

Training Provider Organisations

Arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement planning

October 2023



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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Context

The implementation of the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy (DfE) [14-19 Framework](#) is central to delivery of '[a 10x Economy](#)' and the policy objectives set out in the Skills Strategy, and in fulfilling [Fair Start](#) commitments. It is also a first step in addressing some of the challenges raised in the recently published [Independent Review of Careers](#).

In planning for the future, other DfE strategies and policies both on Skills, Tourism and Energy and the Executive's new Programme for Government will also inform the economic response and wider strategic responses to address social inequalities, infrastructure and green growth.

The NI Skills Barometer forecasts future skills needs and skills gaps by qualification level, subject area and sector for Northern Ireland; [an update report](#), the fourth publication in relation to the NI Skills Barometer, covers the coming decade to 2030.

This document sets out how the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will evaluate the effectiveness of quality improvement planning in training provider organisations contracted by DfE to delivered skills training programmes. These updated arrangements replace the previous scrutiny evaluation process of September 2022.

While training provider organisations can implement internal self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes that meet their individual needs, the following overarching requirements are expected:

- the use of a robust self-evaluation process, based on an appropriate range of evidence, to inform curriculum planning and quality improvement at strategic and operational levels;
- the development of a whole-organisation quality improvement plan informed by the self-evaluation process that prioritises appropriate actions to address effectively any key areas for improvement identified; and
- the implementation of monitoring and review processes that evaluate the impact of the actions taken to sustain improvement in the quality of the provision.

Throughout the report, where text is accompanied by an asterisk, this indicates that additional information can be found in Appendix 3: Notes.

Introduction

The **submission*** of the Quality Improvement Plan to DfE's Quality Improvement Team (QIT) by training provider organisations (training organisations) is Friday 27 October 2023. It is important to ensure that the approach taken to quality improvement planning takes account of the policy context and is useful in supporting the work of the organisation and its learners, and that it is manageable. Training organisations may wish to access [ETI guidance on effective action planning](#).

The following sections in this guidance document set out the arrangements for scrutiny by the ETI, on behalf of DfE, of the effectiveness of quality improvement planning by training organisations.

Quality Improvement Planning Scrutiny

There will be a desk-based scrutiny of the effectiveness of quality improvement planning for all training organisations. The outcome of the scrutiny of the quality improvement plan will be one of four outcomes as outlined later in this document. There will also be inspection visits associated with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the work of training organisations.

After DfE's QIT has received the submissions, the information submitted will be shared with ETI for scrutiny, which will involve an evaluation of the following aspects of the submission:

1. a **statement of assurance*** that the training organisation has appropriate quality improvement planning arrangements in place to ensure good quality of provision and continuity in learning, training and assessment;
2. an overview of the quality monitoring, evaluation and reporting structures including lines of responsibility across job roles within the training organisation;
3. a review of the training organisation's previously submitted quality improvement plan, including evidence of the impact of the actions taken to improve or sustain the quality of the provision and the associated outcomes;
4. a whole-organisation, time-bound, targeted quality improvement action plan informed by effective self-evaluation, including any required separate sections as identified in DfE's commissioning letter for the Quality Improvement Planning submission.
5. overall outcomes and findings including a summary of the training organisation's key strengths and any areas for improvement (see Appendix 1);
6. a **summary*** of strengths and areas for improvement, where appropriate, in each professional and technical area and in the essential skills (see Appendix 2), including performance levels if appropriate;
7. a summary of the training organisation's key performance data. The performance tables available from the [ETI's website](#) may be used to record data; and
8. an overall evaluation outcome for the training organisation's training provision, based on the content outlined in the points above, for the reporting year 2022/23 (See the appendices at the end of the document).

Key areas for consideration

Key areas of consideration and inclusion, as referenced in DfE's commissioning letter, within a training organisation's quality improvement planning submission should include:

- curriculum development and delivery which supports the holistic development of the trainees and apprentices and enables them to achieve and progress;
- provision of inclusive, effective approaches to planning, teaching, training and assessment for successful learning and high quality outcomes for learners;
- promotion of the health, wellbeing and safety, including staying safe while online, of trainees, apprentices and staff;
- effectiveness of child and adult protection and wider safeguarding arrangements;
- effectiveness of the approaches and practices to promote and embed equity, equality and inclusion of all trainees and apprentices;
- strategic development of collaborative networks to improve the broader learning experiences and outcomes for trainees and apprentices;
- the views and ideas of the trainees, apprentices and staff to inform ongoing monitoring, evaluation and actions to promote improvement; and
- staff professional learning to underpin the identified priorities for development to support delivery and quality improvement going forward.

Response to the submission

ETI's desk-based scrutiny of submissions will normally be undertaken by the District Inspector for the training organisation. It is anticipated that the District Inspector will make contact with the organisation after their submission has been received from DfE to discuss the quality improvement plan and also to provide some evaluative feedback.

When the desk-based scrutiny process is completed, ETI and DfE's QIT will take the relevant actions as outlined below.

ETI's Inspection Services Team will advise DfE's QIT of the relevant scrutiny outcome and DfE QIT will issue the response letter to the training organisation with one of the following outcomes and any associated actions.

Outcome A

On the basis of the information provided, there is sufficient evidence that the training organisation is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement.

ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation brings about improvement. This may include an inspection visit.

Outcome B

On the basis of the information provided, there is insufficient evidence that the training organisation is planning effectively for learning or quality improvement. In order to demonstrate more fully that there is effective quality improvement planning for learning, the organisation will be requested to submit additional information within four weeks for further scrutiny. Outcome A or C will then apply.

ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation brings about improvement. This may include an inspection visit.

Outcome C

On the basis of the information submitted, and including any additional information submitted within four weeks, there is still insufficient evidence that the training organisation is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement.

DfE's Quality Improvement Advisor/Team will indicate any further improvement actions to be taken by the organisation within a given timescale.

ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation brings about improvement. This may include an inspection visit.

Outcome D

The training organisation has been notified of an upcoming inspection: the scrutiny of the organisation's annual quality improvement planning submission will be incorporated within the inspection process. Outcome A or B then will apply.

Inspection visits

The key reasons a training organisation may be selected for a monitoring or inspection visit typically include:

- the scrutiny of the quality improvement plan and associated **documentation*** identifies that the organisation is not submitting sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they are planning effectively to ensure quality and continuity in learning, training and assessment;

- the organisation has evaluated itself as having significant weaknesses in quality improvement planning and ensuring continuity of learning and training to meet the needs of the learners;
- the statement of assurance governance letter identifies only 'partial assurance' for the organisation's quality improvement planning processes; or
- a request from the Department or an evidence-based risk is identified by the training organisation's District Inspector.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overall outcomes and findings

The tables below, and those in Appendix 2, can be used to present a summary of organisation's overall key findings and a summary of subject area key findings. The tables are aligned to ETI's [Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\)](#).

Overall effectiveness (please select one of the following)

| | |
|--|--|
| The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. | |
| The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. | |
| The organisation needs to address (an) important area (s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. | |
| The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. | |

Overall Performance Levels

(Please insert a Performance Level for each of the three areas below)

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Outcomes for Learners | |
| Quality of Provision | |
| Leadership and Management | |

Overall quality of the programmes evaluated

| Programme/project | Proportion of Registration | Insert Performance level below |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| e.g. Skills for Life and Work | % | |
| e.g. ApprenticeshipsNI | % | |

The arrangements for protecting and safeguarding young people and adults

(Please select one of the following)

| | |
|--|--|
| Reflect current legislation and practice | |
| Reflect broadly current legislation and practice | |
| Are unsatisfactory | |

Care and Welfare

(Please select one of the following)

| | |
|--|--|
| Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes | |
| Does not impact positively enough on one or more of learning, teaching and outcomes for learners | |

Summary of overall organisation- key findings

Organisation: _____

Key findings

(Succinct, single sentence, evidence-based evaluations of the key strengths and areas for improvements aligned to ISEF and balanced to reflect the internal evaluation findings. Reference should be made to data, where appropriate including key performance indicators. For the overall organisation this should be no more than two A4 pages.)

The provision has the following strengths:

- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX

To improve further the provision, the organisation needs to:

- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix 2: Summary of professional and technical area/essential skills key findings

Professional and technical area/essential skills

Title: <(e.g.) Wood occupations, hair and beauty, engineering, construction, essential skills, etc.>

(The organisation should decide how these will be submitted to best reflect the quality of the provision and should note this in the submission (e.g.) one submission for essential skills rather than individual submissions for literacy, numeracy and ICT; professional and technical reports incorporating ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success/Skills for Life and Work rather than separate ones for each programme; combined reports for similar professional and technical areas such as hairdressing and beauty therapy or professional and technical areas with low enrolments, etc.)

Internally self-evaluated performance levels

Performance Levels

(Please insert a Performance Level for each of the three areas below)

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Outcomes for Learners | |
| Quality of Provision | |
| Leadership and Management | |
| Overall | |

Key findings

(Succinct, single sentence, evidence-based evaluations of the key strengths and areas for improvements aligned to ISEF and balanced to reflect the internal evaluation findings. Reference should be made to data, where appropriate including key performance indicators. For each professional and technical area/essential skills strand included this should be no more than one A4 page.)

The provision has the following strengths:

- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX

To improve further the provision, the organisation needs to:

- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix 3: Notes

- Page 2** **submission*** - A DfE communication (25 July 2023) advised of the arrangements for the Quality Improvement Planning submission 2023/24 by work-based learning supplier organisations.
- Page 3** **statement of assurance*** - DfE's QIT provides an Assurance Statement template; the organisation will be assuring DfE that they have a fit-for-purpose quality improvement plan in place.
- summary*** - The internally evaluated summary of key strengths/areas for improvement for each main professional and technical area and, where appropriate, the essential skills including reference to outcomes at level 2 in literacy and numeracy.
- Page 5** **documentation*** - This decision would be made after the scrutiny of any re-submitted evidence, as requested by DfE's QIT.

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