETB's Senior Management Team. This group did not have any learner representatives or external stakeholders.

15. The Review Oversight Group's approach sought to provide the most benefit and insight for the review panel, for Cork ETB and its FET services. The Oversight Group saw the review as an opportunity to:

- embed self-evaluation in the ETB's normal operations and delivery of programmes;
- provide focus and direction for centres and services;
- identify good practice and areas where improvements could be made.

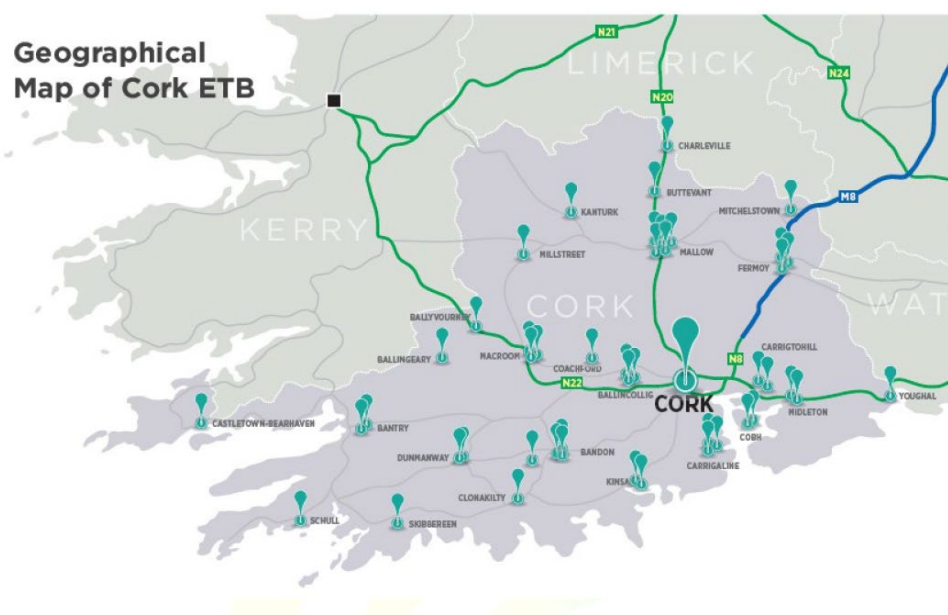
16. The review process began with every centre, college or service completing a structured profile and self-evaluation report using a standard template and instruments agreed by the Review Oversight Group and based on the QQI guidelines for the inaugural review. These instruments extended beyond those which had been developed by QQI in order to gain greater insight into the experiences of the diverse group of learners in the ETB, e.g. those in the Youthreach area. These self-evaluations provided the ETB and the FET service with an assessment of the effectiveness of the current quality assurance approach, policy, procedures and practices. To support the centres, colleges and services, Cork ETB developed guidance and delivered briefing sessions for centre and service managers in January 2021. A dedicated section of Microsoft Teams was used to encourage centres, colleges and services to share draft materials and keep in close contact with the Review Oversight Group.

¹ Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards (QQI, 2019)

17. The schedule and programme of work for the centres/services and the Review Oversight Group were agreed in January 2020. They were significantly disrupted by COVID-19, and this led Cork ETB to request the rescheduling of their main review visit.

18. The Review Oversight Group used questionnaires, focus groups, evaluation forms and discussions to gather information to inform the self-evaluation review. Liaising with the 48 centres/colleges which are geographically dispersed (as shown in figure 2) was challenging and it was difficult to collate and analyse a substantial amount of information. The review team was informed about the difficulties and time-consuming nature of extracting key messages and common issues from the detailed reports from each centre.

Figure 2 - Location of Cork ETB centres



19. Following completion of the initial reports by each centre/service, the Review Oversight Group explained that they had needed to ask the centres/colleges/services for more detail. Once the individual reports were completed, the group considered each area of quality assurance and identified emerging themes. These included:

- the need to strengthen employer engagement in the self-evaluation process and the completion of the final version of the ETB report;
- the need to balance different views from centres/services;

- the ongoing importance of quality assuring the assessment process. This is reflected in the strategic performance agreement with SOLAS, which sets out specific outcomes and uses of the PLSS data to monitor success;
- the difficulties involved in monitoring each centre's/service's quality of provision;
- the need to listen to the voice of learners in the self-evaluation process.

20. The centres'/colleges'/services' self-evaluation reports identified the need to review the financial model for allocating funds from the ETB.

21. The review team was informed that the development of the final self-evaluation report for the ETB had required a more strategic approach to analysing the data and information provided in each centre's/service's reports. All areas of quality assurance had to be considered and it was important to consider a 'high-level view from above' (the helicopter perspective). It was not clear to the review team whether the final draft of the ETB's self-evaluation reports had been 'signed-off' by learner representatives or external stakeholders.

22. The review team considered it valuable for all of the centre/service to be involved in their own self-evaluation process and reflection. The ETB's briefing and training sessions helped to explain the standardised reporting templates and encouraged centres/services to be open and transparent. The ETB feels confident that its internal review process could be repeated with centres/services at a future date. This is something that the senior management team has considered and would be welcomed by the review team.

23. A substantial amount of information was collected during the centres'/services' self-evaluation. Most of this information was descriptive rather than analytical. This led to difficulties in extracting key themes and common issues which affected all, or most, parts of the ETB.

24. The ETB's self-evaluation report noted that it would have been helpful to appoint sub-groups of the Review Oversight Group to examine specific areas of quality assurance. In addition, the centres'/services' reports focused on qualitative information, and this made it difficult to use quantitative analysis in the ETB's self-evaluation report. The review team believes that a greater focus on quantitative data (e.g. through the use of indicators, benchmarks, key performance indicators, targets) would have strengthened the analysis in the ETB's self-evaluation report.

25. Throughout the review team's virtual visit in June 2021 all members of staff in the ETB, the employer groups and the learners fully engaged with the process and responded to all requests for information. Those interviewed were open and responsive to ideas and questions from members of the review team.



Section

3

**WE ARE
GORK**

SUMMER **YOUTH CHALLENGE**

 **WE ARE
GORK**
SUMMER **YOUTH CHALLENGE**

**Quality Assurance &
Enhancement**

Section 3: Quality Assurance & Enhancement

Objective 1: Governance and Management of Quality

ETB Mission & Strategy

26. Cork ETB, established under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, has a corporate governance arrangement based on the statutory structures, functions and responsibilities as set out in the Act. In accordance with the Act, Cork ETB is governed by a board of 21 members representing Cork City and County Councils; ETB staff; parents/guardians of children who are registered learners under the age of 18; and representatives of business, the community, and school management bodies.

27. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the oversight of all Cork ETB activity, including further education and training. The Director of FET has operational responsibility for the coordination and management of the ETB's FET services and activities and reports to the Chief Executive. The Director of FET is responsible for:

- planning and delivering FET provision;
- the governance and management of FET;
- coordinating the FET Steering Group;
- workforce planning and performance management.

28. Cork ETB uses the principle of subsidiarity, and college principals and centre/service managers have responsibility for the management of their centre, service or programme in line with the agreed policies and procedures. College principals and centre/service managers are responsible for ensuring that ETB governance arrangements are applied uniformly across their centres and services.

29. Cork ETB's stated mission for 2017-2020 is to plan, provide, support and co-ordinate education, training and youth services in Cork which are recognised internationally as a model of excellence (page 12 of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan).

30. The current strategic vision is to make Cork ETB a driving force of education and training in Cork, providing high quality services which are innovative, responsive and inclusive. Through Cork ETB there should be a pathway for every learner. This is part of Cork ETB's 2017-2021 Strategy Statement which sets out the aim to 'provide a high-quality learning experience for every learner'. This strategy statement, which was commended by the review panel, was the result of a consultation process which began in March 2017. This consisted of meetings involving managers, staff, boards of management and learners. External stakeholders were also consulted, and feedback on the draft proposals was requested. An online questionnaire was also made available to all internal and external stakeholder groups and was key to ensuring that a broad view was obtained in respect of identifying and refining the actions for achieving the strategic priorities.

Commendation 1

The widespread awareness and the relevance of the ETB's strategic intention to 'provide a high-quality learning experience for every learner'.

31. The ETB is developing a new strategy for 2022-25 based on SOLAS' FET Strategy Future FET: Transforming Learning (SOLAS, 2020) which sets out a vision for developing FET on the model referenced as the FET College of the Future. The SOLAS strategy notes that "[k]ey to successful development in relation to skills, pathways, and inclusion will be the evolution of FET facilities and provision into a distinct integrated college of FET that can serve as a beacon of community-based learning excellence which can start to change the hearts and minds of Irish society with regard to school leaving and lifelong education options".

32. Cork ETB's mission statement (paragraph 28) emphasises 'international recognition' and 'excellence'. The ETB's self-evaluation did not seek to show how these aspects of the mission statement had been achieved. There were references to involvement in the Erasmus+ programme but, in general, it was not clear how the aspiration to achieve 'excellence' and 'international recognition' have had an impact on the ETB's quality assurance processes. The absence of

quantitative data based on targets, key performance indicators or benchmarks has made it difficult to substantiate a claim that these aspects of the ETB's mission have been achieved.

Structures and Terms of Reference for the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance

33. The FET Directorate has established a number of management groups covering a range of FET services. These management groups are supported by policy groups, including the Quality Assurance Steering Group and working groups with specific areas of responsibility.

Commendation 2

The review panel noted, and commended, the clear 'line of sight' between the activities of the working groups and the senior management team as shown in figure 1.

34. The Quality Assurance Steering Group provides advice, oversight and governance for the Quality Assurance of FET provision. The group was set up in 2016 to review, amend and revise the three sets of legacy quality assurance agreements, policies and procedures. The review team was informed that the group's initial work has been completed.

35. The group also approves quality assurance policies and procedures and monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of these procedures. The following working groups report to the Quality Assurance Steering Group:

- The Assessment Working Group;
- The Access, Transfer and Progression Group;
- The Recognition of Prior Learning Group.

36. Key tasks for the Quality Assurance Steering Group have included the development of:

- a more consistent and common approach to quality assurance across the ETB centres;
- a new approach to the quality assurance of assessment;
- a centralised management approach based on the Quality Assurance Office;
- staff teams with responsibility for different areas of quality assurance e.g. the work to create new pathways for learners;

- supporting centres, colleges and services to develop their quality assurance systems based on the ETB model.

37. The ETB colleagues from the Quality Assurance Steering Group and various teaching teams explained how much progress has been made on developing more consistency in all aspects of the learner assessment process. The review team noted this development and confirmed there had been significant progress in the development of a more consistent approach.

Recommendations

38. The review team recommends that the ETB use quantitative data to support the quality assurance of each centre/ service. The ETB has a large amount of data on assessment which could be used to strengthen the analysis and monitoring of the quality of provision in each centre/service. Developing, through consultation with centres/services, ways to quantify and measure the success and achievements of each centre/ service would support the quality assurance of the ETB's FET provision. A better understanding of each centre's/service's achievement using key performance indicators would facilitate the ETB's provision of support and provide an additional focus for professional engagement and discussion.

Documentation of Quality Assurance

39. The documentation produced for the review team (based on the ETB's self-evaluation and analysis) was extensive. These documents described the process, policies and procedures used by the ETB to support and manage quality assurance.

40. The ETB's policies were developed through extensive consultation following information sessions for centre managers. An example of this process can be seen in the production of the revised assessment policies for the ETB. This process included consultation with staff and learners throughout the county through focus groups. There was an opportunity for written feedback from staff who could not attend the focus group meetings. This feedback was reviewed by staff in the Quality Assurance Office and representatives from the centres, and services. Using this feedback, the procedures and policies were redrafted and presented to the Quality Assurance Steering Group for approval. The group agreed to pilot the new assessment procedures during the 2017/2018 academic year. The new assessment procedures were introduced the following year. The procedures cover:

- Assessment information to learners;
- Coordinated planning of assessment;
- Assessment design;
- Implementation of assessment activities;
- Reasonable accommodation in the assessment of learners with specific needs;
- Extenuating circumstances in assessment;
- Repeats and resubmission of assignments;
- Assessment malpractice.

41. The ETB's quality assurance procedures also include:

- Recognition of prior learning;
- Security of assessment material;
- Assessment performed by third parties;
- Internal verification;
- External authentication;
- Feedback to learners;
- Issuing of results and certification to learners;
- Learner appeals;
- Results approval;
- Return of certification data to QQI;
- Corrective action.

42. These procedures are available to all staff and all centres through the staff SharePoint system. The Quality Assurance Steering Group members highlighted the importance of all staff consistently using these procedures (e.g. there is less use of the procedures by some part-time and hourly-paid staff) as this remains a quality issue for centre managers. This difficulty in implementing the policies can be compounded by the need for all teaching staff to have a sufficiently detailed understanding of complex and extensive procedures and documentation.

43. The Quality Assurance Office is working on the review of the existing assessment procedures and the development of new procedures for other areas of quality assurance. These developments will be added to the staff SharePoint system. Assessment is one area where there has been extensive progress on developing and implementing a standardised quality assurance process. In other areas of quality assurance, less progress has been made e.g. the effectiveness of each centre's

recruitment and learner selection processes, each centre's engagement with employers and external partners, learner complaints and feedback, the effectiveness and impact of continuing professional development, reducing the number of staff vacancies, each centre's success in recruiting to target, each centre's statistics on learner progression and employment.

44. The review team noted that there are many areas which could be quality assured (e.g. the selection of learners for programmes, the effectiveness of the guidance and careers systems for learners, the appointment of staff, the effectiveness of continuing professional development, the assessment of work-based learning, the effectiveness of teaching and learning, etc.). The review team recognised that the Quality Assurance Office had established its priorities to extend quality assurance to all aspects of the ETB's provision e.g. through the creation in 2020 of the Access, Transfer and Progression Working Group.

Recommendation 1

The review team recommends that the ETB continues to roll out and evolve its quality assurance procedures to cover more aspects of provision

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

45. The recruitment of staff for FET service delivery is organised and managed by Cork ETB's Human Resources Unit. For these staff the national agreements and procedures are applied to their recruitment, management and development.

46. Staffing levels are determined by student recruitment. A fall in the number of learners enrolling for the post-leaving certificate courses has had a significant impact on Cork ETB's ability to recruit new staff and existing staff are asked to teach in more than one centre. This can be a challenge for the scheduling of learner programmes as the timetables and modules on offer depend on the availability of the teachers. It is also challenging to hold staff meetings or events when teachers have conflicting commitments at other centres. In some areas of the ETB's provision (e.g. adult and community education services) there are staff shortages and there can be delays in replacing staff. The provision and management of substitute cover is a challenge for all centres as it can be difficult to find appropriately qualified cover staff.

47. Staffing in second providers and through the contracted training facility is the responsibility of the contracted provider. These contractors must ensure they have sufficient staff with the appropriate skill sets to deliver on their contractual obligations to Cork ETB. Staff in these organisations are required to comply with the ETB's quality assurance procedures.

48. The recruitment of staff for self-financing adult education (evening classes) is the responsibility of individual centres. These staff are required to comply with the ETB's quality assurance procedures.

49. There is an induction programme for all new teaching staff each year. The purpose of induction is to give new staff an overview and understanding of the extent of Cork ETB's services, rather than focusing on the needs of a particular sector or service. Delays in recruitment mean that some FET teaching staff do not engage in the ETB-wide induction session. Staff induction for FET occurs primarily at the individual centre level, both formally and informally. Some larger centres operate a formal mentoring system for new staff. The impact of these mentoring programmes is neither measured nor recorded.

Recommendation 2

The review team recommends that the ETB develop a much better understanding of the effectiveness of the existing, and any future, mentoring schemes.

50. The review team noted that the FET Directorate is committed to professional development for learning practitioners and service managers. There is localised professional development in colleges and centres at times of the year when student activity is reduced. Staff who wish to develop their skills and competences in their own time can apply for individual professional development support from their centre/service or from the ETB. Cork ETB also has ETB-wide initiatives in professional development for all staff, including work shadowing as part of the Erasmus+ initiative, support for the use of technology-enhanced learning (TEL) and the Staff Placement in Industry Programme. The impact of these programmes on teaching and learning, and on learner achievement, is not measured or recorded.

Recommendation 3

The review team recommends the ETB develops a much better understanding of the effectiveness of these placements.

51. There has been an extensive programme to support TEL. It has largely focused on:

- supporting centres in the development of their blended learning approaches;
- developing and delivering targeted professional development interventions;
- developing standardised approaches to using virtual learning environments;
- exploring ways to maximise learner access to digital technology and resources through low-cost solutions;
- supporting the development of online assessment.

52. The Quality Assurance Office provides staff training in relation to quality assurance. Each Cork ETB centre has a designated quality assurance officer whose role includes staff support. This initiative has been welcomed by centres – especially the smaller centres – as these centres do not always perceive themselves as receiving the same support as larger centres. Since 2019 the Quality Assurance Office has provided:

- support in assessment writing to individuals;
- support to Cork Training Centre as it switched its assessment processes and focused on locally-devised assessment;
- whole staff training at centre level on the quality assurance procedures and assessment process;
- whole staff training on writing examination papers at centre level;
- whole staff training at centre level in internal verification processes;
- workshops on writing examination papers for staff delivering Level 4 modules in horticulture, mathematics and IT;
- workshops on integration of assessment for staff from all Youthreach centres.

53. The management of existing staff is subject to national and sectoral agreements. The ETB's staff management arrangements were not discussed during the review team's visit. The information in the ETB's documentation did not describe how individual members of staff were managed and what performance management or staff monitoring arrangements were in place. The quality of the ETB's provision is highly dependent on the expertise and ability of staff – the review team was therefore surprised that this area of quality was not addressed in the ETB's self-evaluation.

Recommendation 4

The review team would encourage the ETB to strengthen the existing arrangements (within the context of the national and sectoral agreements) for the quality assurance of teaching and learning.

54. The review team recognised the staffing constraints within which the ETB operates. The panel welcomed the ETB's work to support staff flexibility, including the opportunity and expectation that some staff members work in more than one of the ETB's locations/sites. The limitations and restrictions on the recruitment of staff make it particularly important that every staff selection decision is of high quality.

Recommendation 5

The review panel recommends the use of quality assurance processes to enhance and strengthen the existing HR procedures. The review panel recommends that the induction of new staff be improved and strengthened, and that more opportunities be found for staff to complete industry placements. The existing inconsistencies in staff induction across the ETB should be eliminated as all teaching staff are entitled to expect the same level of support during their induction.

55. The review team supports the ETB's proposal to appoint a professional development co-ordinator, who could develop a professional development framework with mechanisms for measuring and reporting on the impact and effectiveness of all professional development. This would help to enhance the quality of professional development in Cork ETB.

Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation

56. The majority of Cork ETB's programmes have been running for many years. They were developed through collaborative national processes across the sector or through structures which were retained on the establishment of the ETBs. These programmes can be described as 'legacies' which were once suitable for learners – whether these programmes are still appropriate is much less certain. As many programmes are more than ten years old, it was difficult for the review team to be assured that all the ETB's courses meet the needs of employers, learners and society.

57. Cork ETB has created a Programme Approval Group to manage centres' proposals to add new modules to existing awards and to submit applications for new awards. In recognition of the need

to address legacy programmes, the Quality Assurance Office's capacity to support programme development has been enhanced during the past year through the secondment of FET teaching staff.

58. The ETB has also worked as a collaborating provider for post-2016 apprenticeship programmes.

59. Developing a new programme is time-consuming, technical and challenging for staff who become involved in the process. It is not clear how the ETB will address the essential updating of its many legacy programmes. Cork ETB's self-evaluation notes that 'programme development is a demanding task which cannot be done "as an extra" to a full-time teaching contract. Cork ETB has learnt from initial setbacks and now releases staff from teaching duties to engage in programme development. This has enhanced the programme development process. However, a challenge remains on how to release learning practitioners from delivery if they are working in a field of learning where there are staff shortages. The significant volume of programmes that require review and the time implications under the current validation requirements are a significant concern.'

60. The review panel supports Cork ETB's proposal to conduct a scoping exercise to identify with centres the programmes that need to be prioritised for review and to identify the resources and capacity which are required to engage in further programme development.

Recommendation 6

The review panel recommends that much more be done to ensure all the programmes offered to learners are updated on a regular basis.

Access, Transfer and Progression

61. It is part of Cork ETB's vision to provide "a pathway for every learner". Consequently, Cork ETB uses local arrangements to support students accessing and moving between and from various programmes. Cork ETB has started to develop an access, transfer and progression policy which will incorporate all the current policies in this area.

62. The admission, and selection, of learners to Cork ETB's programmes is an essential aspect of quality assurance. Helping potential learners to 'make the right decision' about which programme to follow helps to improve learner satisfaction, reduce 'drop-out' rates, improve employment statistics and meet the needs of employers and society. Investing in effective and high-quality guidance systems supports learners in making their decisions. The panel encourages Cork ETB to ensure every learner has access to a guidance counsellor who can support progression. Currently the ETB provides information on programmes through the individual centres/ services and various Cork ETB information channels, including:

- the Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH);
- the Cork ETB website;
- Cork ETB social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram;
- Cork ETB centre/service websites;
- Cork ETB college prospectuses;
- information leaflets;
- local and national media including radio advertisement and newspaper advertisements;
- noticeboards in local offices of the Departments of Employment and Social Protection.

63. Information on the ETB's programmes is presented in different ways. There is no 'one-stop shop' for potential learners other than the Cork ETB website which the learner representatives (and the review team) found difficult to navigate and where information was considered hard to find. The 2020 Access, Transfer and Progression Working Group is considering ways to align and manage information for potential learners. The 2020 Communications Working Group is considering all FET services with a view to coordinating, simplifying and bringing coherence and consistency to all communications from Cork ETB. This group is currently drafting a Cork ETB communications strategy with accompanying operational guidelines.

64. Cork ETB's Adult Guidance Service supports learners to make informed decisions about accessing education and training, transferring within, and progressing from Cork ETB. It is challenging for the guidance service staff to deliver an adequate service across all Cork ETB target groups given the large geographical area. The four post-leaving certificate colleges have guidance counsellors who support learners, guide learners on progression options and negotiate progression routes with HE institutions. The ETB's self-evaluation reports notes that in recent years the demand for these services has increased, with more learners self-referring for support.

65. Cork ETB's self-evaluation report notes that "Provision of guidance is varied; some services have excellent guidance, whereas other have ad hoc...or no arrangements...in place. An aim for Cork ETB is to further standardise guidance provision across all aspects of its provision, in order to provide a pathway for every learner".

66. The ETB's self-evaluation report also notes that, "Transfer between Cork ETB centres and within centres could be improved. When transfer occurs, it is often ad hoc and driven by the learner themselves rather than formalised by or between centres...The transfer routes for learners are not clearly defined or set out for learners. Mapping and publicising these pathways is an area that can be improved."

67. Cork ETB operates progression pathways for learners to other Cork ETB programmes and to local higher education institutions. Cork ETB has successfully developed a significant number of arrangements to support learner access (often through access programmes) to higher education programmes in Ireland and other countries. The review team noted that the progression pathways:

- a) within Cork ETB have improved in recent years with good relationships being developed between different Cork ETB centres/colleges;
- b) for external progression are well defined for the stand-alone post-leaving certificate colleges (e.g. through links with local and national higher education institutions) but less so for learners wanting to progress to PLC provision or from training programmes.

Recommendation 7

The review panel recommends that additional support relating to progression is provided to vocational learners outside the PLC sector.

68. Learners wishing to progress to employment need the knowledge, competence, and skills required by employers. Many Cork ETB courses provide for direct progression to employment. The ETB's self-evaluation report notes that guidance on progression to employment is variable across the ETB and there are some centres where provision is not sufficient. In addition, there are examples of practice in the ETB's self-evaluation report which could be shared.

69. The ETB does not use a 'graduate tracking' system, and learner follow-up after graduation is anecdotal and ad hoc. As such the ETB does not have a systematic way of knowing whether the skills

and competences developed by their learners are meeting the needs of employers. Cork ETB's self-evaluation report notes 'there is no dedicated "follow-on" service or system to track learner progression. For example, Cork ETB does not formally follow up and track learner progression in the years after they complete a programme.' While this is an area which could support quality assurance, the review panel agrees with Cork ETB that this is not an area which can easily be developed by one ETB by themselves. However, it is an area where more quantitative data could complement the anecdotal information that the ETB currently receives.

Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

70. The review team noted the self-evaluation report's comment that one of Cork ETB's guiding principles is to be fair, open, and accountable in order to operate to the highest ethical, professional, moral, and legal standards. In line with this principle, the ETB operates a standardised assessment policy across all provision. The development and use of a standardised approach was seen by ETB staff as having contributed to the creation of a coherent Cork ETB identity. All Cork ETB staff have access to the quality assurance assessment policies and procedures on the Quality Assurance SharePoint site. Cork ETB-approved module descriptors are also available on the SharePoint site. All of the ETB's quality assurance procedures have been updated to reflect the use of the Moodle virtual learning environment.

Commendation 3

The development of a standardised set of procedures (and the move away from three different systems inherited when the ETB was established in 2013) was seen by the ETB and the review team as having been a success.

71. The ETB uses standardised approaches for all awards in all centres. Full details of these approaches (the policies, handbooks and templates) are available from the ETB's SharePoint site. These cover:

- the authenticity of learner evidence;
- the examination processes;
- the certification process;
- the role of the assessor;
- internal verification – and training for internal verification;
- external authentication;
- the operation of the results approval panels;

- submission of information results to the national databases;
- the learner appeals process.

72. The review team noted the extent of progress which had been made in relation to the consistency of assessment across the ETB's programmes. The review team agreed with the proposals in the ETB's self-evaluation, namely to:

- further develop the use of Moodle and TEL in the assessment process;
- provide more formal and organised support and mentoring for new assessors;
- train senior ETB staff to enable them to take significant roles in meetings of the results approval panel.

Information and Data Management

73. The ETB uses a range of data management systems to store and manage data and perform administrative and operational functions. Many of these are legacy systems and Cork ETB would like to streamline its data management. This type of development depends on the creation of common systems for collecting and storing information at a national level, and a number of sector-wide initiatives to harmonise and consolidate systems into a uniform structure. The IT team reported that there were no key performance indicators for this aspect of VET provision, and the quality of provision was not benchmarked against the performance of other (similar) organisations.

Recommendation 8

As with other areas of quality assurance, the review team recommends the use of key performance indicators to monitor and measure the quality of this aspect of provision.

74. The current range of information and data management systems include:

- information sharing and communications;
- human resources;
- financial systems;
- learner management, including application management;
- virtual learning environments.

75. The multiplicity of IT and data management systems, some linked and interdependent, and others independent, creates significant challenges for staff across all the FET services. While the HR

and financial services are to some extent linked (for staff contracts and payment, learner payments etc.) they share few design characteristics. During the visit the IT team reported that staff consistently refer to the complex and unfriendly end user experience of the IT systems. Centres consistently report how difficult it can be when a user familiar with a system is absent, and the challenges that arise in ensuring that operations happen effectively and/or in time – for example, that orders are placed, or payments made. The complexity of the data management systems can inhibit the contribution of ‘central services’ teams to supporting high quality provision.

Commendation 4

The review team supports the ETB’s ongoing review and analysis of how the existing IT and data management systems could be improved in order to benefit learners, staff and centres/colleges. Linking management information systems across centres would greatly benefit synergies and cooperation.

Public Information and Communication

76. Cork ETB is covered by the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and ETB staff reported that they publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis and as part of normal business activities.

77. Cork ETB does not have a communications plan or strategy, and much of the communication with external parties comes from individual centres, services and programmes. During the main review visit, and in the examples in the self-evaluation report, ETB colleagues illustrated the wide range of activities undertaken to promote the programmes offered by the ETB. The review team noted, and ETB staff commented on, the lack of consistency and uniformity in presentation and style. Cork ETB has established a communications working group to develop a strategy, policy and plan which would cover all services and centres. This strategy will include all forms and modes of communication, and review and incorporate existing policies relating to communications. This strategy will cover the existing arrangements for marketing the ETB’s programmes, social media accounts, printed materials and videos.

78. During the review team’s visit, there were opportunities to discuss prospective learner access to relevant course and programme information. Given the large number and diversity of programmes, is difficult to generalise about the ease with which potential learners can find relevant course

information. However, there was a consensus among learners that information was easier to find once they started their programme. At this point, in general, learners confirmed that they receive the information they need (e.g. on assessment, learning outcomes, the ETB support services etc.). The review team noted that the current development, and future implementation, of an ETB communications strategy would help potential learners to discover more about the ETB's programmes.

Commendation 5

The review team supports the ETB's development of a communications strategy which includes arrangements for ensuring information is updated and relevant to all end-users.

79. With over 4,000 staff, internal communication is an area which needs to be considered in relation to promoting and supporting high quality provision. The review panel was informed that the reliance on the Quality Assurance Team and SharePoint, in an environment where the ETB promotes subsidiarity and the local management of centres/services, was not sufficient to ensure consistency in the use and understanding of the quality assurance processes. The adoption of a new internal communication application (WorkVivo) should help to enhance internal communication.

Objective 2: Teaching, Learning & Assessment

The Learning Environment

80. Cork ETB's self-evaluation report described the available facilities and centres. The review team's visit was virtual and therefore the panel was unable to comment on the ETB's physical learning environment. The review team noted the significant, and speedy, progress which had been made in the creation of a virtual learning environment – including support for staff to use TEL through Moodle's virtual learning platform, training in response to individual needs and support for staff in their preparation of online examinations.

81. The ETB's self-evaluation report notes the smaller centres' needs for IT support were greater as expertise was not available among existing staff resources. TEL support focused on:

- the development of their blended learning approaches;

- developing and delivering appropriate targeted professional development;
- developing standardised approaches to using a virtual learning environment;
- exploring approaches to maximise learner access to digital technology and resources through low-cost solutions;
- the development of online assessment.

This TEL support was seen as a significant success as training was provided across all FET provision. Significant professional development support was developed for TEL. The ETB used a professional development platform (Wriggle Connect) to give all FET staff access to a comprehensive range of inputs across multiple platforms, applications, and technologies. The review panel was unable to comment on how these developments affected learner achievement and motivation.

Commendation 6

The review team noted and commended the ETB for the speed with which they had responded to the government's restrictions associated with COVID-19.

Assessment of Learners

82. The development of a single assessment system (based on legacy systems which existed when the ETB was established) has been the most important and significant quality assurance change within the ETB in recent years. This involved the quality assurance sub-group on assessment looking at the assessment processes used in different departments and centres and managing the development and implementation of a new approach. The process sought to ensure that all ETB learners have the same experiences, opportunities and outcomes. The new approach was implemented in 2017.

83. The review team was informed that the use of SharePoint had helped to provide information to everyone who is involved in learner assessment, and this helps to support the correct and uniform use of the assessment procedures. The implementation of the new approach has been supported through workshops and meetings for teaching staff.

84. Some assessment activity involves assessors from outside of the ETB (e.g. employers and those working on apprenticeship programmes). Supporting (e.g. through training, guidance and the discussion of previous learner experiences) external colleagues in their use of the ETB's assessment processes is an area that has been highlighted for improvement by the ETB. The review team would support this proposal as it has the potential to enhance employer confidence in the ETB's programmes and in learner employability.

85. The review team noted the significant achievement as well as the challenges associated with implementing a unified assessment policy and procedures. The review team was informed that there are 'hard-to-reach' parts of the ETB (e.g. some part-time or session-based staff) as not all staff are fully conversant with all aspects of the assessment procedures. Through online help, one-to-one advice and centre-based training sessions, staff in the Quality Assurance Office reported that they continue to encourage and support the use of an 'official' set of processes relating to learner assessment.

86. To evaluate the effectiveness of the new approach to assessment the ETB has relied on an internal analysis of the reports from the external authenticators. This internal analysis is discussed with the senior management team and used to create an annual action plan. This reliance on the external authenticator reports and feedback creates an unbalanced relationship between the internal and external monitoring of the quality of provision. Without an internal, balancing analysis, there is a risk of an individual external authenticator's comments being assigned too much importance, particularly if there are difficult and controversial comments in a report.

Recommendation 9

The review team recommends that an annual internal analysis of the effectiveness of the assessment process be conducted in order to avoid a dependence on this external perspective. This internal perspective should combine quantitative and qualitative information and inform the content of any continuing professional development programme for staff.

Supports for Learners

87. Learner support covers a wide variety of activities before and after enrolment on a programme. This includes the promotion of the ETB and its programmes, as well as mechanisms for helping individual learners select the right programme for them. Once learners are enrolled, the

learners and staff from the ETB's support services informed the review team that the centres/services offered a wide range of support, e.g. for learners who have additional needs, for language development, careers guidance, support for application to higher education or progression to other programmes etc.

88. As part of the ETB's provision there is support for learners with disabilities and additional learning needs. A range of reasonable accommodations is available to support a fair and consistent assessment process for all learners, to allow a learner to demonstrate his/her level of attainment and to enable the learner to reach her/his full potential. Learners interviewed by the review team were aware that support was available to those with additional learning needs. Reasonable accommodation requests can be made on the following grounds:

- learning difficulty;
- hearing difficulty;
- visual difficulty;
- physical difficulty;
- mental health or behavioural difficulty.

89. Learners with disabilities, medical conditions and special/additional needs can apply for support and funding in relation to:

- assistive technology equipment and software;
- non-medical helpers (e.g. personal assistants and note takers);
- academic/learning support;
- deaf support (e.g. sign language interpreters and Speedtext);
- transport support.

90. Cork ETB's Coordinator for Active Inclusion across FET provides support and training to staff across all the services/centres. Other specialist staff services provide support for learner numeracy/literacy, well-being, IT competence and childcare needs.

91. The learners interviewed by the review panel noted that they, and their classmates, were regularly asked for feedback and their teachers were always available for discussion and the provision of information including feedback on assignments and examinations.

92. There are opportunities for the ETB to listen to learners – the learners interviewed by the review panel commented that many (if not most of these) opportunities are informal and this can leave learners uncertain about the follow-up actions which result from their feedback. There is a newly-formed learner voice forum in the FET Directorate and there are learner representatives on many student/learner councils in individual centres and colleges (e.g. in the PLC colleges, the Youthreach centres), and course and programme management boards (e.g. in the PLC colleges). The review team noted that the ETB plans to expand the number of student councils (as noted in the ETB's self-evaluation report) and is currently working on a FET Learner Charter which will set out values and provide a framework for learners, staff, teachers, and tutors to know and understand their respective responsibilities.

Recommendation 10

The review team welcomes the development of the Learner Charter and recommends that the ETB consider the development of more formal opportunities for learner voices to be heard including learner comments on course improvements, teaching and learning approaches, and the scheduling of assessments.

Objective 3: Self-evaluation, Monitoring & Review

Self-evaluation, Monitoring & Review

93. The review team noted that the ETB is committed to the quality assurance of its programmes and services through different mechanisms of self-evaluation and monitoring throughout the year. The ETB's self-evaluation report notes that it approached the completion of the report as an opportunity to identify the current level of compliance with QQI requirements to assist in building capacity in the ETB, and to identify potential gaps in quality assurance structures, policies, and processes. The ETB's senior management team commented that this self-evaluation process had facilitated an enhanced understanding and ownership of quality and quality enhancement processes and led to many recommendations for improvement and priority actions. These actions are set out in the ETB's Annual Improvement Plan and described in the ETB's self-evaluation report. The review team noted that the self-evaluation report often described the quality assurance processes which were used by the ETB – rather than analysing the extent to which they were effective in improving the quality of provision.

94. An Executive Self-Evaluation Report was submitted to QQI in 2017, and annual Quality Improvement Plans have also been developed and submitted to QQI since that time. These plans form the basis for discussions with QQI ('dialogue meetings') each year. As background information, the review team received copies of these documents prior to their virtual visit.

95. In 2018 the Quality Assurance Steering Group monitored and evaluated the ETB's assessment procedures to ascertain if they were effective and fit for purpose and how they were being implemented in the centres. The first stage of this process was for all centres to complete a self-evaluation report for the Quality Assurance Office. Based on information in these reports a representative sample of centres were selected for on-site monitoring visits. The visits took place over a four-month period and centres were issued with a checklist for monitoring in advance of the visit. At the end of the process a report was submitted to the Quality Assurance Steering Group and there was centre-based follow-up by the quality assurance staff.

96. Cork ETB's executive organised an ETB-wide self-evaluation (the Executive Self-evaluation Report) in 2017 in accordance with the QQI Statutory Core Quality Assurance and Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for ETBs and within the nationally agreed Terms of Reference for an Executive Self-evaluation. During the 2019/2020 academic year all the ETB's centres submitted a Centre Quality Improvement Plan to the Quality Assurance Office. These plans consisted of two sections:

- recommendation/(s) from the external authenticator reports, what annual targets have been set to address the recommendation/(s), and what actions may be required to assist in implementing the recommendation/(s);
- other areas for improvement including any recommendations from the results approval panel meetings.

Staff from the Quality Assurance Office liaised with each centre and offered support in specific areas identified in the plans as required. The review team noted that this experience of preparing the Executive Self-evaluation Report had assisted the centres/services prepare for this inaugural quality assurance visit.

97. The review team noted that the centres' reports heavily relied on the views of the external authenticators. As these reports only cover the assessment process, there could be many areas of the centres' provision which may not be considered in the quality improvement plans. The panel recommends that the ETB's self-evaluation process be extended beyond the analysis of external authenticator and results approval panel recommendations.

98. The ETB has procedures in place to monitor the quality of provision which is offered through the sub-contracting of training. These arrangements cover the Specialist Training Providers, the Community Training Centres, the Local Training Initiatives and contracted trainers. As this aspect of the ETB's provision is required to adhere to Cork ETB quality assurance policies and procedures, there is monitoring on a regular basis. The monitoring of all aspects of these external partner programmes is undertaken by an ETB colleague (a community development officer or contracted training officer) at regular intervals during the year.

99. For the Community Training Centres and Specialist Training Providers there is a business planning process with three meetings each year between the provider and representatives including senior management from the Training Centre. In November each 'second provider' is issued with a business planning template which is completed and returned to the ETB. A business planning meeting is arranged with each second provider to discuss individual submissions and agree the second provider's business plan for the year ahead. A mid-year meeting takes place to discuss progress, achievement of goals and targets. At the end of each year a final meeting is held. The review team did not consider the extent to which the learner voice, the views of the local community and employers were included in this business planning process. The review team noted that this monitoring of 'second provider' provision by the ETB was thorough and could provide the ETB with more information on these organisations' provision than is available from their own centres/services.

100. The review team noted that the ETB had established a system-wide process and procedures to support this inaugural quality assurance review. This involved collecting information on the quality of provision in all the centres. The review team noted that a member of the Quality Assurance Team analysed the individual reports from centres/services and amalgamated the information to provide an overarching analysis of the quality of the FET Directorate's provision. The review team noted the challenges and workload involved in reading, analysing and comparing long, detailed reports from many centres/services. As mentioned earlier, this process led to an overly descriptive self-evaluation report.

Programme Monitoring & Review

101. The ETB has a programme management system in place which enables centres to propose the development of a new programme, make amendments to an existing programme or request a review of an existing programme or programme module. The ETB's Programme Approval Group, which meets at least six times each year, oversees programme management and development. For those centres making proposals there is a standardised application process based on the following information:

- the reasons for proposing the development of a programme or component leading to the award(s) listed, information on research undertaken to support the proposal;
- reference to national/regional/local studies indicating a lack of current provision of programmes leading to the type of award(s) listed;
- any consultation or engagement with relevant stakeholders, including industry representatives;
- the capacity of the centre to deliver the programme/programme module considering staffing and resource requirements.

The review team would emphasise the importance of always ensuring the views of stakeholders, including learners and employer groups, are considered in the development of proposals for new or amended programmes.

102. The review team was made aware of the very significant amount of work involved in developing or reviewing existing programmes. The expected workload and staff commitment were barriers to centres making proposals. In an environment where a significant number of the ETB's programmes are based on curricula and outcomes developed more than ten years ago, these barriers to the development of more up-to-date and employer-relevant content appear to inhibit the quality of the ETB's provision. The review team noted that the ETB had recently increased its capacity for programme validation through the secondment of staff from the teaching/training teams. Using this increased capacity, the ETB plans to devise a schedule of programmes which need to be reviewed.

Recommendation 11

The review team supports this approach and recommends that all programmes be brought up-to-date with content that meets the current needs of learners, employers and society.

Oversight, Monitoring & Review of Relationships with External Parties

103. Cork ETB has an extensive network of relationships with other bodies and organisations in the region and seeks to ensure these are maintained and developed. These external parties include community education partners; local planning networks; second providers; higher education institutions; and employers. The review panel was able to meet representatives from all of these external partners. For some partners the ETB relationships were based on monitoring and review (e.g. second providers) while for others the relationship was based on collaboration and partnership (e.g. higher education institutions). These differences show themselves in the nature, and extent, of the oversight arrangements which are in place (e.g. the self-evaluation report notes that the ETB's Adult and Community Education Service works with more than 150 organisations. Some of these community groups have signed agreements and a formal memorandum of understanding agreement with the ETB).

104. The review team noted and welcomed the ETB's plans '[to establish] an Employer Engagement service/team to ensure the ETB becomes a clearly identified and readily accessible resource and support for enterprise, assisting employers to identify their future skills needs, support the up-skilling and re-skilling of existing employees, and deliver professional development and management supports required by businesses and industry sectors within the region. The Employer Engagement service will draw on the knowledge and relationships that currently exist to provide a "single point of contact" for employers, with employer and sector information shared across the ETB's services.'

105. For those relationships which depend on monitoring and review, the ETB has an established set of procedures and processes to manage the quality of provision. The review team noted that the individual relationships were described as strong, well-established and enduring. However, the self-evaluation report from the ETB notes a more mixed picture of monitoring and review. This report notes 'there is extensive engagement with third external/third parties across the ETB, but much of this is locally based and lacks structure and coherence. Engagement with Community Education partners is good, and their involvement in the local area planning processes is something that has become well

established and need to be maintained and fostered in the future. The formalising of quality assurance arrangements with interested Community Education providers is something that Cork ETB is pursuing, although there are some concerns regarding the resource availability to support and monitor these groups in addition to the current requirements in this area.”

106. For those relationships based on collaboration, the review team noted the strength and commitment from partners to make the relationships work and deepen the involvement. This was evident from the team’s discussions with employer and higher education representatives.

A woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a dark green cardigan over a black turtleneck, is working in a workshop. She is looking intently at a large, curved wooden structure she is holding up. The workshop is filled with various wooden materials and tools. In the background, there are shelves with more wood and a window with a light fixture. The overall atmosphere is one of focused craftsmanship.

Section

4

Conclusions

Section 4: Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions on Arrangements for Governance & Management of Quality

107. The review took place when the ETB's provision was significantly disrupted by government decisions in response to COVID-19. The review team recognises that these disruptions made the collection and production of evidence and information on quality assurance more challenging for the FET Directorate.

108. The review team confirms that the ETB's structures, responsibilities and range of activities were sufficient to manage the quality of provision. The team recognised that many of the governance and management systems used by the ETB are reliant on external constraints, restrictions and expectations (e.g. resourcing, national guidelines and regulations, the speed of change expected by employers, the move to more on-line provision). In addition, the 'legacy issues' experienced by the ETB increase the number of quality assurance issues that need to be addressed (e.g. in the area of human resources, in the guidance service offered to learners, in the strengthening of the learner voice, the engagement of employers). It is not possible to address all the legacy issues simultaneously and the review team notes there is a scheduled programme of work in place to do so. In this environment, the ETB is seeking to develop a 'culture of quality', and this is having an impact on a range of activities and services (e.g. through the acceptance of a more consistent use of on-line learning)

109. The review team reflected on whether the arrangements for managing the quality of provision offered by external partners was stronger than the processes used for the ETB's own centres/services. On balance, the review team felt that the monitoring and measuring of the quality of provision offered by the external partners was more developed, more regulated, and more consistently applied. The use of key performance indicators to measure and record the quality of the centres/services would enhance the ETB's quality assurance processes.

110. The review team considered the ease with which it was possible to produce a 'high-level' analysis of all the ETB's FET provision. While data and information on individual centres/services is available, it was not clear how this is amalgamated and how an overall picture of provision can be

produced on an annual basis. In this context, it can be more difficult to discuss and agree strategic priorities for the FET Directorate.

4.2 Conclusions on Arrangements for Teaching, Learning & Assessment

111. The review team noted the considerable progress that had been made in the quality assurance of the assessment processes. This is to be commended. The production, distribution and easy access to a wide range of policies, procedures and processes helps to ensure a shared understanding of the ETB's methodology for assessing learners.

112. The review team noted there was a minimal amount of information available on the effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning across the ETB's centres/services. In these circumstances, the quality assurance of the teaching and learning process was based on 'proxy measures' such as the provision of continuing professional development, informal learner feedback, anecdotal feedback from employers on the skills and competences of learners, information on learner progression and employment etc. When such proxy measures are used, it is important to have accurate, valid and reliable data. It was not clear to the review team whether the ETB had a detailed awareness of the quality of teaching and learning across all its provision.

Recommendation 12

The team recognises the ETB operates within a national context but recommends that the ETB consider how to strengthen the quality assurance of teaching and learning or enhance the accuracy and validity of the proxy measures which are being used.

4.3 Conclusions on Arrangements for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

113. The ETB centres' annual improvement plans and the 'business planning meetings' with second and other providers create the basis for self-evaluation and an opportunity for the ETB to monitor the overall quality of provision. The review team found that there is currently an over-reliance on the external authenticator reports on assessment and the panel results meetings. While these reports are important and make a significant contribution to monitoring and reviewing the quality of

provision, there are other aspects of quality assurance to consider (e.g. the effectiveness of each centre's recruitment and learner selection processes, each centre's engagement with employers and external partners, learner complaints and feedback, the effectiveness and impact of continuing professional development, the number of staff vacancies, each centre's success in recruiting to target, each centre's statistics on learner progression and employment, etc.)

114. The ETB's production of documentation for the review panel meeting, and the ways in which each centre/service engaged and contributed to the process, is highly commendable. The team recognises the very significant amount of work involved in producing, analysing and reflecting on quality assurance processes across the organisation. It is a substantial task, and the output enabled the review team to gain a deep and broad understanding of the wide range of activities undertaken by the ETB.

4.4 Commendations

115. The review panel recognises the very significant amount of progress that has been made in developing and strengthening the quality assurance culture in the ETB.

116. The review team particularly commends the ETB for its work on:

1. creating a system-wide approach to the quality assurance of all aspects of the assessment process;
2. developing and implementing a systematic approach to managing relationships with second providers and other external partners;
3. the production of annual improvement plans in each centre/service;
4. the speed with which the ETB responded to government restrictions relating to COVID and organised on-line learning;
5. encouraging and supporting each centre/service's engagement with the quality assurance process and this QOI review.

117. As set out in this report, the review team also commends the ETB on:

1. the development of a communications strategy which includes arrangements for ensuring information is updated and relevant to all end-users;
2. the ongoing review and analysis of how the existing IT and data management systems could be improved in order to benefit learners, staff and centres/colleges;
3. the development of a standardised set of procedures (and the move away from three different systems inherited when the ETB was established in 2013);
4. the review panel noted, and commended, the clear 'line of sight' between the activities of the working groups and the senior management team;
5. the widespread awareness and the relevance of the ETB's strategic intention to 'provide a high-quality learning experience for every learner'

4.5 Recommendations

118. The review team recommends that the ETB, based on their analysis of the ETB's self-evaluation report and interviews during the review meeting:

1. make more extensive use of quantitative information and data in the monitoring, evaluation and review of each college's/service's provision e.g. through the use of key performance indicators;
2. develop and implement a quality assurance approach for all areas of the ETB's provision;
3. develop and implement systematic and regular monitoring of the quality of individual centres/services;
4. rapidly implement a manageable process of programme review to ensure all programmes are up-to-date and meet the needs of learners, employers and society.

119. The review panel also recommends that further work be completed to:

1. strengthen the learner voice in all aspects of the ETB's provision and governance;
2. simplify and streamline the opportunities for external partners (particularly employers) to contact and engage with the FET Directorate;

3. explore how the ETB could develop and strengthen its arrangements for tracking learners following the completion of their programmes;
4. consider how to monitor the ETB's central services (e.g. finance, IT, HR etc.) contribution to the quality of FET provision;
5. explore what opportunities exist to use indicators to 'benchmark' the quality of individual centres' provision;
6. consider how it can strengthen the quality assurance of teaching and learning, or enhance the accuracy and validity of the proxy measures which are being used;
7. produce an annual internal analysis of the effectiveness of the assessment process in order to avoid a dependence on this external perspective. This internal perspective should combine quantitative and qualitative information and inform the content of any continuing professional development programme for staff
8. ensure that additional support relating to progression is provided to vocational learners outside the PLC sector;
9. use quality assurance processes to enhance and strengthen existing HR procedures;
10. develop a much better understanding of the effectiveness of work placements and learner work-based learning;
11. develop a much better understanding of the effectiveness of existing, and any future, mentoring schemes;
12. strengthen the quality assurance of teaching and learning or enhance the accuracy and validity of the proxy measures which are being used (the review team recognises the ETB operates within a national context).

4.6 Statements on Quality Assurance

120. The review team considers the ETB's quality assurance procedures to be effective, to contribute to a culture of quality assurance, and to add value to what is being achieved in individual centres/services. The team recognises the considerable success that has been achieved in gathering and reporting on qualitative information and quantitative data in relation to examination results and certification numbers. The panel encourages the ETB to go much further in its use of quantitative data (e.g. key performance indicators, targets, benchmarks etc.) to further strengthen the quality assurance of all aspects of provision.

121. The review team confirms that the policies, processes and procedures used by Cork ETB are in line with the QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines and policies including the QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training. The review team noted the ETB had established a working group to look at the quality assurance of access, transfer and progression.

122. The review team notes that the ETB has a programme of work in place to enhance quality, and has identified areas of responsibility for working groups (e.g. access, transfer and progression; and the recognition of prior learning). The review team notes that these groups will build on the successful work which has already been completed in the area of assessment. There are other areas where quality could be enhanced, and the review team encourages the ETB to consider these



Section

5

ETB Review Response

Section 5: ETB Review Response

Response to QQI Inaugural Review Report

Introduction

Cork ETB welcomes the Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) Inaugural Statutory Review carried out in June 2021. Engagement with this inaugural review was a positive and developmental step in Cork ETB's quality journey. We thank and acknowledge the international review panel of experts for engaging with Cork ETB in a thought provoking, engaging and robust panel visit. Engagement in the review process, including the engagement of centres and services in a self-evaluation process and the ETB's overall self-evaluation as well as the weeklong panel engagement provided Cork ETB with an opportunity to take time to reflect critically on its provision. The review process and the panel visit are by their nature a "snapshot in time"; and in the case of Cork ETB took place against the backdrop of the extraordinary circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts since March 2020.

The Virtual Review Process

Planning for the inaugural review process was completed just prior to the advent of Covid 19. The impacts of Covid 19 significantly affected the timeframe and manner of the self-evaluation process. Completing the self-evaluation process and preparation of the self-evaluation report and panel visit took place during the height of the pandemic, and it was a considerable challenge to complete as the ETB and its centres and services continued to operate in remote working modes. The logistics of conducting the review process during the COVID-19 pandemic were a significant challenge for Cork ETB and had the self- evaluation process taken place in non- covid times, or during a time of less restrictions, some of the approaches that would have been adopted and the experiences of all involved would have been very different.

Response to Commendations

The review report sets out ten commendations. Cork ETB sincerely thanks the panel for their acknowledgement and the affirmation of the areas of good practice identified and evidenced within Cork ETB.

Cork ETB warmly welcomes the commendation and recognition of the significant work that has been undertaken in respect of quality assurance in Cork ETB since its establishment in 2013. The tasks of devising and implementing a system-wide approach to the quality assurance of all aspects of the assessment process has been significant, requiring the aggregation of three separate sets of procedures, and perhaps more significantly, three different cultures. That this has been achieved and a single integrated quality system designed for Cork ETB is a significant step in our quality journey and Cork ETB welcomes the panel recognition of these achievements.

Cork ETB sincerely appreciate the commendation of the review panel of the speed with which Cork ETB responded to government restrictions relating to COVID 19 and moved to emergency on-line teaching and learning. The past 18 months have been severely challenging for all our staff and learners. We welcome the acknowledgement of the outstanding efforts of staff and learners during this most unusual and unprecedented time.

Cork ETB welcomes the commendation of the level of engagement of each centre/service with the quality assurance process and the self -evaluation review. We believe that our approach, where each centre completed their own internal self-evaluation was prudent, gave ownership of the Self-Evaluation process to members of the wider organisation, and further builds on the culture of quality improvement which we are embedding in our organisation.

Response to Recommendations

The panel report sets out 16 recommendations. Cork ETB thanks the review panel for their considered and though provoking recommendations. These recommendations and our responses to them, will form the basis of an Action Plan for improvement in all aspects of our approach to quality.

Several recommendations relate to increasing the use of data analytics, in relation to monitoring of centres and services, benchmarking, key performance indicators and tracking learners following their completion of a FET programme. Cork ETB does gather a wealth of data and uses this to inform its strategic planning. However, Cork ETB has up to now adopted a largely qualitative approach in its evaluation of activities, and it emphasised this qualitative approach in both the review process and its approach to the use of data in its self-evaluation. Cork ETB acknowledges that this has perhaps led to a somewhat distorted interpretation of data presented. Cork ETB is cautious about the use of benchmarking data without contextualising qualitative inputs, for example in, comparing centre

performance, not only in light of national agreements but also as QQI uses criterion-based marking, which can make comparisons between centres less meaningful.

A further subset of recommendations related to the need “to develop and implement a quality assurance approach for all areas of provision”. Cork ETB concurs that quality assurance encompasses every aspect of the organisation and that perhaps the focus thus far has been overly focused on assessment, and that this underpinned much of the engagement with the external panel. However, assessment is at the heart of what we do, and this may somewhat justify this direction. As we move into the next steps in our quality journey, Cork ETB will reflect on the steps that may be taken to further embed quality assurance, and a culture of quality into all aspects of our services and provision.

Cork ETB acknowledges that, in line with panel recommendations, further work needs to be done to “develop and implement systematic and regular monitoring of the quality of individual centres/services” and to “strengthen the quality assurance of teaching and learning”. Cork ETB works within national frameworks of partnership with representative organisations and is constrained at times and in certain aspects by national agreements in how this might be shaped.

Cork ETB concurs with the recommendation that Cork ETB “strengthen the learners’ voice in all aspects of the ETB’s provision and governance”. Our learners are at the heart of what we do, and it is important to give their voice the weight it deserves. Cork ETB has established a Learner Voice structure to promote the learner’s voice within each Cork ETB centre.

Cork ETB concurs with the panel recommendation that Cork ETB “rapidly implement(s) a managed process of programme review to ensure all programmes are up to date”. The process of programme review is linked to the recognition of awards and award standards, which are the responsibility of QQI. The review of programmes and awards affects all 16 ETB’s and other providers, and there are aspects of any review that are outside the control of Cork ETB or the ETB sector as a whole. Work on reviewing existing Cork ETB programmes has commenced since the panel visit. In engaging in programme review, Cork ETB will be cognisant of other areas recommended by the review panel, including the learner voice, engagement with external partners and work-based learning.

Cork ETB and the other ETBs will work collaboratively with QQI, in its role as custodian of ETB programmes and awards to address issues related to programmatic and award reviews as they affect all 16 ETBs.

Conclusion

The QQI Inaugural Statutory Review process provided the opportunity for Cork ETB to reflect on every aspect of our FET provision. A lot has been achieved since the foundation of Cork ETB in 2013 but we recognise and acknowledge there is more work to do. The review process, the commendations, recommendations and insights obtained from and through engagement with the process, provide Cork ETB with the starting point for the next phase on our quality journey. This work will also be guided by our vision and mission and values, and the strategic priorities, goals and objectives which have been identified for our Strategy Statement 2022-2026 which is in the concluding stage of development and will be published shortly. Cork ETB will ensure that the vision, mission and strategic priorities will inform our approach to quality assurance processes.

Cork ETB sincerely thanks all members of the review panel, in particular the Chair Professor James Calleja and Coordinating Reviewer Keith Brumfitt for their expertise, good humour, and professionalism through the process and for their highly constructive feedback and report.

Cork ETB also would like to acknowledge the work of all Cork ETB staff, learners (past and present), employers and our partners in the community and Higher Education for their energetic enthusiasm, honesty, and authenticity throughout the review process, and thank them for their time and ongoing support

Finally, Cork ETB would like to express their sincere gratitude to the work of the members of the Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review Unit in QQI for their assistance, guidance, and support for Cork ETB in completing the review during these most unprecedented times.

Denis Leamy

Chief Executive

John Fitzgibbons

Director of Further Education & Training



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Appendices

Appendix A: Review Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education & Training Boards

1 Background and Context for the Review

1.1 QQI established Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for all providers in April 2016, and Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in May 2017². These guidelines collectively address the quality assurance responsibilities of ETBs as significant public providers of further education and training. The scope of the guidelines incorporates all education, training and related services of an ETB, leading to QQI awards, other awards recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or awards of other awarding, regulatory or statutory bodies.

1.2 The Education and Training Boards (ETBs) were established under the Education and Training Boards Act (2013). They are statutory providers with responsibility for education and training, youth work and other statutory functions, and operate and manage a range of centres administering and providing adult and further education and training (FET). ETBs also administer secondary and primary education through schools and engage in a range of non-accredited provision. These areas are not subject to quality assurance regulation by QQI.

1.3 In 2018, all sixteen ETBs completed re-engagement with QQI. Following this process each ETB established its quality assurance (QA) policy and procedures in accordance with section 30 of the Quality and Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012. QQI recognises that those policies and procedures are reflective of the evolving and developmental nature of quality assurance within the ETB sector as it continues to integrate the legacy body processes.

² Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards (QQI, 2019)

1.4 As outlined in QQI's Core QA Guidelines, quality and its assurance are the responsibility of the provider, i.e. an ETB, and review and self-evaluation of quality is a fundamental element of an ETB's quality assurance system. A provider's external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI. QQI review functions are set out in various sections of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) as amended (henceforth 'the 2012 Act'). The reviews relate to QQI's obligation under Section 27(b) of the 2012 Act (to establish procedures for the review by QQI of the effectiveness and implementation of a provider's quality assurance procedures) and to section 34 of the 2012 Act (the external review by QQI of a provider's quality assurance procedures).

1.5 An external review of quality assurance has not been previously undertaken for the ETBs, neither through QQI nor former legacy awarding body processes. QQI is cognisant of the ETBs' current organisational context in which the establishment of comprehensive and integrated quality assurance systems is an ongoing process. A primary function of the reviews will thus be to inform the future development of quality assurance and enhancement activities within the organisations. Following the completion of the sixteen review reports, a sectoral report will also be produced identifying systemic observations and findings.

1.6 The 2012 Act states that QQI shall consult with SOLAS (the state organisation responsible for funding, co-ordinating and monitoring further education and training in Ireland) in carrying out a review of education and training boards. This will take the form of consultation with SOLAS on the Terms of Reference for the review and the provision of contextual briefing by SOLAS to review teams.

2 Purposes

2.1 QQI has specific multi-dimensional purposes for its quality assurance reviews. The Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards outlines six purposes for this review process. Those purposes, and the ways in which they will be achieved and measured, are as follows:

Purpose	Achieved and Measured Through
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To encourage a quality culture and the enhancement of the learning environment and experience within ETBs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasising the learner and the learning experience in reviews. Constructively and meaningfully involving staff at all levels of the organisation in the self-evaluation and external evaluation. phases of the review. Providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them. Exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures. Providing evidence of quality assurance and quality enhancement within the ETB.
<p>2. To provide feedback to ETBs about organisation-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasising the ownership, governance and management of quality assurance at the corporate ETB-level, i.e. how the ETB exercises oversight of quality assurance. Pitching the review at a comprehensive ETB-wide level. Evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards. Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of quality assurance procedures.
<p>3. To improve public confidence in the quality of ETB provision by promoting transparency and public awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent. Publication of clear timescales and terms of reference for review. Evaluating, as part of the review, ETB reporting on quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of the individual ETB reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences. • Publication of sectoral findings and observations.
<p>4. To support system-level improvement of the quality of further education and training in the ETBs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing a sectoral report, with system-level observations and findings. • The identification and dissemination of effective practice to facilitate shared learning.
<p>5. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the expertise of international, national, learner, industry and other stakeholder peer reviewers who are independent of the ETB. • Ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence. • Facilitating ETBs to identify measures for quality relevant to their own mission and context. • Promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation
<p>6. To provide an opportunity for ETBs to articulate their stage of development, mission and objectives and demonstrate the quality assurance of their provision, both individually and as a sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of self-evaluation reports, conducted with input from ETB learners and wider stakeholder groups. • Publication of the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences. •

3 Objectives and Criteria for Review

3.1 The core objective of the external review is **to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of an ETB’s quality assurance procedures**. As this is the inaugural review, it will have a particular emphasis on the arrangements established to date to support the operation of the quality assurance system. Recognising that the development and implementation of an ETB-wide

quality assurance system and procedural framework is an ongoing process, the review will also have a forward-looking dimension and will explore the ETB's plans and infrastructure to support the ongoing development of these systems. The review will thus examine the following:

Objective 1: Governance and Management of Quality:

Evaluate the comprehensive oversight arrangements and transparent decision-making structures for the ETB's education and training and related activities within and across all service provision (for example FE colleges, training centres, community-based education services, contracted providers, collaborative partnerships/arrangements).

The governance and quality management systems would be expected to address:

Indicative Matters to be Explored

a) The ETB's mission and strategy

- How/do the ETB's quality assurance arrangements contribute to the fulfilment of these?
- Is the learner experience consistent with this mission?

b) Structures and terms of reference for the governance and management of quality assurance

- Are the arrangements sufficiently comprehensive and robust to ensure strong governance and management of operations (e.g. separation of responsibilities, externality, stakeholder input)?
- Is governance visible and transparent?
- Where multi-level arrangements exist (i.e. where responsibilities are invested in centre managers), is there sufficient clarity, co-ordination, corporate oversight of, and accountability for, these arrangements?

c) The documentation of quality assurance policy and procedures

- How effective are the arrangements for the development and approval of policies and procedures?
- Are policies and procedures coherent and comprehensive (do they incorporate all service types and awarding bodies?), robust and fit for purpose?
- Are policies and procedures systematically evaluated?

d) Staff recruitment, management and development

- How does the ETB assure itself as to the competence of its staff?
- How are professional standards maintained and enhanced?
- How are staff informed of developments impacting the organisation and how can they input to decision-making?

e) Programme development, approval and submission for validation

- What arrangements are in place to ensure alignment of programme development activity with strategic goals and regional needs?
- Are the arrangements for the approval and management of programme development robust, objective and transparent?
- What arrangements are in place to facilitate and oversee a comprehensive programme development process in advance of submission for validation (e.g. the conduct of research, inclusion of external expertise, writing learning outcomes, curricula etc.)?
- Are there structures in place to support collaborative programme development with other ETBs/providers?

f) Access, transfer and progression

- How does the ETB quality assure access, transfer and progression systematically across all programmes and services?
- Are there flexible learning pathways, respecting and attending to the diversity of learners?
- Are admissions, progression and recognition policies and processes clear and transparent for learners and implemented on a consistent basis?

g) Integrity and approval of learner results, including the operation and outcome of internal verification and external authentication processes

- What governance and oversight processes are in place to ensure the integrity of learner assessment and results?
- How does the ETB ensure that these arrangements provide for consistent decision-making and standards across services and centres?

h) Information and data management;

- What arrangements are in place to ensure that data are reliable and secure?
- How are data utilised as part of the quality assurance system?
- What arrangements are in place to ensure the integrity of learner records (including, where relevant, the sharing of learner data with other providers on national apprenticeships)?

- How is compliance with data legislation ensured?

i) Public information and communications;

- Is information on the quality assurance system, procedures and activities publicly available and regularly updated?

Indicative Matters to be Explored

- What arrangements are in place to ensure that published information in relation to all provision (including by centres) is clear, accurate, up to date and easily accessible?

Objective 2: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the ETB and a high-quality learning experience for all learners. These will include:

Indicative Matters to be Explored

a) The learning environment

- How/is the quality of the learning experience monitored?
- How/are modes of delivery and pedagogical methods evaluated to ensure that they meet the needs of learners?
- How is the quality of the learning experience of learners on work placements ensured?
- Is there evidence of enhancement in teaching and learning?

b) Assessment of learners

- How is the integrity, consistency and security of assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures and records ensured – including in respect of recognition of prior learning?
- How is the standard of assessment of learners on work placements ensured – particularly where these are undertaken by non-ETB staff?
- Do learners in all settings have a clear understanding of how and why they are assessed and are they given feedback on assessment?

c) Supports for learners

- How are support services planned and monitored to ensure that they meet the needs of learners?

- How does the ETB ensure consistency in the availability of appropriate supports to learners across different settings/regions?
- Are learners aware of the existence of supports?

Objective 3: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

Evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the ETB's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them. It will also reflect on how these processes are utilised to complete the quality cycle through the identification and promotion of effective practice and by addressing areas for improvement. This will include:

Indicative Matters to be Explored

a) Self-evaluation, monitoring and review (including programme and quality review)

- What are the processes for quality assurance planning, monitoring and reporting?
- Are the processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and review (including the self-evaluation report undertaken for the inaugural review) comprehensive, inclusive and evidence-based?
- Is there evidence of strategic analysis and follow-up of the outcome of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring (e.g. review reports, external authenticator reports, learner feedback reports etc.)?
- How is quality promoted and enhanced?

b) Programme monitoring and review

- How are programme delivery and outcomes monitored across multiple centres (including collection of feedback from learners/stakeholders)?
- Are mechanisms for periodic review of programmes comprehensive, inclusive and robust?
- Is there evidence that the outcome of programme monitoring and review informs programme modification and enhancement?
- Are the outputs of programme monitoring and review considered on a strategic basis by the ETB's governance bodies to inform decision-making?

c) Oversight, monitoring and review of relationships with external/third parties (in particular, with contracted training providers, community training providers, and other collaborative provision).

- How does the ETB ensure the suitability of the external parties with which it engages?
- Is the nature of the arrangements with each external party published?
- Is the effectiveness of these arrangements monitored and reviewed through ETB governance?
- Does the ETB assess its impact within the region and local communities?

3.2 In respect of each dimension, the review will:

- i. evaluate the effectiveness of ETB's quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of further education, training, and related services; and
- ii. identify perceived gaps in the internal quality assurance mechanisms and the appropriateness, sufficiency, prioritisation and timeliness of planned measures to address them in the context of the ETB's current stage of development; and
- iii. explore achievements and innovations in quality assurance and in the enhancement of teaching and learning.

3.3 Following consideration of the matters above, the review will:

- Provide a qualitative statement about the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the ETB and the extent of their implementation;
- Provide a statement about the extent to which existing quality assurance procedures adhere to QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines and policies (as listed at 3.4), to include an explicit qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures are in keeping with QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training;³
- Provide a qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality; and
- Identify effective practice and recommendations for further improvement.

³ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/ATP%20Policy%20Restatement%20FINAL%202018.pdf>

3.4 The implementation and effectiveness of QQI's Core Quality Assurance Guidelines will be considered in the context of the following criteria:

- The ETB's mission and objectives for quality assurance;
- QQI's Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards
- QQI's Topic-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes;
- QQI's Topic-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning;
- QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training;
- QQI's Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training; and
- Relevant European guidelines and practice on quality and quality assurance

4 The Review Team

4.1 QQI will appoint a review team to conduct the review. Review teams are composed of peer reviewers who are learners; leaders and staff from comparable providers; and external representatives including employer and civic representatives. The size of the team will depend on the size and complexity of the ETB but in general will comprise five or six persons. A reviewer may participate in more than one ETB review.

4.2 QQI will identify an appropriate team of reviewers for each review who are independent of the ETB with the appropriate skills and experience required to perform their tasks. This will include experts with knowledge and experience of further education and training, quality assurance, teaching and learning, and external review. It will include international representatives and QQI will seek to ensure diversity within the team. The ETB will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their review team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. The roles and responsibilities of the review team members are as follows ⁴:

⁴ Further detail on the conduct of reviewers is outlined in QQI's Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators.

Chairperson

4.3. The chairperson is a full member of the team. Their role is to provide tactical leadership and to ensure that the work of the team is conducted in a professional, impartial and fair manner, and in compliance with the Terms of Reference. The chairperson's functions include:

- Leading the conduct of the review and ensuring that proceedings remain focused.
- Coordinating the work of reviewers.
- Fostering open and respectful exchanges of opinion and ensuring that the views of all participants are valued and considered.
- Facilitating the emergence of evidence-based team decisions (ideally based on consensus).
- Contributing to, and overseeing the production of, the review report within the timeline agreed with QQI, approving amendments or convening additional meetings if required.

Co-ordinating Reviewer

4.4 The co-ordinating reviewer is a full member of the team. Their role is to capture the team's deliberations and decisions during the proceedings and ensure that they are expressed clearly and accurately in the team report. It is vital that the co-ordinating reviewer ensures that sufficient evidence is provided in the report to support the team's recommendations. The role of the co-ordinating reviewer includes:

- Acting as the liaison between the review team and QQI; and, during the main review visit, between the review team and the ETB review co-ordinator.
- Maintaining records of discussions during the planning and main review visits.
- Co-ordinating the drafting of the review report in consultation with the team members and under the direction of the chairperson within the timeline agreed with QQI.

All Review Team Members

4.5 The role of all review team members includes:

- Preparing for the review by reading and critically evaluating all written material;
- Investigating and testing claims made in the self-evaluation report and other ETB documents during the main review visit by speaking to a range of staff, learners and stakeholders.

- Contributing to the production of the review report, ensuring that their particular perspective and voice (i.e. learner, industry, stakeholder, international etc.) forms an integral part of the review.
- Following the individual ETB reviews, providing observations to inform the development of the sectoral report.

5 The Review Process and Timeline

5.1 The key steps in the review process with indicative timelines are outlined below. Specific dates for each ETB review will be outlined by QQI in accordance with the published review schedule.

Step	Action	Timeframe
Preparation	Preparation of a provider profile by each ETB (e.g. outlining mission; strategic objectives; local context; data on staff profiles; recent developments; key challenges).	6-9 months before first main review visit
	Provision of ETB data by SOLAS (e.g. data on learner profiles; local context; strategic direction).	
	Establishment of review teams and identification of ETBs for review by each review team, selected in accordance with the ETB provider profiles and data and in consultation with ETBs on potential conflicts of interest.	
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	Preparation and publication by ETBs of individual, inclusive, whole-of-organisation self-evaluations of how effectively they assure the quality of teaching, learning and service activities.	11 weeks before main review visit
Desk Review	Desk review of the self-evaluation reports by the review teams.	Before initial meeting

Step	Action	Timeframe
Initial Meeting	An initial meeting of the review team, including reviewer training, briefing from SOLAS, discussion of preliminary impressions and identification of any additional documentation required.	5 weeks after submission of self-evaluation report 6 weeks before main review visit
Planning Visit	A visit to the ETB by the chair and co-ordinating reviewer of the review team to receive information about the self-evaluation process, discuss the schedule for the main review visit and discuss any additional information requests.	5 weeks after SER 6 weeks before main review visit
Main Review Visit	A visit to the ETB by the review team to receive and consider evidence from ETB staff, learners and stakeholders in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.	11 weeks following receipt of self-evaluation report
Individual ETB Reports	Preparation of draft ETB review report by review team.	6-8 weeks after main review visit
	Draft report sent to ETB by QQI for a check of factual accuracy.	1 week following receipt by QQI
	ETB responds with any factual accuracy corrections	1 week following receipt
	Final report sent to ETB.	1 week following receipt of any factual accuracy corrections
	Response to review submitted by ETB.	2 weeks after receipt of final report

Step	Action	Timeframe
Outcomes	QQI considers findings of individual ETB review reports and organisational responses through governance processes.	Next available meeting of QQI Approvals and Reviews Committee
	ETB review reports are published with organisational response.	
Follow-Up	Preparation of an action plan by ETB.	1 month after QQI decision
	QQI seeks feedback from ETB on experience of review.	6 weeks after decision
	One-year follow-up report by ETB to QQI. This (and any subsequent follow-up) may be integrated into annual reports to QQI.	1 year after main review visit
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through annual reporting and dialogue processes.	Continuous

Appendix B: Main Review Visit Schedule

Date:		14th June 2021		
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles	Purpose
08.45-9am	Private Review Team Meeting			
09.00-09.30	ETB Review Coordinator/Director of FET	John Fitzgibbons, Carol Quinlan, Niamh Gaine	Director of FET; ETB Review Coordinator	Meeting with ETB Review Coordinator
09.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting			
10.00-11.00	1. ETB Chief Executive & SMT	Denis Leamy	Chief Executive	Discussion of mission, strategic plan, roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement
		John Fitzgibbons	Director of FET	
		Pat McKelvey	Director of Schools	
		Suzanne Mullins	Director of OSD	
		Enda McWeeney	Director of OSD	
		Valerie Lucey	Assistant Principal Officer Human Resources	
		Henry Creedon	Assistant Principal Officer Finance	
		Adrian Deasy	Assistant Principal Officer IT	
11:00-11.30am	Private Review Team Meeting			
11.30 - 11.45	Review Team Break			
11.45-12.30	2. Self-Evaluation Team	John Fitzgibbons	Director of FET	Discussion of the development of the self-evaluation report
		Carol Quinlan	Quality Assurance Officer	

		Niamh Gaine	QA Unit/ETB Review Coordinator	
		Katie O' Reilly	QA Unit	
		Ruth Griffin	Adult Education Officer Cork City	
		Matthew Reville	Youthreach Coordinator The Glen Youthreach	
		Valerie Cowman	Assistant Manager Training Services Cork Training Centre	
		Sarah Flynn	Assistant Principal Officer Corporate Services	
12.30-1pm	Panel Review Team Meeting			
1pm- 2pm	Review Team Lunch/Break			
2pm-2.45pm	3. Parallel sessions with learners, including learners (max 3 groups)			Discussion of learner experience
	Parallel session 1 (Unaccredited and L 1-3 learners)		6 Learners from unaccredited provision and Level 1-3 FET provision	
		Finbar Motherway	Killeagh/Inch Monday Club, Community Education Provision - non accredited	
		Casimiro Martins	Community Education who is in Direct Provision Kinsale Road - non-accredited	
		Breda Campbell/Anne Casey possible back up	Adult Literacy North Cork	
		Fiona Kelleher	Dillons Cross Project	
		James Kenny	The Glen Youthreach	
		Cian Raymond	The Glen Youthreach	

	Parallel session 2 (L4-5-6 learners)		6 Learners from Level 4-6 FET provision	
		Caroline Murphy	BTEI South Cork (Level 4)	
		Desmond O' Reilly	Youthreach Fermoy	
		Anna Jakobek	Mayfield Community Training Centre (Level 4)	
		Aoife Mooney	St. Johns Central College (level 5)	
		Clare McCarthy	Training Centre (level 5)	
		Veronica O Driscoll	Kinsale College (Level 6)	
		Maura Field	Cork College of Commerce (Level 6)	
	Parallel session 3 (Apprentices & other WB learners)		6 Learners from apprenticeships, traineeships and other work-based learning FET Provision.	
		Zoe Fitzgerald	Accounting Technicians Cork College of Commerce	
		David Grincell	Property Service Management Cork College of Commerce	
		Gobnait O Connell	Property Service Management Cork College of Commerce	
		Katie Fennessey	Property Service Management Cork College of Commerce	
		Denis Murphy	Craft Apprenticeship (HVM) (Cork Training Centre)	
		Ross Raven	Craft Apprenticeship (HVM) (Cork Training Centre)	

		Patryk Mierzejewski	Commis Chef Apprenticeship (Cork Training Centre)	
		Cormac Cahill	Life Sciences Traineeship (Cork Training Centre)	
2.45-3pm	Review Team Break			
3-3.45pm	4. Parallel sessions with learners, including learners (max 3 groups)			Discussion of learner experience
	Parallel session 1 (Past Graduates in HE or employment)	Chris Howard	Graduate of QQI Level 5 Cork College of Commerce and currently a Cork ETB staff	
		Alan O'Sullivan	Graduate of Youthreach Mahon	
		James Leonard	Graduate of QQI Level 5 Cork College of Commerce and currently in employment	
		Ken Forde – Jannsen Biologics	Graduate of QQI Level 5 Cork Training Centre and currently in employment	
		Juliette Crowley	Graduate of QQI Level 5 Mallow College and currently in HE	
	Parallel session 2 (Past Graduates in HE or employment)	Jake Mulley	Graduate of Youthreach Macroom and currently in HE	
		Susan O' Sullivan	Graduate of QQI Level 5 CSN and currently in HE	

		Dave McCarthy	Graduate of QQI Level 5 CSN and currently in HE	
		Gillian Butler	Graduate of QQI Level 5 Cork College of Commerce and currently a Cork ETB staff	
		Maria Gillen	Graduate of QQI level 5 St Johns College	
		Kate O Sullivan	Graduate of QQI Level 5 Cork College of Commerce and currently a Cork ETB staff	
3.45-4.15pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
4.15pm-4.30pm	Review Team Break			
4.30-5.15pm	5. Parallel sessions with LEARNING PRACTITIONERS (max 3 groups)			Discussion of staff involvement in quality assurance and enhancement
	Parallel session 1 (Unaccredited and L 1-3 learning practitioners)		6 Learning practitioners from unaccredited provision and Level 1-3 FET provision	
		Lorraine Higgins	Learning practitioner n Education Unit Cork Prison	
		Brid Murphy	Learning practitioner in Adult Literacy Cork City	
		Mary O'Connell	Learning practitioner Adult Literacy Charleville	

		Mike Lyons	Learning practitioner in Community Education Direct Provision Centre		
		Ann Ward	Learning practitioner in Community Education/Adult Literacy North Cork		
		Catherine Foley	Learning practitioner in Community Education		
	Parallel session 2 (L4- 5-6 Learning Practitioners)		6 Learning practitioners from Level 4-6 FET provision		
		Jacqui Jones	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 4 Blackpool CTC (Cork Training Centre)		
		Hughie O' Donovan	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 4 The Glen Youthreach Centre		
		Linda Coleman	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 5 Cork Training Centre		
		Carole Carey	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 5 Cork Training Centre		
		Catherine Kelleher	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 5 Mc Egan College		
Alex Masterson	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 6 Mallow College				
Mary Looney	Learning practitioner of QQI Level 6 St. Johns College				

	Parallel session 3 (Apprenticeship & other WBL instructors)		6 Learning practitioners from apprenticeships, traineeships and other work-based learning FET Provision.	
		Brian Stokes	Property Services management Apprenticeship	
		Noreen Forde	Accounting Technicians Apprenticeship	
		Deirdre O Sullivan	Hairdressing Apprenticeship	
		Yeohan Cunningham	Commis Chef Apprenticeship	
		Kevin O' Brien	Plumbing Apprenticeship	
		John Barry	Electrical and Instrumentation Apprenticeship	
		Tom Madden	Apprenticeship instructor	
5.15pm- 5.45pm	Panel Review Team Meeting			

Date:		15th June 2021		
Theme: TBD (Day 2)				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles	Purpose
09.00-09.30	ETB Review Coordinator	Carol Quinlan; Niamh Gaine	FET Director; Quality Assurance Officer; ETB Review Coordinator	Meeting with ETB Review Coordinator
9.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting			
10.00-10.45	6. Parallel sessions Learner Representatives			
	Parallel session 1 Learner representatives	Olive O' Sullivan	BOM representative ST Johns College	Discussion of mechanisms for learner voice
		Caitlin O'Driscoll	Community Training Centre, Blackpool	
		Kathy Bradley	BOM representative CSN	
		Ryan Coughlan	Ballincollig Youthreach Student Council	

	Parallel session 2 Learner representatives	Hanna Menie	Mallow Youthreach Student Council	
		Stephen Cummins	Ballincollig Youthreach Student Council	
		Antoinette Byrd	Aontas forum/Learner Voice	
		Tony Moloney	Aontas forum/Learner Voice	
10.45-11.15	Private Review Team Meeting			
11.15-11.30	Review Team Break			
11.30-12.15PM	7. Parallel sessions with FET Coordinators			
	Parallel Session 1: Heads of Centre/FET Coordinators - Unaccredited/level 1-3 provision	Ger Canning	Adult Education Officer - Cork City	Discussion of QA arrangements, responsibilities and implementation
		Ciarán Lynch	Adult Education Officer - South Cork	

		Nuala White	Area Coordinator -Cork City	
		Jon Hynes	Director Kinsale Outdoor Education Centre	
		Des Cullinane	CCLS Youthreach	
		Ann Corcoran	Unaccredited Night classes (Cork College of Commerce)	
		John Healy	Unaccredited Night classes (Mallow College)	
		Norma FitzGibbon	Cork ETB Observer	
	Parallel Session 2 - Heads of Centre/FET Coordinators Level 4-6 provision (including training provision)	Deirdre O' Sullivan	Principal Post Leaving Certificate CSN College	
		Fiona Sneedon	Manager of Further Education and Training (FET) Provision and Support Services	

		Paula McCarthy	Principal Post Leaving Certificate College	
		Brendan Glynn	BTEI Co-ordinator North Cork	
		Michael Crowley	Area Coordinator West Cork	
		Nuala Glanton	Adult Education Officer North Cork	
		Ann O' Riordan	Co-Ordinator Youthreach Macroom	
		Catherine O'Sullivan	Cork ETB Observer	
12:15-12.45pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
12.45pm-1.45pm	Review Team Lunch/Break			
1.45-2.30pm	8. Parallel sessions with Second Providers (e.g. Representatives of Training Contractors, LTIs, CTCs)			
		Niall Mc Carthy	Manager of Mayfield CTC	

	Parallel Session 1 Second Providers (e.g. Representatives of Training Contractors, LTIs, CTCs)			Discussion of arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement of education and training delivered by second providers
		Billy O Callaghan	Manager of Cork Academy of Music (LTI)	
		Mary O Connell	Education Co-Ordinator of St Joseph's Charleville (LTI)	
		Jason Wycherley	Manager of National Learning Network (STP) Manager	
	Parallel Session 2 Second Providers (e.g. Representatives of Training Contractors, LTIs, CTCs)			
		Rachel Budds	Co-Ordinator of IRD Duhallow	
		Toni McCaul	SECAD Partnership	
		Roisin Hartley	Director, Hartley People Contract Training Provider	
		Niall Crowley	Managing Director, Impact Training Contract Training Provider	
2:30-3pm	Private Review Team Meeting			

3:00-3.15pm	Review Team Break			
3.15pm-4pm	9. Parallel sessions with external stakeholders			
	Parallel session 1 (Higher Education)	Deirdre Creedon	MTU Access	Discussion of collaboration and engagement with HEIs, including consideration of ATP
		Dan Collins	MTU Academic Administration & Student Affairs representative	
		Áine Ní Shé/Matt Cottrell	MTU Vice President & Registrar / MTU Head of School Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering	
		Olive Byrne	UCC Head of Access & Participation	
		Paul McSweeney	UCC Vice President – Teaching and Learning	
		Martin Flynn	UCC+ manager	
		James Bilson	UCC Access Plus	

	Parallel session 2 (Community Providers & Groups, including representatives of Cooperation Hours)	Don O' Leary	Cork Life Centre Director	Discussion of ETB engagement with community groups
		Helen O' Shea	YMCA	
		Deirdre Hunt	Mayfield Arts	
		Fiona Hegenson	Simon Community	
		Cathy Buchanon / Marie Drew (backup)	Meitheal na Mara	
		Debbie Kelleher	Field of Dreams Integration Lead / Care Co-Ordinator	
		Siobhan O' Dowd	Now Ballyphehane CDP	
4:00-4.30pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
4:30-4.45pm	Review Team Lunch/Break			
4.45-5.30pm	10. Professional and Administration Services (finance, HR and Facilities/IT)	Mark Dineen	Finance	
		Clare Browne	HR	
		Clare Creedon	Corporate Services	

		Helen Mulqueen	Cork Training Centre - Admissions	
		Conall Forde	IT	
		Kerrie Dixon	FET Support, Finance LQ	
		Catherine O'Sullivan	Cork ETB Observer	
5.30pm-6pm	Private Review Team Meeting			

Date:		16th June 2021	
Theme: TBD (Day 3)			
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles
09.00-09.30	ETB Review Coordinator	John Fitzgibbons; Carol Quinlan; Niamh Gaine	FET Director; Quality Assurance Officer; ETB Review Coordinator
9.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting		
10.00-10.45	11. Strategic Regional Planning Sub-group	Sile Hunt	DEASP
			Employer representative
		Sadie Allen	Planning group North Cork
		Cathy O'Mahony	Planning group South Cork
		Noreen Murnane	Planning group West Cork
		Rónán O'Caoimh	Planning group Cork City
10.45-11.15	Private Review Team Meeting		

11.15-11.30	Review Team Break		
11.30-12.15	12. Learning Practitioners (cross-section of services and programmes) involved in programme development and review	Niamh Gaine	Music Programme Developer, QA Unit
		Catherine O' Sullivan	All programmes: Assistant Process Coordinator
		Lara Noris	Music programme: Teacher Post Leaving Certificate College
		Katie O' Reilly	General Cleaning Programme Developer, QA Unit
		Geraldine O' Sullivan	General Cleaning Programme: Teacher Post Leaving Certificate College
		Nick O' Callaghan	Domestic Gas Programme Developer, QA Unit
		Paula Cosgrove	Domestic Gas Programme: Instructor Cork Training Centre

		Veronica Long	(seconded to DDLETB for ELC award) Teacher Post Leaving Certificate College
12.15-12.45	Private Review Team Meeting		
12.45-1.45	Review Team Lunch/Break		
1.45-2.45	13. ETB Employer Engagement Function Representatives		
	Parallel Session 1 ETB Employer Engagement Function representatives	Mary Lenihan	Industry Liaison Officer, Cork ETB
		Don Mc Carthy	Authorised Officer, Apprenticeship Services
		Maeve O' Callaghan	Deputy Principal, Cork College of Commerce
		Valerie Cowman	Assistant Manager, Skills to Advance- Cork Training Centre

		Catherine O' Sullivan	Cork ETB Observer
	Parallel Session 2 ETB Employer Engagement Function representatives	Suzanne Powell	Assistant Principal, Mallow College
		John Byron	Hospitality Programme Co-Ordinator, West Side Facilities, Cork Training Centre
		Lillian Buckley	Regional Co-ordinator Skills to Work Programme
		Phil Heffernan	Employer Engagement Cork ETB
		Norma FitzGibbon	Cork ETB Observer
2.45-3.15	Private Review Team Meeting		
3.15-3.30	Review Team Break		
3.30-4.15	14. Parallel Sessions with Employer and regional skills bodies		

	Parallel session 1	Jones Engineering	Employer of Craft Apprentice
		Brian Kenneally	Manor Properties Waterford and member of Auctioneering Apprenticeship Consortium Steering Group
		Aidan O Driscoll	Executive Chef Clancy's Bar and Restaurant Princes St., Cork
		Rose McCarthy, Macroom Tool Hire	Employer for Work Wise Skills Programme (Youthreach)
	Parallel session 2	Deirdre O'Donovan, O'Donovan's Engineering Coachford	Employer for Work Wise Skills Programme (Youthreach)
		Eanna Cantwell	HR, Hovione
		Gerry Murphy	Employer from IT of Cork, VmWare
		Donagh Madigan	M & C Property Limerick
4.15-4.45	Private Review Team Meeting		

Date:		18-Jun-21		
Theme: Wrap-up				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Role	Purpose
9-9.30	20. Free Session			
9.30-10.45am	Private Review Team Meeting	QQI representatives will join team at 10.15 for 15 minutes.		
10.45-11.30	21. FET Steering Group	John Fitzgibbons	Director of Further Education and Training	Revisit earlier session themes.
		Enda McWeeney	Director of OSD	
		Helen Ryan:	Principal Cork College of Commerce	
		Paula McCarthy:	Principal St. Johns Central College	
		Ger Canning:	Adult Education Officer	
		Teresa O' Sullivan:	Adult Education Officer	
11-11.30am	22. QQI & ETB Review	John Fitzgibbons; Carol Quinlan; Niamh Gaine	FET Director; Quality Assurance Officer; ETB Review Coordinator	QQI gathers feedback on the review process (Review Team not in attendance)

	Coordinator/FET Director			
11.30-12	Private Review Team Meeting			
12-12.30	23. Oral Feedback: ETB Chief Executive, SMT, Self-Evaluation Steering Group, Group of Learners	Denis Leamy	Chief Executive	Oral feedback on initial review findings
		John Fitzgibbons	Director of FET	
		Carol Quinlan	Quality Assurance Officer	
		Niamh Gaine	QA Unit/ETB Review Coordinator	
		Katie O' Reilly	QA Unit	
			Open invitation to other review participants	
12.30-1	Review Team Break			
1-5.pm	Private Review Team Meeting			Review team discuss report drafting

Glossary of Terms

QQI glossary of terms and abbreviations from this report

Term	Definition/Explanation
2012 Act	Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
AONTAS	Ireland's National Adult Learning Organisation
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CAO	Central Applications Office
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Core	Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, developed by QQI for use by all Providers
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
Erasmus+	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
Fáilte Ireland	Ireland's National Tourism Development Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology

Moodle	A free, open-source online learning management system (LMS) that supports learning and training needs
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SOLAS (formerly FÁS)	The National Further Education and Training Authority (responsible for funding, co-ordinating and monitoring FET in Ireland)
SPA	Strategic Performance Agreement (between the ETB & Solas)
TEL	Technology-Enhanced Learning
Youthreach	Service providing early school leavers without and formal qualifications with opportunities for basic education, personal development, vocational training and work experience
VECs	Vocational and Education Committees (later became ETBs)