

ETBI QQI Collaborative FET Forum Communiqué Number 3

ETBI is pleased to welcome you to the third communiqué of the ETBI QQI Collaborative FET Forum. The purpose of this communiqué is to provide an update to those working in the area of FET in the ETBs on the work and developments of the Forum between April 2015 and July 2015.

ETBI Further Education and Training Officer

On 5 May 2015 Marie Gould took up a new role in ETBI as Further Education and Training Officer. Marie is on secondment from QQI and brings a wealth of experience in further education and training to her new role in ETBI.

Towards a Quality Assurance Framework for Education and Training Boards: Draft Quality Assurance Guidelines, v0.2

Following the publication, in October 2014, of v0.1 of the draft QA guidelines for the ETB sector, QQI undertook a feasibility study to test the appropriateness of the guidelines and to identify ways in which they could be improved. This study resulted in an external advisory panel report being produced, findings from a parallel consultative process being documented and feedback recorded through an on-line survey. QQI has considered all of the information gleaned from the feasibility study and in May 2015 circulated v0.2 of the 'Towards a Quality Assurance Framework for Education and Training Boards: Draft Quality Assurance Guidelines' to the Forum.

A sub-group of the ETBI QQI Collaborative FET Forum met to review v0.2 of the draft guidelines and document their findings in the form of summary feedback, observations and comments. These findings were shared with the FET forum members who were then facilitated to contribute further to the findings of the sub-group.

ETBs were also invited to consider the guidelines at a local level and provide any additional feedback to ETBI, the feedback from the sub-group and from the individual ETBs was combined and shared with the ETBI FET Strategy Group. The collective feedback from the sector was formally submitted to QQI. The ETBI FET Strategy Group has responsibility for recommending the final guidelines for agreement through the CE Forum.

Representatives of the ETBI QQI Collaborative FET Forum, FET Strategy Group and the CE Forum are due to meet with QQI to discuss the collective feedback and agree the next steps in the Autumn.

ETB Training Centres and QQI Operational Issues

Following on from a meeting held in February between ETB Training Centre (TC) representatives and QQI, on 29 June a meeting was held with TC representatives, QQI and SOLAS to explore possible solutions to ongoing operational issues in the training centres with regards specifically to programmes and assessments. It was agreed with SOLAS that the SOLAS IT department would carry out work which will enable each ETB to upload their own results data files from the training centres to the QBS. Once this facility is in place, QQI can then change the QBS provider code for each of the training centres to that of the relevant ETB. The timeline for this is not yet confirmed.

Some work will have to be undertaken by QQI to reassign programmes that are currently validated singly for SOLAS to be validated individually for each of the 16 ETBs. Once this is done an ETB will be able to look at each of those programmes and assign them to the training centre(s) and, if appropriate, to former VEC centres.

Learner Appeals Process

Cork ETB is currently administering the learner appeals in relation to assessment results for the ETB sector, for the June 2015 certification period. This is the last time that CETB will do this and it is expected that ETBs will be implementing their own appeals process for future certification periods.

QQI Awards in Agriculture

Two representatives from the Teagasc Curriculum Team made a presentation to the ETBI QQI FET Forum in May. A number of ETBs have expressed an interest in offering programmes leading to QQI certification in awards in Agriculture. Teagasc provided clarification on the access requirements associated with some of these awards and also provided information on the certification and regulatory requirements of farmers wishing to avail of the 2015 National Reserve and Young Farmers Scheme. ETBI will be arranging a follow up meeting in the Autumn between Teagasc and ETBs interested in offering QQI certification in awards in Agriculture.

'Sharing Snapshots of Practice Series'

It is planned to run a series of seminars on a variety of themes and topics that would enable colleagues involved in FET provision in ETBs to collaborate and share practices and experiences, and explore solutions to common problems arising. The seminars will be supported by the FESS team and co-ordinated by ETBI through the ETBI QQI Forum. Two topics and dates have been identified **Interim Governance Process for Programme Management on 22 October 2015** and **Ensuring Consistency of Assessment in Multi-Centres on 25 November**.

Information and Communications Working Group

A working group of the Forum has been established to explore the communication and information requirements of the ETBs with QQI. The first meeting of this group is on 3 September 2015.

The Development and Review of Awards and Standards

The Awards and Standards Review Working Group, which is a sub-group of the Forum, has facilitated the ETB sector in identifying awards for review by QQI, as a priority. In addition to this, as a result of issues being identified relating to the employment pathways for graduates of the care/health type programmes, ETBI has been in contact with QQI in relation to the potential review of these awards, in consultation with the HSE, to ensure they are fit for purpose.

As new awards are developed they are available for consultation on www.qqi.ie. ETBs are requested to feed back on the draft award standards so that QQI are informed of any issues, concerns or opinions relating to these awards. QQI has also requested that where an ETB is happy with a draft award, this sentiment would be communicated to QQI.

Currently the ETB sector is leading the development of a new award in Journalism at level 6, as well as reviewing the awards in Furniture Design and Making at levels 5 and 6. Anyone with an expertise in this area who is interested in being part of the development or review of these awards should contact their ETB representative on this forum.

The Development of Programmes

The ETBs continue to develop programmes leading to newly published awards. Information on which programmes are being developed and which ETB is taking a lead in that development work can be accessed in a series of status sheets available for download on www.fess.ie