

QOI AWARD



NEW LINKS
TRAINING SOLUTIONS

Linking People, Ideas, Networks

Our Re-Engagement Journey

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- Private (FET) training provider (focus primarily on Professional Development Training)
- Registered with QQI/FETAC since 2009
- Application submitted – March 2019
- Site Visit end of May 2019
- **Timeframe:** application to site visit (approx. 8 weeks)
- PAEC sign off September 2019



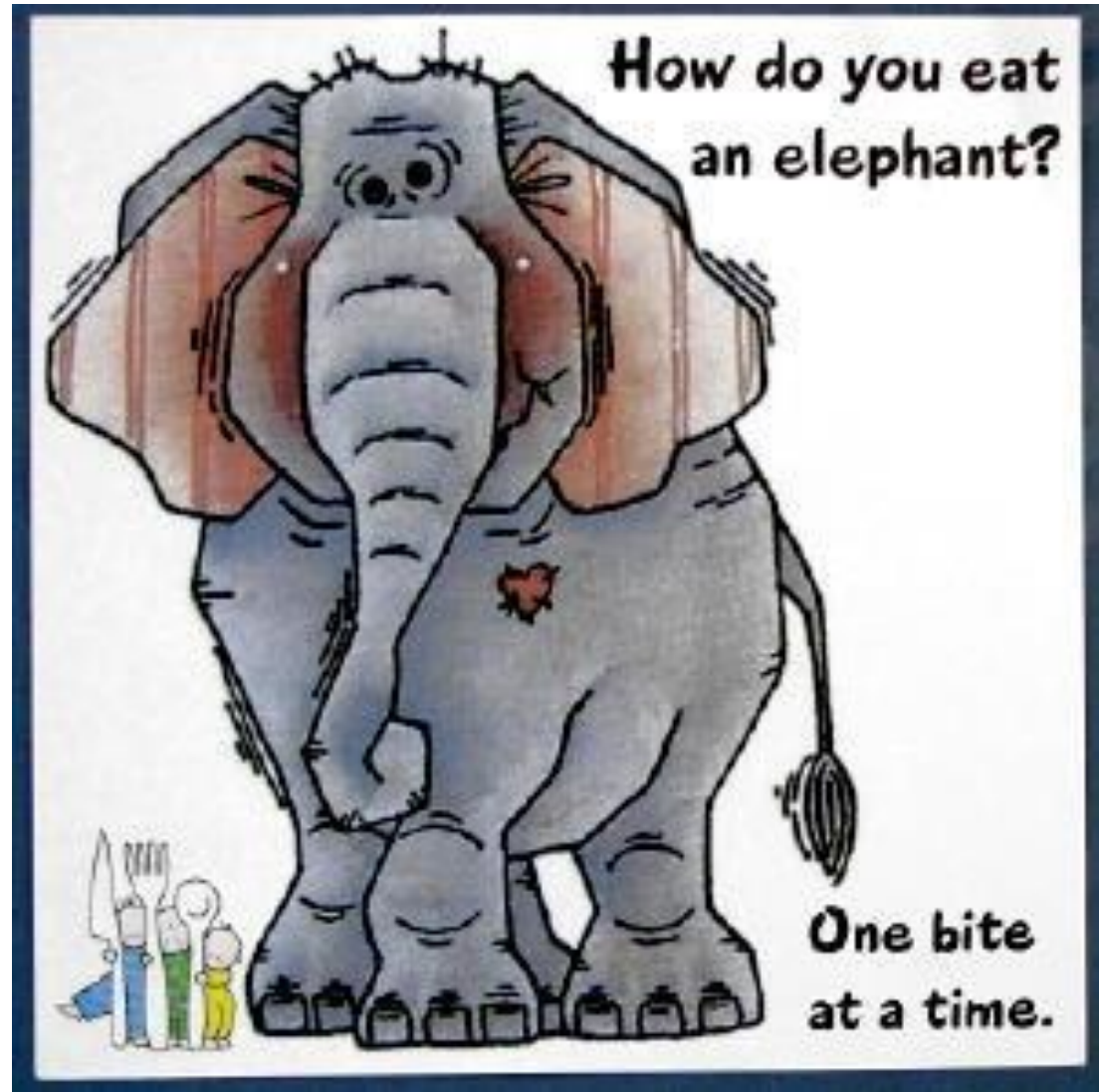
September 2021 – we expanded our scope of provision to include Blended Learning



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**Fully Approved Blended
Learning Provider**

That's us January 2019



Starting our Re-Engagement Journey

- **Attended briefings** – gained insight from QQI and other Providers
- **Questioned** the efficiency/effectiveness of all internal processes
- **QA system was somewhat disjointed** – opportunity to streamline processes
- **Operations manual** – full critical review of existing QA system and associated documents – streamline into an accessible usable business tool
- **Made a Re-engagement plan** - considered all instructional documents received from QQI



We Focused on:

Opportunities

- Formation of a **Quality Committee** – external experienced contributors to the business
- Developing new ways of doing things
- Transparent and accessible operational standards
- Fully updated policies & procedures - fill the in gaps
- Increased confidence in our Quality Assurance System
- Peer reviews from a variety of perspectives
- Development opportunity

Gap Analysis & Mapping Exercise

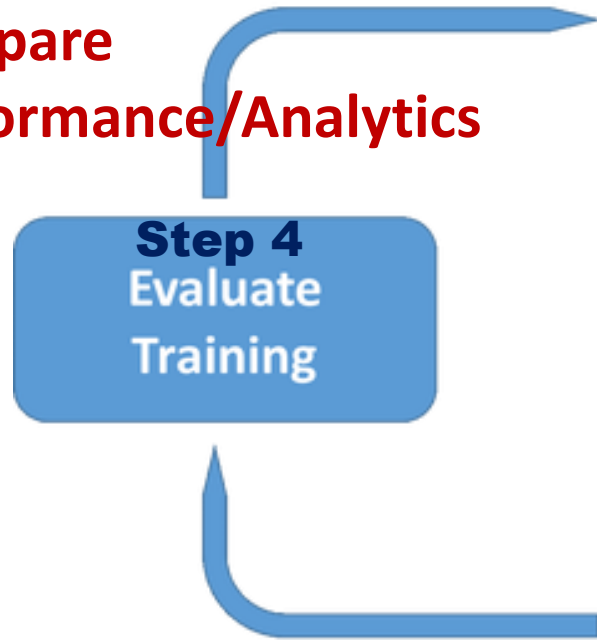
- **Gap analysis tool** – to identify the strengths and vulnerabilities of our QA system
- Linked to the **Mapping Exercise** (application form)
- Rebuild step by step, document by document, procedure by procedure ...no shortcuts
- **We had a great team around us** - any successful QA system relies heavily on those who are tasked with the day to day operations of the business



Systematic Approach – Gap Analysis

- Provider who uses the services of contracted trainers
- How do I ensure consistency of teaching, learning and assessment?
- **One Example:** Feedback to learners (Formative & Summative)

- Review learner feedback
- IV/Portfolio intake
- EA Reports
- Compare performance/Analytics



Step 1
Identify
Training Needs

- Tutor induction
- Tutor Handbook
- Learner Handbook

Step 2
Design
Training

- Scheme of work
- Tutor is Fully resourced

Step 3
Conduct
Training

- Monitoring
- Communication
- LMS – daily tutor reports

Step 4
Evaluate
Training

“Good morning....,

Thank you for the feedback just now. I also wanted to thank you for delivering such a brilliant course so very very well. I really enjoyed each session and the constant instant feedback loop was of huge value.

In appreciation,

ML”

Email received through LMS 25th October 2019

Tutor & Learner Handbooks

New Links Training Solutions – Student Handbook



Learner Handbook



2019 V1.3



1 | Page



Tutor Handbook



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assess. predict. perform.

Application for Re-Engagement

Governance and Externality

- Business resources are limited in terms of personnel
- Compliance is the cornerstone of the business; therefore applying logic and practicality to all aspects of what is expected
- The development of a Quality Committee has been practical and ongoing
- Panel of external experts available to the business and who are equipped to support the business as required:
- **Current Quality Panel:**
 - 1 X Legal professional/lecturer (Chairperson) (HET)
 - 1 X Private Training Provider (FET)
 - 1 X Lead Tutor
 - 1 X QQI External Authenticator (FET)
 - 1 X Quality Manager
 - 1 X Learner
 - 1 X Compliance Officer
 - 1 X Secretary/Notetaker

Application for Re-Engagement

Blind Spots

- Very challenging to identify our own **blind spots**
- **External review** of your application
- Operations manual (example)
- **Keep track** of all your QA activities
- “Measure twice cut once”
- Need to find **practical solutions** to seemingly complex situations e.g. Quality Committee
- Don't try to fit the old 'FETAC' system into the new QQI Core Guidelines format

Application for Re-Engagement

Screening

- Questions returned to us for clarification
- This resulted in some additional amendments to the mapping exercise (application)

Screening Feedback

- 8 points relating to general administration issues (page numbers, signposting of compliance documents etc)

The main piece of feedback was in reference to the structure of the Operations Manual:

“In the column named 'Page Number/Reference' please be more specific, rather than referring to an overall section as a whole (which will not be very helpful to the panel).

Naming the relevant document would help the reader to navigate the documentation more easily”

One week before site visit – Panel Questions

- **Programme management**
- **Process/steps taken for developing a new programme**
- **The programme review process**
- **Terms of reference for the academic structures**
- **The organisations strategic plan**
- **Risk Management**
- **Where is external expertise availed of with the exception of external authenticators?**
- **Protection for Enrolled Learners**
- **What is the internal verification process for assessment?**
- **Names of tutors to meet with panel members...**

Application for Re-Engagement

The site visit

- **Ts & Cs explained** at the outset
- **All aspects of the application examined** - the panel's main interest was to assess how the items described in the mapping exercise/operations manual were applied in practice
- Plenty of opportunity for dialogue
- Feedback given at the end of the day
- The final report reflected accurately the dialogue and recommendations
- **3 mandatory recommendations** and 6 weeks to respond (Governance, Public info, Ops Manual)
- Recognised panel expertise and willingness to assist even outside of the parameter of the site visit

Application for Re-Engagement

Some Practical Advice

- **Read the instructional material** before taking any action – use the tools; there are definitely no shortcuts here.
- **Read reports from providers** that have gone through the process
<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/QA-Approval-Reports-.aspx>
- **Critically analyse your business** and your QA system from a 360[®] perspective – be harsh and if possible apply a Lean Mindset.
- **Don't assume you know everything** (this isn't possible) seek expert help for areas you are unsure about.

Application for Re-Engagement

Some Practical Advice

- Listen to the advice given and more importantly **listen to the questions asked by the evaluators** during the screening and pre - visit stages
- **Be prepared to accept critical feedback** – this can only enhance the process of continuous improvement.
- **Don't be afraid to defend areas of your QA which will be scrutinised by the panel** – there were several instances where our message didn't translate very well in the mapping exercise – the Q&A session was a useful platform to explain or clarify to the panel.

Application for Re-Engagement

Some Practical Advice

- **Be proud of your business** – for us, the panel visit was an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to QA and our professionalism. By the end of the site visit we believed that we had given a good account of our business and we also felt that panel members really ‘got’ what we are about and this, for us was the result we were hoping for.
- Most of all remember that **QQI reengagement is a Quality Mark** and is an indicator to clients and customers that our business is operating in line with National and International best practice FET standards

From my Experience...

- Ensure to have a notetaker on hand to record suggestions/feedback during the panel visit
- Panel members will give generous practical advice (friend not foe)
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.....
- Don't be afraid to say you don't know....
- Stay mindful - express Gratitude...



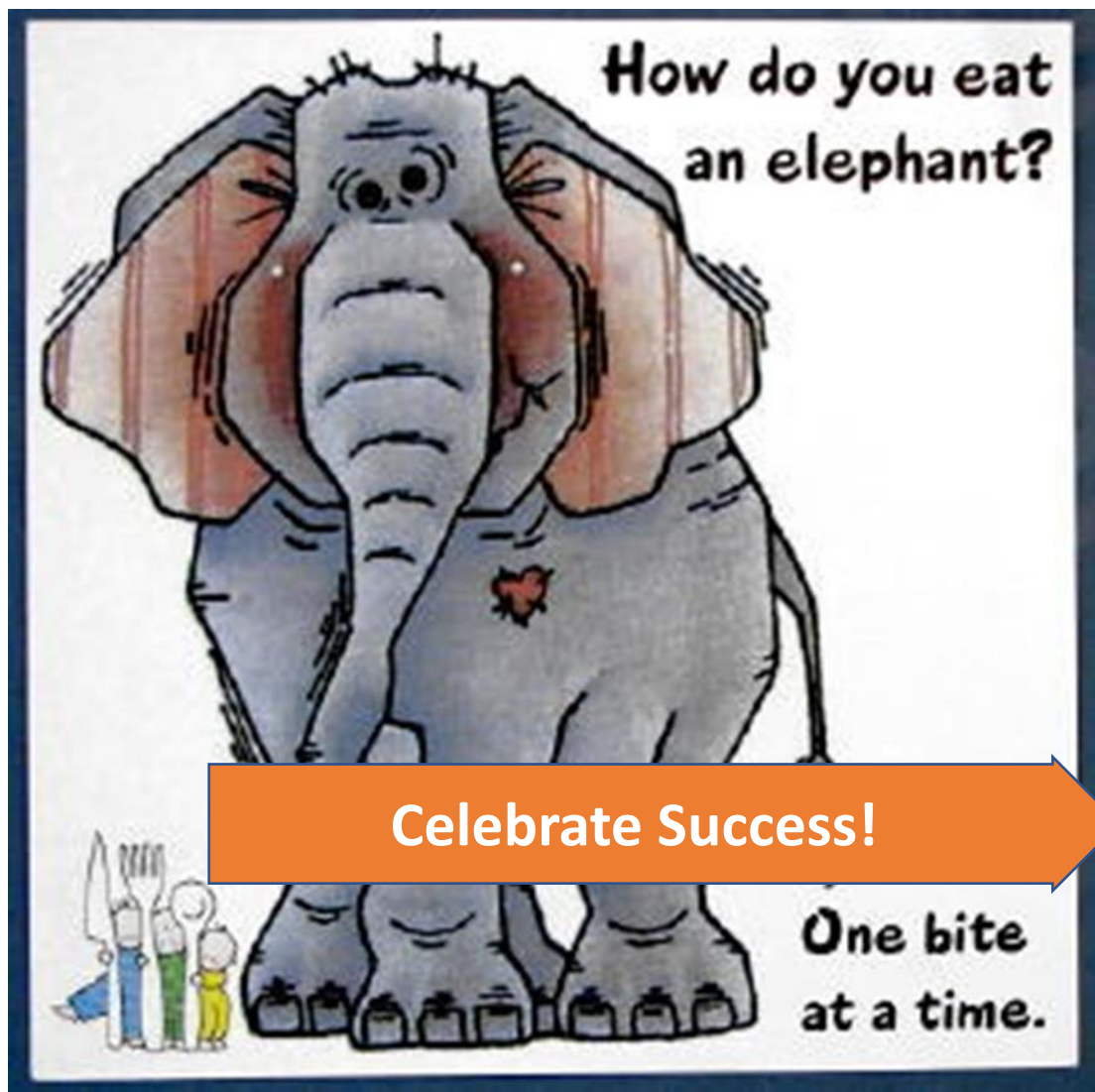


**THE
BEST**

**THE
WORST**

**External Quality Committee
Operations Manual
Way forward – healthier
division of responsibility**

**Overly attached to old
FETAC QA Format – should
have let go sooner!**



Thank You



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