

## ETBI QQI Collaborative FET Forum Communiqué Number 1

ETBI is pleased to welcome you to the first communiqué of the ETBI-QQI Collaborative FET Forum. The purpose of this communiqué is to provide an update to those working in FET in the ETBs on the work of the FET Forum.

The ETBI QQI Collaborative FET Forum is the co-ordinating structure through which ETBI, the 16 ETBs and QQI will work collaboratively on a range of operational, developmental and strategic matters in relation to Qualifications and Quality Assurance. It provides a framework and mechanism through which representatives from these bodies can work together and share information.

The FET Forum is chaired by Cynthia Deane, CE Carlow & Kilkenny ETB. ETBI is represented by Michael Moriarty and Pat O' Mahony. QQI is represented by members of QQI's Provider Relations, Quality Assurance and Qualifications Services sections. Members of the Further Education Support Service (FESS) provide ongoing support to the work of the FET Forum.

Each of the ETBs has a representative on the FET Forum, as follows:

- Dr. Fionnuala Anderson      Dublin & Dun Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB)
- Martha Bolger                  Kilkenny & Carlow ETB (KCETB)
- Catherine Byrne                Kildare & Wicklow ETB (KWETB)
- Eileen Condon                  Tipperary ETB (TETB)
- John Costello                  Longford & Westmeath ETB (LWETB)
- Ann Dunne                        City of Dublin ETB (CDET)
- John Fitzgibbons                Cork ETB (CETB)
- Patricia Hehir                  Louth & Meath ETB (LMETB)
- Alan Hogan                        Limerick & Clare ETB (LCETB)
- Virgo Hynes                        Waterford and Wexford ETB (WWETB)
- Anne Marie Keane                Laois & Offaly ETB (LOETB)
- Anna-Maria Kinsella            Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB (MSLETB)
- Anne Marie Lacey                Cavan & Monaghan ETB (CMETB)
- Anne McHugh                  Donegal ETB (DET)
- Eithne Ni Dhonnchadha        Galway & Roscommon ETB (GRETB)
- Shivaun Shanahan                Kerry ETB (KETB)

The Forum has met twice so far, on the 14<sup>th</sup> October and the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. A schedule of meetings has been agreed for 2015.

### Communications

The FET Forum recognises the importance of communicating with FET staff in the ETBs to keep them informed of developments. To this end, information and updates on the work of the Forum will be posted on the ETBI website at <http://www.etbi.ie/quality-assurance/>

## What developments have taken place so far?

A working group was established to draft a work plan for the Forum. This working group is made up of seven members of the FET Forum with representation from ETBI, QQI, FESS and the ETBs. The working group met on two occasions and proposed a work plan to the Forum, setting out key topics and activities for the period November 2014 – April 2015. This work plan was presented to the Forum for consideration at its meeting on the 18th of November and the following actions were agreed:

- Undertaking a comparative analysis of the former suite of FET Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for providers with the new QQI draft QA Guidelines for the ETBs
- Documenting the learning from the ETBI/CEEOA National Shared Programme Development Initiative
- Reporting to the Forum on developments, outcomes and issues arising from the External Authentication (EA) Pilot Project
- Exploring with the ETBs specific operational issues arising from the transfer of former SOLAS Training Centres
- Exploring the information and communication requirements of the ETBs in partnership with representatives of the ETBs and the Communications Team from QQI

The working group will meet again in December to progress the following tasks:

- Developing consultative questions to assist ETBs in providing feedback on QQI draft QA Guidelines for the ETBs
- Exploring mechanisms to advance cross-sectoral dialogue and to facilitate the sharing of best practice across the sector and with other sectors
- Developing a draft protocol and set of principles to underpin the collaborative work of the ETBs

The outcomes from the working group will be presented to the FET Forum for consideration at its next meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2015. The work plan will be updated following each meeting of the Forum.

## Towards a Quality Assurance Framework for Education and Training Boards: Draft Quality Assurance Guidelines For the ETBs

In October 2014 QQI circulated the draft QA Guidelines for the ETB sector to the CEs and FET Forum members. The draft guidelines are intended to assist the ETBs in the development of appropriate quality assurance systems which will promote and support quality in ETB programmes and services.

In January 2015 QQI, with the assistance of an external advisory panel, will conduct a feasibility study to test the appropriateness of the draft guidelines and to identify ways in which they may be improved. Three ETBs, CMETB, LCETB and LMETB, will participate in this feasibility study. As part of the study, each of the three ETBs will be visited by the external panel of advisors. The report from the panel will be presented to the FET Forum.

In addition to this, CDETB, CETB, GRETB and LOETB will participate in a parallel consultative process with a team from QQI. Through the feasibility study, the parallel consultative process and the FET Forum, all ETBs will be facilitated to contribute feedback on the draft QA Guidelines. Following this the draft guidelines will be reviewed and finalised in spring 2015.