

# European Social Fund Call 3 Project Promoters

## Arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement planning

September 2022



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](#) will be 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 key element of the Executive's [Building Forward: Consolidated NI COVID Recovery Plan](#) and 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 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.

## Introduction

All European Social Fund (ESF) project promoters have been required to submit an annual Quality Improvement Plan to DfE since the introduction of the ESF projects<sup>1</sup>. 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. Organisations may wish to access [ETI guidance on effective action planning](#).

This document sets out the arrangements for desk-based scrutiny by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), on behalf of DfE, of the effectiveness of quality improvement planning by ESF Call 3 project promoters.

## Quality Improvement Planning Scrutiny

There will be a desk-based scrutiny of the effectiveness of quality improvement planning for those existing ESF project promoters visited by ETI as part of Call 2 during the period from January 2022 to April 2022. There may also be a small number of Call 3 visits to these project promoters.

Based upon the submission date communicated of 21 October 2022, DfE's Quality Improvement Team (QIT) will then share the information submitted with ETI for scrutiny as listed below:

- The DfE Statement of Assurance; and
- The DfE ESF Call 3 Mid-Year Quality Monitoring and Evaluation Return<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A DfE communication (9 August 2022) advised of the arrangements for the submission by ESF Call 3 project promoters of the annual Quality Improvement Evaluation Update and related Quality Improvement Planning documents.

<sup>2</sup> The DfE template as provided in its communication of 9 August 2022.

Some priority areas that project promoters may have included in the previous quality improvement plan include:

- curriculum development and delivery which supports the holistic development of the participants and enables them to achieve and progress;
- identifying and addressing the barriers faced by participants;
- developing inclusive, effective approaches to planning, teaching/training and assessment for successful learning;
- development of appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding and access to accreditation, including for the essential skills to meet the needs of the participants and employers;
- safeguarding of participants in learning and training environments, including provision related to contemporary issues, staying safe online and the emotional wellbeing of participants and staff;
- careers education, information, advice and guidance, additional learning experiences and links with parents/carers, employers, external agencies and other providers;
- the views and ideas of the participants and staff to inform ongoing monitoring, evaluation and actions to promote improvement; and
- staff professional learning to underpin the identified priorities for development and reflect organisation context, including progressively developing and sustaining the digital skills of participants and staff and their ability to learn and deliver remotely.

## Response to the submission

ETI's desk-based scrutiny of submissions will normally be undertaken by the District Inspector for the organisation. It is anticipated that the District Inspector will make contact with the project promoter after the submission has been received from DfE 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 outcome and DfE QIT will issue the response letter to the organisation with one of the following outcome(s) and any associated actions.

### **Outcome A**

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

### **Outcome B**

On the basis of the information provided, there is insufficient evidence that the organisation is planning effectively for learning or quality improvement, including planning for sustainability and progression of participants.

In order to demonstrate more fully that there is effective quality improvement planning, the organisation will be requested to submit additional information within four weeks for further scrutiny. Outcome A or C will then apply.

### **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 organisation is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement, including planning for sustainability and progression of participants.

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 a Call 3 visit.

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