



## Reengagement Panel Report

### Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

#### Part 1 Details of provider

##### 1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	NCU Training
Address:	Glin Centre, Glin Road, Coolock, Dublin 17.
Date of Application:	13/08/2018
Date of resubmission of application:	
Date of evaluation:	
Date of site visit (if applicable):	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	

##### 1.2 Profile of provider

NCU Training was established in 2003 and is based in the Glin Centre in Coolock, Dublin. It is a not-for-profit organisation and company limited by guarantee with CRO number 348990.

NCU Training provides community services and training to its local community and extended community under the direction of a Training and Business Development Manager and has seven employees. Predominately the learner profile is from adults seeking training for employment purposes.

They have provided FETAC training courses since 2008 and the scale and scope of provision has increased significantly over the years. Currently there are approximately 5000 learners each year with about 2000 QQI certified and about 3000 other certifications.



NCU Training offer programmes from Level 3 to Level 6 in areas such as Healthcare, Childcare, Business, Engineering, Construction, IT and ELT. They have 28 validated programmes, three leading to a Major award and 25 leading to a minor award.

All courses are short courses lasting days rather than weeks and the Safe Pass certification accounts for the bulk of the non QQI accreditation.

They had already engaged with QQI and the Pilot Re-engagement process in January 2018.

## Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Joe Fitzgerald	Chair	Registrar, Dorset College
Deborah Butler	Secretary	Former Registrar, Respond College
Ronnie Harrison	Panel Member	Academic Affairs Manager, Open Training College
Rachel Tucker	Panel Member	Training Manager, CTEC Wexford

## Part 3 Findings of the Panel

### 3.1 Summary Findings

The purpose of QQI re-engagement is to evaluate the institutional capacity and quality assurance procedures of NCU Training. Based on the information provided it is found that NCU Training has established a Quality Assurance system that is appropriate and fit for purpose.

The panel had some specific feedback on issues to be addressed regarding the following:

- \* staffing,
- \* the development of a Strategic Plan,
- \* strengthening the procedural detail of some policies included in the QA manual,
- \* making the QA manual more user friendly,
- \* expanding the composition of the Board of Management,
- \* tutor induction and meetings,
- \* the teaching and learning approach,
- \* access, transfer and progression and
- \* learner representation.

More detail on each of the above is outlined in Section 6.2 of this document.



### 3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

Approve the capacity and QA procedures of NCU Training with eight recommendations.

## Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

### 4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

- 4.1.1(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?*
- 4.1.2(a) **Criterion:** *Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?*
- 4.1.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?*
- 4.1.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?*
- 4.1.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?*
- 4.1.6(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.*

### Findings

NCU Training satisfy all the legal and compliance requirements outlined in Section 4.1.

Applicant is a well- established, wholly Irish owned not-for- profit organisation. They have linked with *The Wheel* and similar organisations to support them in fulfilling all their legal and compliance requirements.

**4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:**

- 4.2.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?*
- 4.2.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?*
- 4.2.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?*
- 4.2.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?*

**Findings**

The panel are satisfied that these criteria have been broadly addressed in this application. However there is some specific feedback pertinent to this section:

4.2.2 (a) It is noted that there is no current Strategic plan in place.

This Strategic Plan needs to be developed and approved by the BOM. The plan should include an operational budget for QA and related activities.

4.2.3 (a) The panel noted the particular structure of the NCU Board of Managers with seven Directors and the mechanism for separating academic and corporate/business decisions needs to be more fully documented. In particular the BOM decision making structures should be clarified and documented. For example, how are the staff needs and financing of supporting resources decided on?

The members of the Board of Management are very experienced individuals and heavily involved in the community. While they are very supportive of the work which NCU Training carries out the panel felt that it would be of long term benefit if future Board members also had skills and expertise in areas such as education, training and healthcare. Hence it is recommended that there is an active search for new board members over the next twelve months as other board members step aside.

4.2.4 (a) There is an over reliance on current staff members and their current duties.

On page 12 of the application it is stated *"We are currently looking for approval from our Board of Management for a new position of Programme Development Manager for the management of programme delivery and validations. We hope once approved to fill this position before October 2018."*

The panel felt that staff workloads, roles and responsibilities need to be reviewed and new staff should be recruited and employed as required.



### 4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:

- 4.3.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?*
- 4.3.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?*
- 4.3.3(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?*
- 4.3.4(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?*
- 4.3.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?*
- 4.3.6(a) **Criterion:** *Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?*
- 4.3.7(a) **Criterion:** *Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?*

#### Findings

NCU Training has experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes. It appears to have a fit-for purpose complement of teaching staff.

4.3.4 (a) All activities are in one centre with some delivery on customer site/rented space. The QAM (page 10) states that “the organisation (*requesting the training*) arranges approved facilities suitable for delivery of training sessions”.

The Academic Standards Quality Officer approves these facilities but a checklist on the approval process is desirable.

#### 4.3.5 (a) Access, Transfer and Progression

While there are systems in place for providing learners access to programmes this needs to be clarified and fully documented. The registration form needs to be reviewed and updated.

NCU also need to develop links with other providers with respect to offering progression pathways for their students. This is of particular importance given that they are expected to offer more Major awards in the future.

RPL policies need to be expanded and communicated to all potential and current learners.

4.3.7(a) There is a Bond with an Insurer to satisfy PEL requirements. However PEL arrangements will need to be reviewed if NCU Training progress their stated plan to expand programme provision to offer major awards as part of the validation process as this could be significantly more expensive than their current arrangement.



#### **4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training**

NCU Training is a long-established provider and appears to have a strong commitment to quality assurance. The ethos and values of the organisation appear to be student-centred with a significant focus on the needs of the local community.

Tutors appear to be well qualified for the job and QA procedures around Staff Recruitment and Learner Assessment appear to be well developed.

It is now entering an exciting stage by planning to increase the number of major awards. This needs to be fully thought out and prepared for. The development of a five year Strategic Plan will be vital in shaping the future training provided by NCU Training and ensuring that it has the future capacity and resources to meet all formal education and training requirements.



## Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by <Provider Name>

*The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of NCU Training Ltd's quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). This section of the report follows the structure and referencing of the guidelines.*

### 1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

#### **Panel Findings:**

There is a Voluntary Board of Management (BOM) who are currently adopting the Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations. The BOM provides the strategic direction and governance for the organisation. Given the focus of the re-engagement panel is on Quality Assurance and the provision of training courses by NCU Training, it was felt that the skillset of the Board of Management should be reviewed and augmented if required.

The five year Strategic Plan needs to be developed and approved as soon as possible.

In the Operational Governance chart on page 33, it appears that one person (Training and Business Manager) has overall responsibility for seven key areas and there is some concern about the capacity of one individual to fully deliver on all these areas.

In the Educational Structure of NCU Training (Page 34), it states that there is "a definite separation between NCU Training's corporate management and its educational governance". However, the same individual (the Training and Business Development Manager) is responsible for overseeing both in a combined role. There is a need for more documentation in this area and guidance given as to how it operates. For example, if there are conflicting priorities around budget allocations, how is this to be managed?

It was also noted that there are a number of sub committees which have related functions and cross over similar areas. In light of this the Terms of Reference for all committees needs to be examined and adjustments made as required.

Timelines need to be developed and adhered to. In particular the system for providing a rationale for QQI programmes is not in place as yet and is said to be under development. However no timeframe is provided for when completion is expected or details of what this system will entail. Equally so, no timeline for completion of the Risk register is identified.

### 2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

#### **Panel Findings:**

The documentation supporting the NCU Training's application shows a commitment to the implementation of a systematic approach to internal quality assurance. The written documentation is further augmented by an excellent resource website where all manuals, policy documents and other helpful material can be accessed on-line by staff and students. This is to be commended.



Although a documented and clearly diagrammed QA system is in place, in some areas it is a statement of NCU's commitment to QA of programmes leading to QQI awards rather than a detailed document showing how QA standards will be achieved and how/when these will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed. Furthermore the QAM document relies heavily on diagrams and the presentation of information using the minimum amount of words and while this is innovative and original it has proved difficult to drill down into specific procedures.

It is recommended that the QA manual and in particular the on-line version be revisited and the development of hyperlinks to other policies may make the entire QA manual more user friendly.

### **3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

#### ***Panel Findings:***

NCU have a track record of providing education and training programmes and has a range of EA reports to validate their work to date. They have 28 validated programmes, three leading to a Major award and 25 leading to a minor award. They plan to increase the number of major awards in the future. If more major awards are to be offered systems and approaches need to be put in place to ensure that learners are supported in achieving the overall award as well as each individual module.

The QAM outlines the procedures for the development of new programmes. However in the diagram representing the steps involved (Page 101) there is no mention of a financial feasibility study being carried out. How is a budget agreed upon?

Who is involved in the Programme Development Team? This is somewhat unclear.

What are the policies and procedures for Learner Admission? More clarity is needed on English Language requirements.

Linkages need to be made with other FET and HET providers.

PEL is in place with ODON. However which learners does this cover? Per module? Per Major Award? How often is the policy updated and reviewed re learners currently enrolled with NCU? What is the plan/policy for the future?

In summary, the addition of new major award programmes brings additional responsibilities for NCU in terms of Access, Transfer and Progression, RPL, mapping component awards to specific majors, considering component awards gained from other providers offering QQI awards, 5 year cut off point for awards to be used as exemptions etc. Learner CRM system will make this work easier, however, CRM is not expected to be in place until the end of 2019.



**4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT*****Panel Findings:***

There is a detailed flow chart on the staff recruitment process and staff recruitment procedures appear robust with a system in place to support new and existing staff.

NCU have a comprehensive plan around Tutor Induction and the CPD process (Page 65). There are currently 27 tutors working with NCU and individual tutors have been given significant one to one mentoring and support when commencing their employment with NCU. Again this personal mentoring support needs to be more fully documented.

Policies around staff appraisal and development need to be clearer and it would be helpful to have details on the staff training and development budget and how this operates.

**5 TEACHING AND LEARNING*****Panel Findings:***

Feedback on the learning experience from both tutors and learners appears to be encouraged. NCU Training are committed to monitoring the provision of its programmes and are continually striving for improvement. They are also currently developing an online platform to support their courses.

They source regular feedback with a view to improvement of their course delivery and have a high level of engagement with appropriate ICT programs that will assist to quantify their data into meaningful information. How feedback is managed given the high number of casual tutors needs to be reviewed.

Documentation states that NCU need to 'develop a coherent policy on teaching'. No timeframe is given within which this will be accomplished.

There are no procedures on RPL in place and no date is given as to when this will be approved and implemented. Details in QA Manual (89 – 91) rely on QQI information and make no reference to RPL criteria (mapping of Module learning outcomes to experience/prior certification). Hence a more comprehensive section on RPL needs to be developed in the QAM.

The staff web link offers a very detailed overview of the general HR policies and procedures of the institute. This is thorough and comprehensive although at times some statements are a little vague (e.g. Staff Recruitment QA Manual p62 – Setting of 'suitable' probation periods).

NCU intend to develop policy and procedure on Staff Development. Currently staff are expected to attend an annual training day only. Again no timeframe is given for completion of this process.



## 6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

### **Panel Findings:**

There appears to be robust QA procedures particularly around ensuring the reliability of assessments and security. The *Assessment of Learners Guide for Tutors* is to be commended and it is noted that a similar handbook for Learners is under development.

While there is a statement on collecting evidence for the Work placement module, there is no mention of how the fairness and reliability of this workplace assessment is ensured.

There is a *Planning for the Internal Verification Process Guide* but in the table of contents it does not mention how the Internal Verification Process actually works.

The Appeals process is clear but it is not clear how the learner is assessed fairly in the first instance. More detail is required here.

There is a limited amount of information on the programme level assessment strategy. How is this considered/developed? This will be of further importance in the development of future major awards.

## 7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

### **Panel Findings:**

The availability of online resources and guides for learners is to be commended. There is in particular a guide named *Information and Feedback to Learners* and this would be a very supportive mechanism of engagement with learners if it followed by all tutors.

Page 91 of the QAM mentions that the application forms are to be re-designed to include information on past learning. This needs to be addressed.

Given that NCU Training plan to deliver more major awards, the level of support and the availability of staff to provide this will need to be examined.

One mechanism for gaining feedback from learners is the sending out of random emails to learners who have completed a module. While this has worked to date a more systematic and detailed mechanism for learner feedback needs to be developed. The new IT programmes should assist NCU in collecting, analysing and storing formal feedback.

Learner reps are not normally in place due to the short nature of delivery of the modules. However given that the aim of NCU Training is to deliver more major awards in the future, the role of learner reps needs to be re-examined.

PEL arrangements are set out in a policy and reference is given to relevant legislation but there is no procedure as to how PEL works provided in QA manual.

**8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT*****Panel Findings:***

NCU has a clear and well documented Learner Information Recording process and collects quantitative data on its booking system “Bookeo”. It is noted that a new CRM system is being developed which will increase the efficiency in communication with learners, tutors and stakeholders. However no details are given as to when this system will be in place and fully utilised.

Given the new GDPR which became fully effective in May of this year, a review of all forms/materials should also be undertaken to ensure that they are compliant with appropriate regulations. The Data Protection Policy contains reference to 1988 and 2003 acts but nothing on 2018 Act and GDPR. NCU should consider a Document Retention schedule as part of GDPR compliance.

The website a little difficult to navigate – adding links from the QA manual to the relevant Learner Information booklets would be very beneficial.

**9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION*****Panel Findings:***

The QA Manual lacks details on policy and procedures in places. The information provision should be more clearly and easy available. This may be the case for internal stakeholders, but it has proven difficult to find information as an external party.

The single page guides developed for all NCU training courses are informative and helpful.

While it is clear from the publicity material that some courses are QQI validated while others receive a NCU certification, the module names of the latter could be confusing to the public (e.g. Practical Infection Prevention and Control, Manual Handling and Patient Moving, Palliative Care at Home). Hence clarity regarding the awarding authority in all publicity material needs to be monitored and maintained.

**10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)*****Panel Findings:***

Not Applicable in relation to QQI validated programmes.

**11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW****Panel Findings:**

NCU has a detailed and comprehensive plan on Self Evaluation and Improvement Processes. The provider is committed to the on-going monitoring of courses and their outcomes.

However given the volume of short courses currently being offered it is unclear as to how in practice the feedback which is collected is acted on. Equally so it is uncertain as to how regular evaluation of module courses feeds into the larger and more comprehensive self-evaluation process.

How is feedback from External Authenticators integrated into new courses? (A flow chart might be helpful here).

**Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings**

The panel praises NCU Training on the learning and evolution of practice which is inherent in how it carries out its work and recommends that NCU Training be approved by QQI for the purpose of re-engagement.

The panel makes the following commendations:

\*There is a strong commitment to learners and this is evidenced throughout. NCU Training demonstrates a strong learner-centre approach.

\*The high level of dedication which the staff involved in NCU training demonstrate is praiseworthy.

\*There is a formidable community ethos and focus and commitment to life-long learning.

\*The emphasis on getting people into employment adds value to their work overall.

\*The volume of certification is notable.

The Panel wishes to thank NCU Training for the vibrancy and honesty that it brought to the reengagement process.



## Part 6 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

### 6.1 Mandatory Changes

- |          |
|----------|
| 1. None. |
|----------|

### 6.2 Specific Advice

The Reengagement panel concludes that NCU Training be approved by QQI and recommend that the following areas be addressed:

#### **1. Staff**

- \*Review the roles, responsibilities and workloads of the current staff.
- \*Develop clear job descriptions.
- \*Appoint staff as appropriate in particular a Programme Development Manager and an IT person.

#### **2. QA Document**

Develop a more user friendly, clearer and accessible online version of the QA Manual which includes direct hyperlinks to other policy documents as they are mentioned and ensure that all policies and procedures are clearly and fully documented.

#### **3. Strategic Plan**

Develop as a matter of urgency a Strategic Plan/Business Plan for NCU Training which will give the organisation a clear direction for future development.

#### **4. Board of Management**

Address expertise and knowledge gaps in the Board of Management.

#### **5. Staff and Tutors**

- \*Develop and formalise a tutor/staff induction programme.
- \*Timetable and hold more regular tutor meetings.

#### **6. Teaching and Learning**

Clarify the NCU Training approach to teaching and learning. In particular NCU Training should be very clear as to which programmes are to be offered by way of a blended learning approach and how this is to operate in practice.



**7. Access, Transfer and Progression**

Specifically state the details on access, transfer and progression for *EACH* QQI award.

**8. Learner Representation**

Ensure learner representation and involvement in all QA processes as appropriate.

**Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider**

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Level 3 to level 6	Major, SPA and Minor.	Healthcare, Business, Construction, IT, Childcare and Teacher training without subject specialisation.

**Part 8 Approval by Chair of the Panel**

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the Quality Assurance Procedures of NCU Training.

Name:

Joe Fitzgerald

Date:

12/11/18



## **Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation**

Document	Related to
Five handouts	Initial Video Presentations
Learner Registration Form	Requested by Panel
Numerous documents/Policies printed and available to panel for inspection.	

## **Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation**

Name	Role/Position
Chris O Callaghan	Training and Business Development Manager
Pat Flynn	Academic Standards Quality Officer
Catherine Keegan	Programme and Product Development Manager
Other staff were introduced during the tour of the premises.	

# NCU Training Response

## Part 1 Details of provider

We agree with the findings of the panel

## Part 3 Findings of the Panel

### 3.1 Summary Findings:

We agree with the findings of the panel

### 3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI:

We agree with the findings of the panel

## Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

### 4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

NCU Training are in agreement with this section

### 4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

**4.2.2:** It needs to be clarified in the report that it is documented in the Gap Analysis timeline that a five year strategic plan is on the agenda for the Board of Management starting in October of this year. The five-year strategic plan was on the agenda before the QQI Re-engagement process began and the report does not appear to reflect this information. The five-year strategic plan has been a priority at NCU Training that has been documented in information provided to the panel.

**4.2.3:** Pat to review BOM handbook revisit answer later QAM Page 14

*“The panel noted the particular structure of the NCU Board of Managers with seven Directors and the mechanism for separating academic and corporate/business decisions needs to be more fully documented. In particular, the BOM decision-making structures should be clarified and documented. For example, how are the staff needs and financing of supporting resources decided on?”*

The Voluntary Board of Management Handbook outlines the roles and responsibilities of the board.

The staff needs and financing of supporting resources are presented to the Finance Committee and part of the Strategic plan will include Annual budgets agreed in December of the previous year.



“The panel felt that staff workloads, roles and responsibilities need to be reviewed and new staff should be recruited and employed as required.”

This issue is currently under review and it anticipated that the new roles and responsibilities should be finalised by 30 January 2019.

#### **4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:**

*“All activities are in one centre with some delivery on customer site/rented space. The QAM (page 10) states “the organisation (requesting the training) arranges approved facilities suitable for delivery of training sessions”.*

*“The Academic Standards Quality Officer approves these facilities but a checklist on the approval process is desirable.”*

The Quality Assurance Manual, as supplied to the panel during the QOI re engagement process, has detailed information relating to this. A new procedure and form for onsite and offsite training facilities as fully described in the QAM (page 116/117) is now in operation.

#### **4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training**

### **Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by NCU Training**

#### **5.1 Governance and Management of Quality**

*“The five year Strategic Plan needs to be developed and approved as soon as possible.”*

It needs to be clarified in the report that it is documented in the Gap Analysis timeline that a five year strategic plan is on the agenda for the Board of Management starting in October of this year. The five-year strategic plan was on the agenda before the QOI Re-engagement process began and the report does not appear to reflect this information. The five-year strategic plan has been a priority at NCU Training that has been documented in information provided to the panel.

*“Timelines need to be developed and adhered to. In particular, the system for providing a rationale for QOI programmes is not in place as yet and is said to be under development. However, no timeframe is provided for when completion is expected or details of what this system will entail. Equally so, no timeline for completion of the Risk register is identified.”*

A robust, documented timeline Gap Analysis document was carefully considered and constructed which

sets out realistic timeframes for completion of tasks. This comprehensive document was supplied to the panel on the day of the panel visit, which includes the Risk Register.

## 5.2 Documented approach to Quality Assurance

*“Although a documented and clearly diagrammed QA system is in place, in some areas it is a statement of NCU’s commitment to QA of programmes leading to QQI awards rather than a detailed document showing how QA standards will be achieved and how/when these will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed. Furthermore the QAM document relies heavily on diagrams and the presentation of information using the minimum amount of words and while this is innovative and original it has proved difficult to drill down into specific procedures.”*

NCU Training has adopted an approach to create a universally accessible Quality Assurance Manual through the use of diagrams and pictorial presentation of information. The opinion of the panel is accepted and will be considered when reviewing the QAM to ensure that all information is clear and comprehensive. There is an ongoing process of documenting policies and procedures at NCU Training which supplement the information in the QAM and help the QAM user to access further information in a more textual format.

*“It is recommended that the QA manual and in particular the on-line version be revisited and the development of hyperlinks to other policies may make the entire QA manual more user”*

NCU Training accepts this recommendation and states that this is indeed a planned part of the QAM/ Policy & Procedure presentation strategy moving forward.

## 5.3 Programmes of Education and Training

*“The QAM outlines the procedures for the development of new programmes. However in the diagram representing the steps involved (Page 101) there is no mention of a financial feasibility study being carried out. How is a budget agreed upon?”*

NCU Training will conduct a financial feasibility study prior to the commencement of any new programmes. Budgets for programmes are drawn up by the company officers and then sent to the BOM for approval.

*“Who is involved in the Programme Development Team? This is somewhat unclear.”*

This was clarified to the panel during the panel visit that currently the Training and Business Development Manager, The Academic Standards Quality Officer and the Programme Development Manager are the programme development team. This is documented in the Gap Analysis and Gap Analysis Timeline documents. The QAM document may need to be amended to state this.

Based on the suggestions from the pilot re-engagement NCU Training have been reviewing all committees to reduce duplication of responsibilities.

*“What are the policies and procedures for Learner Admission? More clarity is needed on English Language requirements.”*

NCU Training has detailed admissions policies but are currently under review as all of the policies and procedures are. The comments by the panel are accepted regarding the admissions policies and procedures being more defined. With respect to the English Language requirements a lot of work has been completed in the weeks since the panel visit to develop a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for English Language Competence and English Language Assessment. This was to comply with recommendations from the panel but also the new Private Security Authority TP1:2018 Regulations document.

*“Linkages need to be made with other FET and HET providers.”*

NCU Training has many links and connections with FET providers and already engages in peer review and cross moderation with some of these providers. When other FET independent providers complete the re engagement process successfully NCU Training will be in a better position to form further linkages.

*“PEL is in place with ODON. However which learners does this cover? Per module? Per Major Award? How often is the policy updated and reviewed re learners currently enrolled with NCU? What is the plan/policy for the future?”*

Currently NCU Training courses do not require PEL as they are fully completed within a 3-month duration. A full review of our PEL arrangements will take place in January 2019 to assess the level of cover required in line with our strategic plan and business forecasts.

#### **5.4 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development**

*“Policies around staff appraisal and development need to be clearer, and it would be helpful to have details on the staff training and development budget and how this operates.”*

A full review of staff appraisal and development is currently taken place with independent Human Resource consultants and staff training and development budgets will be submitted to the Board of Management for approval in January 2019.

## 5.5 Teaching and Learning

*“NCU intend to develop policy and procedure on Staff Development. Currently staff are expected to attend an annual training day only. Again no timeframe is given for completion of this process.”*

NCU Training accepts the comments made by the panel, refer the panel to the Gap Analysis timeline document, and note that this issue is being addressed using the term CPD rather than staff development. December 2018 is the timeframe earmarked for this review.

## 5.6 Assessment of Learners

*“There is a Planning for the Internal Verification Process Guide but in the table of contents it does not mention how the Internal Verification Process actually works.”*

NCU Training accepts the comments of the panel and will address this issue

## 5.7 Support for Learners

*“PEL arrangements are set out in a policy and reference is given to relevant legislation but there is no procedure as to how PEL works provided in QA manual.”*

NCU Training accept this comment from the panel regarding the need for a documented procedure for PEL and will ensure this is added to the QAM in due course.

## 5.8 Information and Data Management

*“The Data Protection Policy contains reference to 1988 and 2003 acts but nothing on 2018 Act and GDPR. NCU should consider a Document Retention schedule as part of GDPR compliance.”*

The privacy policy on the NCU Training website and the Data protection policy have been updated since the panel visit as per recommendations. NCU Training accepts the panel comments in relation to document retention and this will be addressed in due course.

## 5.9 Public Information and Communication

*“While it is clear from the publicity material that some courses are QQI validated while others receive a NCU certification, the module names of the latter could be confusing to the public (e.g. Practical Infection Prevention and Control, Manual Handling and Patient Moving, Palliative Care at Home). Hence clarity regarding the awarding authority in all publicity material needs to be monitored and maintained”*

NCU Training accept this comment from the panel and will ensure that descriptors will be reviewed to clearly

state the awarding body and course titles will also be reviewed.

### **5.10 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training (Including Apprenticeships)**

N/A

### **5.11 Self Evaluation, Monitoring and Review**

*“How is feedback from External Authenticators integrated into new courses? (A flow chart might be helpful here).”*

NCU Training accept the comments from the panel and will move away from the current verbal feedback scenario and initiate a more documented flow chart as per suggestions of the panel.

### **Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings**

The team at NCU Training welcomes the commendations from the panel and appreciate the acknowledgment of the scope and volume of work carried out by all NCU Training staff and tutors.

## **Part 6 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice**

### **6.1 Mandatory Changes to QA**

We agree with the findings of the panel

### **6.2 Specific Advice**

NCU Training welcomes the specific advice from the panel and will incorporate the recommendations into our Gap Analysis Timeline document for completion in due course.

## **Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider**

We agree with the findings of the panel

### **Conclusion:**

Having engaged with the pilot QQI re-engagement process and the live QQI re-engagement process NCU training would like to thank both panels for their honest and thorough feedback. It can be concluded that the process has been a driving force to instigate change in our organisation by providing a structured framework for growth and development.

At NCU Training we would like to emphasise our awareness and appreciation of the significant workload associated with the re-engagement panel process. It is a challenge for providers to prepare but it should be acknowledged that it is also a challenge for the re-engagement panel members as they have the responsibility of examining various, rather significant, documents and the accountability to ensure providers are fit for purpose.

The significance of peers in the composition of the panel is also worthy of mention. It is a benefit for all parties involved that peers are the principal evaluators; however, we feel that a QQI panel member would be beneficial to the overall process. We thought that we were evaluated relatively and based on QQI benchmarking rather than an evaluation based on the individual peer organisations or contexts. We feel that the panel should be commended for their professionalism and approachability. The panel was chaired well, and topics were assessed evenly among the panel members.

Furthermore, the use of the Gap Analysis tool allowed us to develop a structured response to the areas that needed attention, development or review. Finally, we found the re-engagement process added value to our organisation.

**Chris O'Callaghan**

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