EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

Work-based Learning Supplier Organisations

Arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement planning

September 2022

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# Context

The implementation of the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy (DfE) [14-19 Framework](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/developing-more-strategic-approach-14-19-education-and-training-framework-transform-14-19-education) will be central to delivery of [‘a 10x Economy’](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/10x-economy-economic-vision-decade-innovation) and the policy objectives set out in the Skills Strategy, and in fulfilling [Fair Start](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/fair-start) commitments. It is also a key element of the Executive’s [Building Forward: Consolidated NI COVID Recovery Plan](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/building-forward-consolidated-covid-19-recovery-plan#:~:text=The%20Plan%20details%2083%20highly,and%20health%20of%20the%20population.) and a first step in addressing some of the challenges raised in the recently published [Independent Review of Careers](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/independent-review-careers-guidance).

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](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-skills-barometer-2021-update), the fourth publication in relation to the NI Skills Barometer, covers the coming decade to 2030.

# Introduction

The submission of the Quality Improvement Plan to DfE by work-based learning supplier organisations will be required on or before Friday 28 October 2022[[1]](#footnote-1). 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](https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/further-education-work-based-learning-european-social-fund-a-guide-for-effective-action-planning.pdf).

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 work-based learning supplier organisations.

# Quality Improvement Planning Scrutiny

There will be a desk-based scrutiny of the effectiveness of quality improvement planning for all work-based learning supplier organisations. Where an organisation is involved in the ETI follow-up inspection process, the organisation will be subject to the same scrutiny process as all other organisations and the quality improvement plan will be evaluated according to Outcomes A, B or C. There will also be inspection visits to a number of work-based learning supplier organisations.

Based upon the submission date communicated of 28 October 2022, DfE’s Quality Improvement Team (QIT) will then share the information submitted with ETI for scrutiny as listed below:

* 1. a completed DfE Statement of Assurance[[2]](#footnote-2);

* 1. a whole-organisation quality improvement plan informed by a full year data set and effective self-evaluation, including a rigorous update on all planned actions, review periods and targets, both targets achieved in the course of the year and targets reviewed or newly identified for the incoming year (October 2022 – October 2023) for **all** provision. Separate sections should be provided for Skills for Life and Work (2021 Contracts) and ApprenticeshipsNI (2021 Contracts);

* 1. a review of the organisation’s previously submitted quality improvement plan, including evidence of the impact (both the expected and actual impact) of the actions taken to improve/sustain quality and outcomes;
  2. overall outcomes and findings including a summary of the organisation’s overall key strengths and any areas for improvement (see Appendix 1);

* 1. a summary of strengths and areas for improvement, where appropriate, in each professional and technical area[[3]](#footnote-3) and in the essential skills (see Appendix 2); and
  2. a summary of the organisation’s key performance data[[4]](#footnote-4).

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

* curriculum development and delivery which supports the holistic development of the trainees and apprentices and enables them to achieve and progress;
* identifying and addressing the barriers faced by trainees and apprentices;
* 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 trainees and apprentices and employers;
* safeguarding of trainees and apprentices in learning and training environments, including provision related to contemporary issues, staying safe online and the emotional wellbeing of trainees and apprentices 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 trainees and apprentices 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 trainees and apprentices 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 organisation after the 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 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.

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 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 continues to be insufficient evidence that the 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.

# Inspection visits

The key reasons an organisation would be selected for an inspection visit typically include:

1. the scrutiny of the quality improvement plan and associated documentation[[5]](#footnote-5) identifies that the organisation is not submitting sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they are planning effectively for learning and quality improvement;
2. the organisation has evaluated itself as having significant weaknesses in planning effectively for learning and quality improvement;
3. the completed DfE Statement of Assurance identifies only ‘partial assurance’ for the organisation’s quality improvement planning processes; or
4. a request from DfE or an evidence-based risk is identified by the District Inspector.

The focus of an inspection visit will be on the organisation’s current quality improvement plan and will give the organisation the opportunity to demonstrate that it has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision through its quality improvement planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes.

The organisation’s arrangements for safeguarding will be evaluated and reported on as part of the visit. The completed ETI [safeguarding proforma](https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/safeguarding-proforma-guidance-mandatory-requirements-further-education-and-work-based) should be available at the time of the visit.

The duration of an inspection visit will be proportionate to the size and scope of the organisation’s provision. ETI will carry out inspection visits with flexibility to respond to the particular circumstances of each organisation and its trainees and apprentices.

At the end of the inspection visit, the organisation will be provided with oral feedback[[6]](#footnote-6) on the main findings. A short report will be published with the key findings and a summary of any areas that the organisation needs to focus on.

The organisation will be required, if necessary, to submit a revised quality improvement plan to DfE’s QIT within four weeks of the inspection visit.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Overall outcomes and findings

The tables below, the summary of overall organisation key findings and the summary of subject area key findings in Appendix 3 should be completed, informed by robust self-evaluation, and submitted to the Department’s QIT. The tables are aligned to ETI’s [Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF)](https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/the-inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation-questions-for-further-education-work-based-learning-and-european-social-fund_1.pdf).

**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[[7]](#footnote-7)**

(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 Proportion of Insert Performance level below

Registration

e.g. Skills for Life and Work %

e.g. Traineeships %

e.g. ApprenticeshipsNI %

**The arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at risk**

(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**

**Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Key findings[[8]](#footnote-8)**

The provision has the following strengths:

* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx

To improve further the provision, the organisation needs to:

* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx

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

**Professional and technical area/essential skills/project[[9]](#footnote-9)**

Title:      *(e.g.) Wood occupations, hair and beauty, engineering, construction, essential skills, 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**[[10]](#footnote-10)

The provision has the following strengths:

* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* xxxxxxxxxx

To improve further the provision, the organisation needs to:

* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx
* Xxxxxxxxxx

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Follow us on Twitter. [@ETI\_news](https://twitter.com/ETI_news) Facebook. [@ETInews](https://www.facebook.com/ETInews/) InsPIRE - ETI's virtual inspection system.

1. A DfE communication (15 July 2022) advised of the arrangements for the Quality Improvement Planning submission – 2022/23 by work-based learning supplier organisations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The organisation will be assuring DfE that a fit-for-purpose quality improvement plan is in place. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The summary of the organisation’s key performance data could be provided using the inspection data tables which are available on the ETI website: [Information requirements for Training for Success and ApprenticeshipNI inspections](https://tinyurl.com/Info-Requirements-TfS-AppNI) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This decision would be made after the scrutiny of any re-submitted evidence, as requested by DfE’s QIT. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Which will be normally attended by a representative from DfE. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Performance Levels: Outstanding, Very Good, Good, Important areas for improvement, Requires significant improvement, Requires urgent improvement [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 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.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 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 included this should be no more than one A4 page. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)