4 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

An ETB is responsible for the design, development, approval, monitoring, and review of all programmes, including programmes leading to QQI awards.

In addition to (or by encompassing) regular, periodic reviews of programmes, ETBs should undertake quality reviews of staff performance, training, academic, administrative and service areas or units as appropriate in all constituent centres and colleges. It may also be useful to undertake thematic reviews of institution-wide issues as part of the regular cycle of internal evaluation.

Periodic quality reviews should be understood in the context of a range of other mechanisms in education and training institutions, with which they must interact and which they must support if they are to be fully effective. Integrated corporate approaches to quality improvement should be designed to eliminate unnecessary duplication, reduce burden, promote synergies and support the management system.

In addition to the explicit quality measures envisaged by QQI's core QA guidelines and these sector-specific guidelines it is important to recognise that well-established mechanisms such as the external authentication system; institutional self-evaluation and analysis; and strategic planning functions will also contribute significantly to quality.

The quality assurance procedures in place will include:

- Support for programme design, development and approval and the monitoring process.

  o Where programmes are being developed to lead to QQI awards the development process should be informed by the *QQI validation criteria, as set out in the QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, April 2016*. Addressing these at an early stage in the process will increase the likelihood of a smooth passage through the validation process.

  o Arrangements with other awarding bodies must be formally documented and QQI must be notified before each such arrangement is entered into.

- Preparation of applications for validation of programmes leading to QQI awards. This includes for example:

  o allowing sufficient time for validation;

  o differentiating between different types of processes e.g.:

    – *Programmes with a sharable curriculum for first time validation;*

    – *Programmes based on a shared curriculum – differential validation;*

    – *Programmes leading to CAS awards;*

    – *Programmes leading to non-CAS awards;*

    – *Programmes that will be offered jointly with a collaborative partner;*

    – *Programmes developed for statutory apprenticeship.*

- o identifying the criteria that ETB centres (staff and non-staff resources) must meet to provide a programme validated by QQI for provision by ETB centres.

- Determining the capacity of each ETB centre to provide a given programme of education and training. Such procedures will include:

  - o assessment of the capacity of the centre to provide a validated programme; and

  - o reporting by the centre to the ETB on any change in its capacity to provide QQI validated programmes.

- Planning for all provision within a centre. Capacity to provide a new programme may be limited by the other programmes a centre already provides. The set of programmes provided by each centre will at all times be within its overall capacity. Suitable procedures are in place for planning for provision.

- Supporting and enabling the formal collaborative design and development of shared curricula across the ETB sector for programmes leading to QQI awards and the approval processes as set out in the *QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, April 2016*.

- ETB corporate planning and oversight. This includes monitoring and reporting on the totality of programme provision in the context of the programme lifecycle across all centres operated by the ETB, having regard to educational, employment, social and cultural needs. These should include for example:

  - o planning, development and maintenance of resources required to ensure capacity to support programme provision and quality at the point of delivery (in ETB centres/institutions);

  - o staff planning and continuing capacity to manage will have regard to the professional regulatory infrastructure in place for ETBs;

  - o development and planning of systems to promote quality teaching and learning in all relevant learning environments (e.g. workplace, flexible distributed (e-learning), classroom, and practical training environments) and monitoring of this at centre level and ETB level;

  - o development and planning of systems to oversee the implementation of procedures for the assessment of learners to ensure fairness, consistency and fitness-for-purpose and monitoring of this at centre level and ETB level;

  - o matters relating to employment that may require, for example, systematic engagement with employers, social groups, cultural groups and educational institutions who provide prospective destinations for completed learners (ETB graduates).