



HSE North West
Training and
Support
Services

QUALITY
ASSURANCE
MANUAL

Version 1 - 2022



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Acronyms Glossary of Terms and Interpretations	
AC	Academic Council
AHEAD	AHEAD is an independent non-profit organisation working to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities
Alison	Free online courses
ALL	Adult Literacy for Life
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
AT	Appeals Team
ATU	Atlantic Technological University
CAS	Common Awards System
Centre Coordinator	Person who coordinates the day-to-day activities, holistic support and care within the Centre.
CMT	Corporate Management Team
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPSA	Commission for Public Service Appointments: The Commission for Public Service Appointments is the principal regulator of recruitment and selection in the Irish public service.
CQIP	Continuous Quality Improvement Plans
DCITS	Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services
DCM Learning	DCM Learning is an accredited training provider
EA	External Authenticator
EASI Tool	Evaluation, Action and Service Improvement The aim is to produce a constructive report which will help each service location provider to maintain and improve the quality of its services and supports under New Directions.
ETB	Education and Training Board
FESS	Further Education Support Service. Offer training for personnel working in Further Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
General Manager, Social Care Division	He / she has a pivotal role in service planning, coordinating and managing activities and resources within the service area.
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Publicly funded healthcare system in Ireland, responsible for the provision of health and personal social services.

HSE Day Services Coordination Team	Team Responsible for referring learners to NWTSS
HSELand	HSELand is the Health Service Executive's (HSE) national online learning and development portal. Built on a fully integrated Learning and Talent Management System, HSELand is developed and maintained by the HSE National HR Capability and Culture function.
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IV	Internal Verifier
Key Worker	Learners point of contact within the service.
LAMH	A manual sign language used by people with Intellectual Disabilities with communication needs in Ireland.
LLTM	Leadership, Learning and Talent Management
LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
MIMLO's	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes
MIPLO's	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSLETB	Maye Sligo Leitrim Education Training Board
MSP	Managed Service Provider (HSE recruitment managed externally)
NALA	A charity committed to making sure people with unmet literacy and numeracy needs have access to learning opportunities and can fully take part in society.
New Directions	New Directions calls for a blurring of the boundaries between 'special' and 'mainstream' services so that people can access the support most suited to helping them put their personal plans into action. It challenges people with disabilities to have high expectations for themselves and of their community.
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NRS	National Recruitment Service within the HSE
NWIFHE	North West Institute of Further and Higher Education
NWTTS	North West Training and Support Services
PAS	Public Appointment Service (HSE)
PC	Programme Committee
PCP	Person Centre Planning Is a process for selecting and organizing the services and supports that an older adult or person with a disability may need to live in the community

PCP Facilitator	An individual that assists learner with forming life and learning plans that is centered on the individual.
PDT	Programme Development Team
PEL	Protection of Enrolled Learners
PIP	Programme Improvement Plan
Point of Contact	First person contacted at Stage One of Complaints
PRT	Programme Review Team
QA	Quality Assurance
QBS	QQI Business System
QC	Quality Committee
QIPs	Quality Improvement Plans
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QQI Provision Lead	Person who manages all QQI activities / business
RAP	Results Approval Panel
RPCL	Recognition of Prior Certified Learning
RPEL	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SEC	State Exams Commission
Service Managers	Manage the services and programmes assigned to him / her. Provides direct line management, supervision and leadership.
SIT	Sligo Institute of Technology
SLCITS	Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services
Social Care Division	Social Care Division was established by the HSE to support ongoing service requirements of older people and people with disabilities.
TLAC	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
TNA	Training Need Analysis
TOR	Terms of Reference
YSYS	Is the name of the <i>HSE's</i> complaints process for all users of <i>HSE</i> funded services

Introduction & Context

The North Western Health Board was established in 1970 and became the Health Service Executive (HSE) in 2005 as per HSE Code of Governance – 2021.

<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/hse-code-of-governance-2021.pdf>

For further information, please refer to:

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/42/enacted/en/html>

Training Services in the North West of Ireland were established in 1981 and commenced delivery of FETAC programmes in 2002 with QA systems approved in 2007. Worklink North-West was set up in Donegal in 1995 and began delivering FETAC programmes in 2004 and had Providers QA systems approved in 2007.

The current provider, HSE North West Training and Support Services (NWTSS) came into being in January 2019 and is a consolidation of Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services (which includes HSE Ballyraine Training Services and HSE Tobar Training Services, Donegal), Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services (formerly HSE Ballytivnan Training and Support Services, Sligo) and ASCAIN Training & Support Service, Donegal (formerly Worklink North West). NWTSS is a health and social care service, where the emphasis is placed on the health and personal development of the individual.

Learners taking part on programmes in NWTSS aged between 18 and 65 years and are in recovery from mental ill-health, have an intellectual disability or a dual diagnosis. Learners will have expressed an interest in participating on a training programme.

NWTSS operates under the mantle of New Directions, which consists of 12 pillars of support of which education is one those pillars.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/newdirections/interim%20standard%20for%20new%20directions%20report.pdf>

NWTSS also adheres to the UN Convention on Human Rights, General Principles, Article 3 and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

For further information, please refer to:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-3-general-principles.html> and

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

NWTSS recognises QQI as the most suitable mainstream educational option for our learners as Levels 1 and 2 are used for a wide range of people, including people with intellectual or other disabilities and Level 3 recognising knowledge, as well as personal and practical skills, including some transferable skills. NWTSS provides the learner the opportunity to achieve certification and a progression route to other mainstream Further Education Institutions should the learner so desire.

The purpose of this quality manual is to clearly communicate information, and to serve as a framework or roadmap for meeting quality system requirements. The manual is the responsibility of NWTSS management, and thus conveys managerial commitment to quality and to the quality management system.

Mission Statement

NWTSS seeks to provide a person centred service, empowering each individual with skills that will assist them to become active citizens of their local community with the option of gaining a recognised qualification while promoting a culture of lifelong learning and continuous quality of life improvement and positive recovery.

Aim

NWTSS aims to provide a range of training and personal supports to service users which actively promote person centeredness and community inclusion.

Objective

To provide a high standard of support in line with a person centred approach which recognises and values each unique individual and supports them to achieve their goals, wishes and aspirations through the promotion of independence and autonomy, community inclusion and active citizenship.

Related Documents

- HSE Code of Governance - (2021)
- New Directions Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities (2015)

1. Governance and Management of Quality

1.1 Introduction

NWTSS is committed to providing a high standard of governance that is aligned with the operational and strategic objectives of the organisation. The systems and procedure that direct and underpin governance have been designed to ensure that NWTSS is operating in accordance with the standards agreed in the quality assurance framework. The governance system members are experienced personnel from across a range of locations within NWTSS and also external experts. The governance system aims to provide oversight that agreed quality process are implemented in a fair and consistent manner across all provision.

In developing the Quality Assurance governance system, NWTSS gave consideration to the following:

- The development of one quality assurance system to provide oversight of the quality of three different HSE education and training providers. This resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the three strands of provision (1.2);
- The desire to ensure ownership of quality at centre-level and to build this into the governance system;
- The importance of separating development and approval roles;
- The need to ensure that members of groups and teams that form the governance structure have the relevant expertise;
- The need to clearly outline and document the roles and duties of each group, committee and team that form part of the governance system.

The structure of the governance system is outlined in this section.

1.2 Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services (DCITS)

And

Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services (SLCITS)

And

Ascain Training and Support Services.

Introduction

It is in the best interest of Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services (DCITS), Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services (SLCITS) and Ascain Training and Support Services to formalise their collaborative relationships and ensure a coordinated and quality assured education and training provision to all learners. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out the terms and understanding between the parties to enter into an agreement as part of HSE North West Training and Support Services (NWTSS). In formalising the collaborative relationships, duplication of effort will be reduced and provision will be coordinated and enhanced through a shared quality assurance system. Each party to the MoU will be accountable to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

Purpose

The purpose of this MoU is to signify the NWTSS intent to develop a formal relationship and appropriate linkages for the purpose only of providing quality education and training provision that is underpinned and validated by achieving a Quality Assurance (QA) Agreement with Quality Qualification Ireland (QQI). This MoU sets out the principles for a joint approach as a single provider of QQI accredited programmes of education from Level 1 to Level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It is anticipated that these principles will create a solid foundation for mutual cooperation and collaboration in working towards a common goal of quality education.

Oversight and monitoring will be provided by the NWTSS Education Governance Structure (with delegated authority to the NWTSS Academic Council).

Objective

The objective of this MoU is adoption by all parties of the agreed governance structures and resulting commitments for the purpose of QQI Programmes of education and training only.

Background

NWTSS represents the three HSE Services of DCITS, SLCITS and Ascaín Training and Support Services. The aim is to develop shared governance practices in education across all the Centres.

A range of awards at Levels 1 – 3 will be developed and provided by the NWTSS. These will be based on identified service need, organisational objectives and /or in response to an emerging service priority within all service areas. Through the provision of the QQI accredited Further Education and Training (FET), NWTSS will play a pivotal role in the education and training of learners within DCITS, SLCITS and Ascaín Training and Support Services.

Implementation

The implementation of this agreement will be overseen by the managers of Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services (DCITS), Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services (SLCITS) and Ascaín Training and Support Services.

The parties will commit to a formally agreed single quality assurance system, approved by QQI, that will underpin the governance of education and training provision including: recruitment of learners, staff training, programme development, delivery and review, assessment of learners and communication.

Funding

Each party to the MoU will contribute equally in respect of cost which are not apportioned per person, for example:

- Quality Assurance re-engagement application;

- Validation and revalidation of programmes of education and training;
- External Authenticator/Examiner where it applies to above programmes only
- External expert for Academic Council if applicable;
- External subject matter experts/external reviewer for programme development and review;
- Costs will be split proportionally as it relates to specific areas, e.g. staff training etc.;
- Each party will bear responsibility for any resource costs specific to their programmes / learner/ staff unless otherwise agreed by the Management Team.

Enhancing provision

Each party will commit to:

- Work collaboratively with the adoption of the agreed QA and associated Policies, Procedures, Protocols, Guidelines;
- Support learners for duration identified in agreed programme curricula;
- Provide access in so far as possible to learners on programmes where required.

Confidentiality and mutual respect

Respective representative roles on working groups and committees will facilitate the exchange of information on respective activities and support services, input on policies procedures and how supports can best be provided. Information in relation to activities will be treated with confidentiality and respect by all three parties. Good corporate governance will be adhered to, and protection of data will be underpinned by:

- Relevant HSE Policies in relation to the recording, storage and retention of information;
- GDPR in respect of records of learners on QQI Programmes of education and training.

Duration of this MOU

This MOU will be for the period covered by the agreement with QQI in respect of the current approved Quality Assurance Processes and Procedures. The MoU will be reviewed every three years.

Signature:

Date



05-01-2024

Brendan Hone, Manager, Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services

Signature:

Date



05/01/2024.

Ann Marie Banks, Manager, Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services

Signature:

Date



04/01/2024

Gemma McLoone, Manager, Ascain Training and Support Services

1.3 Policy on Governance and Management of Quality

Policy Statement

The policy supports the development of a robust quality culture in which all staff assume responsibility for implementing, monitoring and measuring achievement against operational and strategic objectives.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the quality assurance system and strategies in place in NWTSS in order to provide a range of quality education and training and personal supports to service users which actively promote person centeredness and community inclusion.

Scope

The policy applies to all QQI training and education activities undertaken by NWTSS

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS QA Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities 2015.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019.

Governance

Corporate

The Management Team leads the implementation of the systems, processes and behaviours that are essential to promote good corporate governance across NWTSS. This will include implementation and oversight of the strategic plan and other agreed

strategies where it applies to QQI validated programmes of education and training. The Management Team will report to the office of the General Manager Social Care Division on matters of NWTSS corporate activities.

Academic

The Academic Council has the delegated authority for MoU decision making and is responsible for the planning, coordination, development, monitoring and oversight of all academic matters as they relate to QQI programmes of education and training. The Academic Council reports to the Office of the General Manager Social Care Division. The Quality Committee, Programme Committee, and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee support the Academic Council in its work.

The Quality Committee has oversight for the co-ordination of the development, implementation and improvement of NWTSS's quality assurance policies, procedures, and processes. It has a role in ensuring compliance and facilitating, promoting and embedding a quality culture throughout the NWTSS provision for improvement of learning opportunities. The work of the Quality Committee is supported by the **Training Team and the Results Approval Panel**.

The Programme Committee has oversight for the planning, co-ordination, development, monitoring and evaluation the quality of the programmes that form part of NWTSS's QQI provision. This includes the strategic review and criteria based decision making to select Programme Proposals for progression to NWTSS Management Team. This committee also monitors and reviews validated programme provision on an ongoing basis to ensure equitable learning opportunities are provided for learners in a supportive setting. The work of the Programme Committee is supported by the **Programme Development Team and Programme Review Team**.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee has oversight for evaluating, developing and improving delivery and outcomes for NWTSS's QQI provision.

Risk Management

The Audit and Risk Committee shall advise the NWTSS Management Team and the office of the General Manager Social Care Division on financial and compliance matters relating to their respective functions. The Committee will maintain oversight and

ensure the integrity of NWTSS internal audit and risk management functions and ensure that the interest of stakeholders are protected in relation to NWTSS business.

The Quality Committee has responsibility for the development and management of a risk register in relation to all aspects of provision, including academic risks. This ensures compliance and facilitates promoting and embedding a quality culture throughout NWTSS. The risk register is reviewed, updated and actioned. The **risk register** is available on NWTSS's shared drive.

In creating the risk register, NWTSS will carry out an assessment of all risks with the aims to manage risk on a provider wide basis that includes all aspects of service delivery processes. This involves pro-actively identifying risks that threaten the core objectives of NWTSS which places learners at the centre in delivering a quality service.

The Academic Council liaises with both the Audit and Risk Committee and the Quality Committee on matters relating to the management of risks.

Organisation Structure

NWTSS (*Diagram 1: NWTSS Governance Structure in relation to QQI Programmes of Education*) provides support to adults with a disability using a person centred approach aligned to the HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services. The Report sets out 12 pillars of support (Page 81-82) which should be available to persons with a disability; education and formal learning being one of the pillars.

Budget Resources

The Management Team of NWTSS allocates funding for resources in the service plans. Service Managers are accountable for effective and compliant procurement that delivers value for money, ensuring that services are delivered in the most economical, efficient and effective way within available resources in line with HSE Code of Governance and National Financial Regulations.

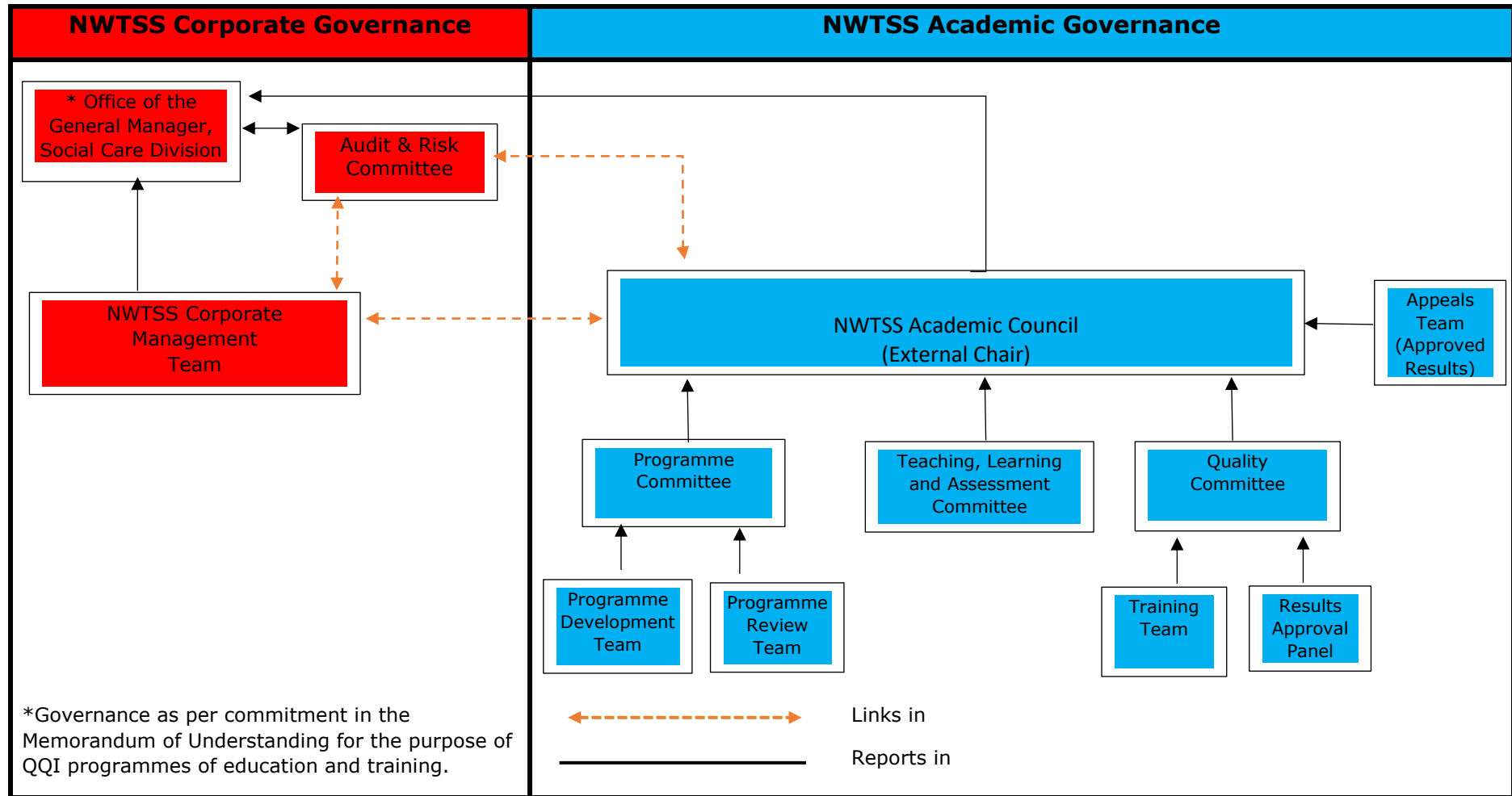
The organisation agrees and allocates a training budget on an annual basis and it is reviewed monthly by the Service Manager. All non-pay training and education related activities with a financial cost are provided for in this budget, this includes QQI related

activities. Service Managers monitor all income and expenditure on the monthly Budgetary Control Reports using the Analyst Reporting Tool.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed December 2025.

Diagram 1: NWTSS Governance Structure in relation to QI Programmes of Education



1.4 Terms of References for NWTSS Governance Committees and Teams

The structure and membership of the following committees, teams and panels has been designed to underpin a whole service approach to quality provision, with roles and membership supporting cross-provision representation and providing a reliable structure for clear two-way communication, feedback and information sharing.

- 1.4.1** Management Team
- 1.4.2** Academic Council (External Chairperson, with all QQI Provision Leads as members)
- 1.4.3** Audit and Risk Committee (Members will include representatives from HSE Audit and Risk, Management Team and Academic Council).
- 1.4.4** Programme Committee (Chaired by ASCAIN's QQI Provision Lead. Members will include representatives from Quality Committee and Teaching and Learning Committee)
- 1.4.5** Quality Committee (Chaired by DCITS' QQI Provision Lead. Members will also include representatives from Programme Committee and Teaching and Learning Committee)
- 1.4.6** Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (Chaired by SLCITS QQI Provision Lead. Members will also include representatives from Programme Committee and Quality Committee)
- 1.4.7** Programme Development Team (Chairperson elected at first meeting)
- 1.4.8** Programme Review Team (Chairperson elected at first meeting)
- 1.4.9** Training Team (Chairperson elected at first meeting)
- 1.4.10** Results Approval Panel (Chaired by DCITS' QQI Provision Lead)
- 1.4.11** Appeals Committee (Sub-Committee of Academic Council)

1.4.1. Management Team: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to set out our current view of how the NWTSS Management Team will work for the purpose of providing corporate governance oversight in respect of QQI education and training provision. This will include implementation and oversight of the NWTSS strategic plan and other agreed strategies where it applies to QQI validated programmes of education. This will be guided by the agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Donegal Community Inclusion Training Services (DCITS), Ascairn Training and Support Service and Sligo Leitrim Community Inclusion Training Services (SLCITS).

Roles and Responsibilities

The NWTSS Management Team reports to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

It is responsible to:

- Review of Memorandum of Understanding;
- Consider new organisational developments and service plans as it pertains to NWTSS education and training;
- Approve, reject or refer application proposals for new education and training provision;
- The financial management of all academic initiatives that relate to QQI programmes of education as agreed in the MoU;
- Commitment to paying QQI Fees as per MoU;
- Identification, evaluation of key risk and that a register of those risks is maintained and actively managed;
- Address risk identified on the risk register in collaboration with the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee;
- Review and consider any required action on Annual Reports from the Academic Council and its sub committees;
- Report to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division on NWTSS Corporate activities;
- Provide an end of year financial report to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division;

- Take into consideration the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division policies and other external policies to comply with NWTSS and or external statutory or regulatory requirement.

Membership of the Management Team

The General Manager of the Social Care Division is responsible for the formation of this group and has specified that the following key areas are represented:

Membership

Chairperson (to be elected by membership at the first meeting)
Deputy Chairperson (to be elected by membership at first meeting)
Managers (DCITS)
Managers (SLCITS)
Managers (Ascain)
Representative from Academic Council
Representative from HSE Finance
Representative from the Audit and Risk Committee
Representative from HSELand
Representative from HSE Digital Team

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The meetings of the Team shall be convened by the Chairperson, with a minimum of thirty days' notice of a meeting. Meeting documentation shall be circulated to members no later than fourteen working days in advance of a meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

At least three times yearly. The schedule of meetings will be agreed on annual basis.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Committee will consist of 50% of the membership +1 and must include the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson.

Decisions

The Management Team will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a simple majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Management Team will review its Terms of Reference annually and report the results of that review to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division. Any changes recommended will be presented to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division for approval.

Performance

The Management Team will undertake an annual self-assessment evaluation of its performance and report the results of that review to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

Tenure

Members will remain in the role whilst they hold the position in the organisation. On leaving that position their membership of the Management Team will terminate and nomination of their successor will be subject to the agreement of the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

1.4.2 NWTSS Academic Council Terms of Reference

Introduction

As set out in the Quality & Qualifications of Ireland (QQI) Governance and Management of Quality (2021) and with the approval of the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division, the Academic Council of the NWTSS has the delegated authority for autonomous decision-making concerning all academic matters as they relate to QQI programmes of education, provided by the NWTSS.

Purpose

The Terms of Reference outlines the set of operating principles that govern the NWTSS Academic Council to incorporate its roles and responsibilities and to define its relationship with QQI and the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

Roles & Responsibilities of the Academic Council

The Academic Council is responsible for the planning, co-ordination, development, monitoring and oversight of all academic matters as it relates to the NWTSS QQI Levels 1-3 programmes of education. The NWTSS Academic Council reports to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

It is responsible for:

- Oversight of all academic matters including learner admission, curriculum, and assessment of learner, academic standards and academic quality assurance as it relates to Level 1 - Level 3 QQI programmes of education;
- Implementation of the written Terms of Reference as agreed with the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division;
- Oversight of the development, implementation and review of educational and quality assurance standards and associated policies and procedures ensuring compliance with standards and guidelines of QQI, legislation, statutory and regulatory external stakeholders requirements;
- Establishment and oversight of the academic governance framework;
- Constitution, reconstitution and discontinuation of Committees/Teams including Terms of Reference, which it determines is required to fulfil its function;
- Approve, not approve decisions or recommendations of such committee and teams;

- Be assured that due diligence has been applied across all committees/teams when making decisions or recommendations;
- Retention of responsibility of any delegation of decision making to committees and teams;
- Consideration of implications of national strategies on standards and existing curricula;
- Liaise with the Audit and Risk Committee as required on matters relating to audit and academic risk;
- Perform any other functions which may be delegated to it by the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division pertaining to NWTSS Academic Governance.

The Academic Council is accountable for:

- Oversight and assurance of the quality and standards of academic matters in the NWTSS;
- Development and supervision of the work of the NWTSS Academic Council teams;
- Maintaining the integrity of academic standards and awards;
- Establishment of criteria for the admission, retention and progression of Learners;
- Approve, not approve or refer for further information new programme documentation consistent with the NWTSS mission prior to submission to QQI;
- Oversee the process for the nomination, selection and appointments of External Authenticator;
- Review and make recommendations on the revision of existing programmes; programme review reports and programme validation documents;
- Oversee the development, maintenance and approval of academic-related NWTSS Quality Assurance policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines;
- Examining the annual Quality Improvement Report from the Quality Committee and consider implementation of recommendations from each of the committees and teams;
- Receive report from Results Approval Panel, on decision on learner final awards;
- Promotion, recognition and dissemination of good practice in teaching to all committees and teams and the NWTSS Management Team;
- Consultation with QQI on proposed programme changes to validated programmes received from Programme Committees;
- Receipt, review and respond to reports, including an end of year report from all committees and teams;
- Be a point of contact with QQI with regard to QA agreement and programme validation/revalidation;

- Communication of decisions on academic matters to all committees and teams and the NWTSS Management Team;
- Review and sign off the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report and make recommendations in regard to the continuation or discontinuation of programmes;
- Provision of a QQI Annual Quality Report and review;
- Provision of an NWTSS annual report to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division;
- Establish and maintain effective communication structures and collaborative working with the NWTSS Management Team to achieve effective governance, whilst respecting the individual roles, responsibilities and authority of each function.

Role of the Academic Council Chairperson

The Chairperson must be an external appointment to the NWTSS.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all NWTSS Academic Council activities are in line with the Terms of Reference;
- Lead the group including presiding over NWTSS Academic Council Meetings and directing Council discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect NWTSS Academic Council discussions;
- Provide reports of NWTSS Academic Council activities to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division;
- Review the NWTSS Academic Council Terms of Reference annually with NWTSS Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Deputy Chairperson is accountable to the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson is accountable to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chairperson;
- Contribute to NWTSS Academic Council activities;
- Inform the Chairperson of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Academic Council members appoint the Secretary.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Co-ordinate the development of the administrative function to support the NWTSS Academic Council;
- Ensure that reports for the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division are developed in a timely and effective manner;
- Schedule NWTSS Academic Council meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance;
- Attend and record minutes of the NWTSS Academic Council meetings.

Membership of the Academic Council

Composition

Composition of the Academic Council and its committees/teams will be detailed in each individual committees/teams Terms of Reference and will aim to comply with the QQI, HSE and NWTSS policies that relate to equality, diversity and inclusion. Any additional committee/teams established are subject to the review and approval of the Academic Council.

Members

Nominated members of the Academic Council will be appointed in accordance with the Terms of Reference and approved by the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division. The Academic Council or its committees/teams may decide to co-opt a member of the NWTSS educational/tutorial/technical/administrative staff with the approval of the Chairperson and consensus of the relevant Committee. Co-opted members will be able to attend as necessary.

Membership of the Academic Council

Position	Voting Rights
Adult Education Officer/ETB (Chairperson - External)	Yes
Chairperson Quality Committee (Deputy Chairperson)	Yes
Secretary	No
Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Coordinator/ETB (External)	Yes
Chairperson Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Yes
Chairperson Programme Committee	Yes
Tutor Representative	Yes
Tutor Representative	Yes
Learner Representative	Yes

Terms of office

Appointment to the Academic Council will be for a period of two years. Roles and membership will be reviewed every two years. The learner representative will have the option of completing the two-year term, even if they cease to be a registered learner during this period. Induction and training will be provided for all members.

Confidentiality

Members will ensure that all matters discussed and all materials viewed will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information relating to individual will be treated with respect and handled with all due care appropriate to maintain confidentiality.

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualification and have experience and knowledge in Quality Assurance and Academic Governance in Further Education. The remaining committee members are required to hold a Level 6 (equivalent or higher) training qualification and have experience and knowledge of Quality Assurance and QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training and NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards.

Chairpersons

Chairperson of established committees/teams will be appointed by the Academic Council. In so far as possible committees/teams should appoint a Deputy Chairperson. Chairpersons hold a key leadership and governance role to ensure the conduct of its business.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the NWTSS Academic Council members will have 14 working days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings.

Agenda items and/or documents for circulation to the members must be submitted to the Secretary of the Academic Council. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member 5 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chairperson of the Academic Council may in an emergency situation at his/her discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency of meetings

Ordinary meetings of the NWTSS Academic Council shall be held at least quarterly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco WebEx or Microsoft Teams will also be available.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Academic Council will consist of 50% of the membership + 1, and must include the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson. If a quorum is not reached the Chairperson will close the meeting and not allow any business to be discussed and will reconvene a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Resignation

Resignation from the Academic Council can take place at any time. Resignation must be effected in writing to the Chairperson and shall be deemed to take effect from the date of

receipt of the letter of resignation. In the event of the Chairperson resigning written notice must be submitted to the Office of the General Manager of the Social Care Division.

Mode of Address

Members may speak to any motion when granted the right to speak by the Chairperson.

Voting

Voting shall be conducted by a show of hands by those who are either physically present or in attendance virtually. All members of the Academic Council will have voting rights. The Secretary shall count and record the votes for and against a motion or to an amendment to a motion, and will also count the number of abstentions. When voting results in a tie, the Chairperson will have the deciding vote.

Minutes

The minutes of meetings of the NWTSS Academic Council will be circulated to the membership 14 days prior to the scheduled date of the next meeting. The minutes shall document:

- Date, time and venue of meetings;
- Attendance, apologies and decisions made by the Academic Council;
- Abstentions from or disagreements within the Academic Council, when this is specifically requested by member(s);
- The name of the members, who formally proposed, seconded and approved the minutes;
- Once minutes are adopted they will be signed and dated by the Chairperson.

Committees/Teams of the Academic Council

Programme Committee

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Committee

Quality Committee

Teams

Programme Development Team

Programme Review Team

Training Team

Results Approval Panel

Appeals Team



1.4.3 NWTSS Audit and Risk Committee: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of this Committee is to maintain oversight, and ensure the integrity of the NWTSS governance, internal audit, financial controls and reporting and risk management and assess such risks as they may be exposed to, and the measures taken to mitigate those risks.

The Committee shall advise the NWTSS Management Team and the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division on financial and compliance matters relating to their respective functions. It also has a number of specified roles including advising on the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the committees/teams procedures relating to: public procurement; seeking approval for expenditure and complying with that approval; risk management; financial reporting, and internal audits.

Furthermore, the Committee will liaise and advise the NWTSS Academic Council as required on matters relating to audit and academic risk. The Committee acts independently and provides to ensure that the interests of stakeholders are protected in relation to NWTSS's business and financial reporting, and internal controls.

Scope

The scope of the Committee's function extends to:

- The relevant activities of the NWTSS Management Team and Academic Council where it applies to QQI validated programmes of education.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Committee is accountable to and reports to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

The Committee will advise on:

- The NWTSSs policies and procedures for the management of risk, internal control, assurance and governance;

- The financial management of all academic initiatives that relate to QQI programmes of education as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
- The Annual Report, including issues of concern and levels of error or omissions;
- The adequacy of the NWTSS Management Teams response to issues identified in audits;
- Assurances relating to the management of risk, and corporate governance, in the NWTSS.

Members

The Audit & Risk Committee will be appointed by the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division and will consist of:

- One member of the NWTSS Management Team;
- One member of the Academic Council;
- Two other persons who have the relevant skills and experience to perform the functions of the committee, one of whom will hold a professional qualification in accountancy/auditing and one with an educational qualification.

Membership of the Audit and Risk Committee

Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson
Secretary
Finance Manager or representative
Risk Manager or representative
One Manager from Management Team
Representative from Academic Council

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet a minimum of twice a year.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Committee will consist of 50% of the membership +1 and must include the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson. The Committee will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a simple majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Tenure

The committee will be in place for a three year term with the possibility of further terms.

Performance

The Audit & Risk Committee will undertake an annual self-assessment evaluation of its performance and report the results of that review to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Audit & Risk Committee will review its Terms of Reference annually and report the results of that review to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division. Any changes recommended will be presented to the office of the General Manager, Social Care Division for approval.

1.4.4 NWTSS Programme Committee: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the NWTSS Programme Committee is to oversee, maintain and enhance the academic quality of QQI accredited programmes of education and training. This includes the strategic review and criteria based decision making to select Programme Proposals for progression to the NWTSS Management Team, ongoing monitoring and review of validated programme provision ensuring equitable learning opportunities are provided for learners in a supportive setting.

To enable the Programme Committee to fulfil its function, the Academic Council established:

- A Programme Development Team;
- A Programme Review Team;

The Chairperson of the Programme Committee informs the Academic Council of the formation of additional Programme Subcommittees as is required to fulfil its function.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Programme Committee is responsible to:

- Convene the Programme Development Team with responsibility for the development of Programmes in accordance with NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards and QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training;
- Undertake a review (stage 3 Programme Review – Policy of Programmes of Education and Training) of each Programme Proposal submitted by the Programme Development Team;
- Approve, not approve (with rationale) or refer for further information each proposed Programme of Education for progression to the Academic Council.
- Submit agreed Programme Proposal to the Academic Council for consideration;
- Oversee the review of validated programmes by Programme Review Team to assure compliance with relevant strategies and quality assurance standards in determining the overall effectiveness and quality of programmes;

- Monitor attrition and completion rates of learners and inform Academic Council regarding the admission, continuation and graduation of learners;
- Monitor academic supports and resources to meet the overall wellbeing needs of learners;
- Submit all proposed changes to validated programmes for consideration of the Academic Council and maintain a record of the evolution of the programme of education since its approval by QQI;
- Consider matters referred by Academic Council;
- Promote effectiveness and fairness in the review of programme proposals, decision making to progress, delivery and governance of programmes in the development of appropriate policies, procedures and guidelines;
- Contribute as appropriate to the implementation and ongoing review of Quality Assurance policies and procedures within NWTSS, including evaluation of learner experience and how this feedback can support continuous programme improvement;
- Emphasise examples of good practice and ensure effective dissemination of practices;
- Contribute to the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report;
- Circulate the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report to the Academic Council and all Academic Committees and Teams;
- Collaborate with the Quality Committee in collating and analysing data from the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report;
- Prepare and provide an annual report of Programme Committee activity to the Academic Council.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Programme Committee will be nominated by the Academic Council.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all Programme Committee activities are in line with the Academic Councils Terms of Reference;
- Convene and chair Programme Committee Meetings and direct discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect Programme Committee discussions;
- Compile reports on Programme Committee activities and submit to the Academic Council in a timely and effective manner;

- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Deputy Chairperson will be appointed at the first meeting.

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chair
- Contribute to NWTSS Programme Committee activities.
- Inform the Chair of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Secretary will be appointed at the first meeting.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Co-ordinate the development of the administrative function to support the Programme Committee;
- Schedule Programme Committee meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance;
- Attend and document minutes of the Programme Committee meetings.

Membership

Chaired by ASCAIN's QQI Provision Lead
Deputy Chairperson
Secretary
Representative from Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
Representative from Quality Committee
Representative from Programme Development Team
Representative from Programme Review Team
Tutor Representative(s)

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualification and have experience in Quality Assurance, Programme Development and Programme Review. The remaining committee members are required to hold a Level 6 (equivalent or higher) training qualification and have experience and knowledge of QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training and NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the Programme Committee will have 14 days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings. Agenda items and/or documents for circulation to the members must be submitted to the Secretary of the Programme Committee. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member 5 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Programme Committee Chairperson may in an emergency situation at his/her discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency

Ordinary meetings of the Programme Committee shall be held quarterly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco Webex or Microsoft Teams will also be available. Meetings will be scheduled to align with QQI Validation Process.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Programme Committee will consist of 50% of the membership + 1, and must include the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson. If a quorum is not reached the Chairperson will close the meeting and not allow any business to be discussed and will reconvene a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Decisions

The Programme Committee will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Team(s)

The Programme Committee may establish appropriate teams. The composition, Terms of Reference and Chairperson of any teams will be determined by the Programme Committee.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Programme Committee will review its Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.5 NWTSS Quality Committee: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the NWTSS Quality Committee is to ensure compliance and facilitate promoting and embedding a quality culture throughout the NWTSS where provision for improvement of learning opportunities is supported. It is responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of a Quality Assurance Framework, embedding measurement processes to assure compliance with national benchmarks, identifying where improvement is necessary, and providing advice and recommendations to the Management Team and the Academic Council.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Advise the Academic Council, and be responsible for the development, implementation, effectiveness, review, or improvement on any aspect of the quality framework and its processes;
- Support and facilitate the development of a quality culture throughout the NWTSS;
- Direct and monitor quality assurance and quality improvement activities within the NWTSS;
- Nominate an independent External Authenticator as per the External Authentication Selection Criteria to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners and advise the Academic Council;
- Schedule an External Authenticator across the provider on an annual basis and notify the Programme Committee Chairperson, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Chairperson and the Academic Council;
- Provide relevant NWTSS documentation to support the External Authenticator in their role;
- Monitor the implementation of quality improvement plans;
- Audit, review, develop and enhance quality assurance policies and procedures;
- Lead on the Annual Quality Report that includes an assessment and review of compliance in respect to statutory quality assurance guidelines;
- Ensure there is regular review of the NWTSS's activities and QA processes which will enhance the learner experience;
- Provide an end of year report on its recommendations to the Academic Council;
- Provide an end of year report on its recommendations to the Management Team;
- Ensure that the programmes of education are aligned to the NWTSS values;

- Oversee consistency in approaches across the NWTSS where it is of benefit to learners and staff;
- Audit implementation of recommendations of External Evaluator/Authenticators;
- Work closely with the Programme Committee, Teaching Learning & Assessment Committee, Appeals Committee, Programme Development Team and Programme Review Team to support integration of quality improvement;
- Promote and support innovation and best practice;
- Support the Academic Council in preparing for external site visits by QQI or other professional regulators;
- Provide oversight of the NWTSS's quality assurance, policies and procedures, and ensure that they are informed by both national and international policy developments and aligned to QQI Standards;
- Examine the annual programme reviews of each programme of education provided by the NWTSS;
- Consideration of reports from all Committees/Teams;
- Review and consider Learner evaluation;
- Review, update and amend Learner and Tutor handbooks in line with amended policies and procedures, programmes and other QA related documents;
- Recommend to Academic Council actions to be taken for quality improvement;
- Identify areas of good practice for dissemination by the Academic Council;
- Oversee that Learner engagement is occurring from curriculum design to end of programme evaluation;
- Determine if the NWTSS quality systems meet both fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose;
- Determine accountability to learners, staff, funders and the wider community that NWTSS services and supports;
- Promote benchmarking of programmes with comparable providers;
- Collaborate with the Programme Committee in reviewing the data provided by Committees/Teams in the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report prior to submission to the Academic Council;
- Undertake final programme review as recommended by the NWTSS Programme Review Team prior to approval by the Academic Council for submission to QQI;
- Disseminate all approved QQI policies and procedures to all staff via the shared drive;
- Review and update risk assessments and maintain a risk register to include academic risk.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Quality Committee will be nominated by the Academic Council.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all Quality Committee activities are in line with the Academic Council Terms of Reference;
- Chair the group including presiding over Quality Committee Meetings and directing Committee discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect Quality Committee discussions.
- Provide reports of Quality Committee activities to the Academic Council;
- Review the Quality Committee Terms of Reference annually with Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson will nominate the Deputy Chairperson.

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chairperson;
- Contribute to Quality Committee activities;
- Inform the Chairperson of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Chairperson will nominate the Secretary.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Attend and document minutes of the Quality Committee meetings;
- Schedule Quality Committee meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance;
- Ensure that reports for the Academic Council are developed in a timely and effective manner.

Membership

Chaired by DCITS' QCI Provision Lead
Deputy Chairperson
Secretary
Representative from Programme Committee
Representative from Teaching Learning & Assessment
Representative from Programme Development Team
Representative from Programme Review Team
Representative from Training Team
Tutor Representative(s)

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualification and have experience in Quality Assurance and development and review of Policies and Procedures. The remaining committee members are required to hold a Level 6 (equivalent or higher) training qualification and have experience and knowledge in drafting and writing Policies and Procedures in line with QCI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes Education and Training and the NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards and have report writing skills.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the Quality Committee will have 14 days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings. Agenda items and/or documents for circulation to the members must be submitted to the Secretary of the Quality Committee. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chairperson of the Quality Committee may in an emergency situation at his/her discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency of Meetings

Ordinary meetings of the Quality Committee shall be held quarterly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco Webex or Microsoft Teams will also be available.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Quality Committee will consist of 50% of the membership + 1, and must include the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson. If a quorum is not reached the Chairperson will close the meeting and not allow any business to be discussed and will reconvene a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Decisions

The Quality Committee will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a simple majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Quality Committee will review its Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.6 NWTSS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the NWTSS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee is to oversee the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the NWTSS Teaching, Learning and Assessment principles.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee is responsible for reporting to and is subject to oversight and review by the Academic Council. Members of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee are responsible for the delivery of the following functions:

- Oversee the development, implementation, monitoring and review of teaching, learning and assessment aligned to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment principles ensuring compliance with legislation, statutory and regulatory external stakeholder requirements;
- Monitor, review and advise the Academic Council on the implications of national initiatives/legislation as they pertain to teaching, learning and assessment;
- Report, make recommendations to and advise the Academic Council on all matters to do with the NWTSS strategic objectives in relation to teaching, learning and assessment as it applies to Level 1-3 QQI programmes of education;
- Promote best practice, innovation and excellence within the NWTSS pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment;
- Provide advice and support to the Programme Committee and Programme Teams on issues pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment;
- Analyse and benchmark NWTSS programmes of education against national academic standards;
- Collaborate with all Committees/Teams on matters relevant to teaching, learning and assessment;
- Collaborate and consult with the Quality Committee on policies and procedures relevant to Teaching, Learning and Assessment;
- Ensure that teaching, learning and assessment policies and practices continue in line with best practice and regulatory Standards & Requirements of QQI;
- Consider such other issues related to teaching learning & assessment as may be referred to it by the Academic Council;
- Contribute to the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report;

- Act with integrity to ensure the principles set out in the Terms of Reference are adhered to;
- Identify trends and issues;
- Review and approve all assessment briefs.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will be nominated by the Academic Council.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all Teaching, Learning and Assessment Team activities are in line with the Academic Council Terms of Reference;
- Chair the group including presiding over Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Meetings and directing Team discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee discussions;
- Provide reports of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee activities to the Academic Council;
- Review the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Terms of Reference annually with Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson will nominate the Deputy Chairperson

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chairperson.
- Contribute to Teaching, Learning and Assessment activities.
- Inform the Chairperson of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Chairperson will nominate the Secretary.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Attend and document minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee meetings;
- Schedule Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance;
- Ensure that reports for the Academic Council are developed in a timely and effective manner.

Membership

Position
Chaired by SLCITS QQI Provision Lead
Deputy Chairperson
Representative from Programme Committee
Representative from Quality Committee
Representative from Development Team (as needed)
Representative from Review Team
Representative from the Training Team
Tutor Representative(s)

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualification and have experience in Quality Assurance, delivery and assessment techniques. The remaining committee members are required to hold a Level 6 (or equivalent) training qualification and have experience and knowledge of assessment techniques and QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training and NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the NWTSS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will have 14 days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings. Agenda items and/or documents for circulation to the members must be submitted to the Secretary of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member 5 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chairperson of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee may in an emergency situation at their discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency of meetings

Ordinary meetings of the NWTSS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee shall be held quarterly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco Webex or Microsoft Teams will also be available.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will consist of 50% of the membership + 1, and must include the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson. If a quorum is not reached the Chairperson will close the meeting and not allow any business to be discussed and will reconvene a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Decisions

The Committee will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will review its Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.7 NWTSS Programme Development Team: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Programme Development Team is to develop new programmes of education to support learners to learn in a stimulating learning environment and ensure academic and quality standards are upheld.

Roles and Responsibilities

The NWTSS Programme Development Team is accountable to the Programme Committee. It has responsibility to:

- Receive the approved programme proposal form from the Programme Committee;
- Convene a Programme Development Team meeting to commence the development of the new programme;
- Review and discuss the new programme proposal;
- Schedule time frame for completion of new programme development and notify relevant stakeholders;
- Review requirements and organise and coordinate internal and external processes where required;
- Review recommendations/suggestions from programme/module evaluations from learners and tutors;
- Review previous programme evaluation reports, internal and external monitoring reports and External Authenticator's Report for recommendations and areas of best practice;
- Develop new programme in accordance with NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards and QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training;
- Submit newly developed programme to the Programme Committee for consideration by the Programme Review Team and the Quality Committee;
- Compile an annual report on activities and submit to the Programme Committee for consideration by the Academic Council;
- Contribute to the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report;
- Review and update learner and tutor workbooks to reflect the level and experience of the learner.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the NWTSS Programme Development Team will be nominated by the Programme Committee.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all Programme Development Team activities are in line with the Terms of Reference;
- Chair the group including presiding over Programme Development Team Meetings and directing discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect Programme Development discussions;
- Provide reports of Programme Development Team activities to the Programme Committee for submission to Academic Council;
- Review the Programme Development Team Terms of Reference annually with NWTSS Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function;

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson will nominate the Deputy Chairperson.

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chairperson;
- Contribute to NWTSS Programme Development activities;
- Inform the Chairperson of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Chairperson will nominate the Secretary.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Co-ordinate the development of the administrative function to support the Programme Development Team;

- Ensure that reports for the Academic Council are developed in a timely and effective manner;
- Schedule Programme Development Team meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance;
- Attend and document minutes of the Programme Development Team meetings.

Membership

Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson
Secretary
Tutor Representatives X 6

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualification and have experience in Quality Assurance and Programme Development. The remaining members are required to hold a Level 6 (equivalent or higher) training qualification and have experience in developing and writing programmes of Education and Training.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the Programme Development Team will have 14 days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chairperson may in an emergency situation at his/her discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings shall be held quarterly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco Webex or Microsoft Teams will also be available.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings will consist of 50% of the membership +1 and must include the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson.

Decisions

The Team will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Programme Development Team will review its Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.8 NWTSS Programme Review Team: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Programme Review Team is to ensure that all programmes are reviewed to guarantee compliance with the NWTSS Quality Assurance Manual and the QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training.

Roles and Responsibilities for:

New Programmes

The NWTSS Programme Review Team is accountable to the Programme Committee. It has responsibility to:

- Receive and review new programme validation applications from the Programme Committee and return with findings to the Programme Committee for consideration, if necessary.

Validated Programmes

- Review validated programmes of education to ensure delivery in adherence to the NWTSS Quality Assurance Manual and QQI policies and procedure;
- Consult with the Programme Committee with regards to any queries on the validated programme;
- Consult with learners and tutors and consider previous programme specifications, monitoring reports, EA and RAP Reports and other relevant information/evaluation reports;
- Compile a programme review report and submit to the Programme Committee for consideration by the Quality Committee;
- Compile an annual report on activities and submit to Programme Committee for submission to the Academic Council;
- Contribute to the Programme Monitoring Review and Evaluation Report.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the NWTSS Programme Review Team will be nominated by the Programme Committee.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all Programme Review Team activities are in line with the Academic Councils Terms of Reference;
- Chair the group including presiding over Programme Review Team Meetings and directing discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect Programme Review discussions;
- Provide reports of Programme Review Team activities to the Programme Committee for submission to Academic Council;
- Review the Programme Review Team Terms of Reference annually with NWTSS Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson will nominate the Deputy Chairperson.

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chairperson;
- Contribute to NWTSS Programme Review activities;
- Inform the Chairperson of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Chairperson will nominate the Secretary.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Co-ordinate the development of the administrative function to support the Programme Review Team;
- Ensure that reports for the Academic Council are developed in a timely and effective manner;
- Schedule Programme Review Team meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance;
- Attend and document minutes of the Programme Review Team meetings.

Membership

Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson
Secretary
Tutor Representatives X4

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualification and have experience in Quality Assurance and Programme Review. The remaining committee members are required to hold a Level 6 (equivalent or higher) training qualification, have report writing skills and experience and knowledge of QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training and NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the Programme Review Team will have 14 days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chairperson may in an emergency situation at his/her discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings shall be held twice yearly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco Webex or Microsoft Teams will also be available.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings will consist of 50% of the membership +1 and must include the Chairperson.

Decisions

The Team will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Programme Review Team will review the Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.9 NWTSS Training Team: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the NWTSS Training Team is the management of the staff training and education activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Conduct a needs assessment survey among the training staff to determine their specific areas for capacity building;
- Propose a training plan including proposed budget based on the results of the survey to be submitted to the Academic Council via the Chairperson of the Quality Committee for approval;
- Separate and clearly identify mandatory and Continuous Professional Development training;
- Establish and maintain linkages with external training providers such as ETB, ATU Donegal and Sligo, FESS, AHEAD, Alison, DCM Learning and other providers for technical assistance, support and provision of specialist training;
- Develop a yearly calendar to address the identified needs;
- Identify suitable training provider to provide programs/trainings/workshops based on the approved training plan;
- Monitor the application of learnings from the programs/trainings/workshops conducted and collect data/information on lessons learned;
- Provide an annual report to the Quality Committee on the training activities conducted and evaluated;
- Identify opportunities for the continuing professional development of staff.

Reporting Relationship

The Training Team reports to the Quality Committee and will provide a quarterly report to this committee on the work of the Training Team.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Training Team will be nominated by the Quality Committee.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Ensure all Training Team activities are in line with the Academic Councils Terms of Reference;
- Chair the group including presiding over Training Team Meetings and directing discussions to ensure the time is used effectively;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect Training Team discussions;
- Provide reports of Training Team activities to the Academic Council via the Quality Chairperson;
- Review the Training Team Terms of Reference annually with Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson will nominate the Deputy Chairperson.

The role of the Deputy Chairperson is to:

- Deputise in the absence of the Chair.
- Contribute to Training Team activities.
- Inform the Chairperson of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Role of the Secretary

The Chairperson will nominate the Secretary.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Attend and document minutes of the Training Team meetings.
- Schedule Training Team meetings and distribute relevant documents 14 days in advance.
- Ensure that reports for the Academic Council are developed in a timely and effective manner.

Membership

Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson
Secretary
Tutor Representative(s)

Qualifications

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will hold a level 7/8 qualifications in education/training/communications, have hands-on administration experience, planning and organising trainings and training programmes, experience in designing training and experience in e-learning design/coordination. The remaining committee members will have a Level 6, equivalent or higher training/teaching qualification and require excellent communications (oral and written English), presentation, interpersonal, influencing and negotiation skills for engaging a wide variety of stakeholders. All committee members will have knowledge of QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes of Education and Training and the NWTSS Quality Assurance Standards and have report writing skills.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The Chairperson shall ensure that the Training Team will have 14 days' notice of the date, time and place of scheduled meetings. Agenda items and/or documents for circulation to the members must be submitted to the Secretary of the Training Team. Agenda and supporting documentation will be forwarded to each member five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chairperson of the Training Team may in an emergency situation at his/her discretion call a Special Meeting without 14 days prior notice.

Frequency of Meetings

Ordinary meetings of the Training Team shall be held quarterly. Dates, times and venues will be agreed in advance. Virtual meeting facilities such as Cisco Webex or Microsoft Teams will also be available.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Training Team will consist of 50% of the membership + 1, and must include the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson. If a quorum is not reached the Chair will close the meeting and not allow any business to be discussed and will reconvene a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Decisions

The Training Team will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a simple majority of all members present, including the Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Training Team will review its Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.10 NWTSS Results Approval Panel – Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Results Approval Panel is to approve assessment results and review other quality assurance matters arising from the outcomes of the assessment, verification (internal) and authentication (external) process in programmes leading to QQI awards.

Scope

NWTSS Results Approval process applies to all assessments leading to QQI awards. The panel will be convened by the Quality Committee for the purpose of approving of QQI assessment results delivered across all provision and centres. All results are provisional until approved by the panel and all learner results must be considered by the RAP before submission for certification.

Role and Responsibilities

The work of the panel must be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, while maintaining confidentiality around learner information. The panel have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results (IV at centre level and EA centrally from the designated centre) has been carried out in line with NWTSS quality assurance;
- Ensure fair and consistent process have been applied by checking the validity of the assessment results;
- Identify and document any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action;
- Agree to the submission of final results to QQI to request certification and approve the issuing of results to the learners;
- Review the authentication process, the Internal Verifiers and External Authenticator's Reports and discuss recommendations;
- Identify areas for improvement and document these;
- Action areas for improvement;
- Maintain a record of strengths of the process and examples of good practice;
- Complete the documentations and submit to the Quality Committee prior to the QC submission to the Academic Council.

Quality Committee Chairperson

- Notify the panel members with the date for the results approval meeting;
- Ensure that an adequate number of panel members are present and ensure the members are aware of their role;
- Ensure that all assessment reports e.g. IV and EA reports are available and appropriately signed;
- Ensure confidentiality and security of assessment related materials for the duration of the process;
- Notify each centre of the outcome and decisions of the Results Approval Panel meeting;
- Inform Centres to submit approved results to QQI via QBS once they have been ratified by the Academic Council.

Membership of the Results Approval Panel

Quality Committee (Chairperson)
QA Committee Members
Senior Managers
QQI Provision Leads
The following may be invited if the context requires it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Authenticators • Internal Verifiers • Assessors • Representative from External Funders

Qualifications

Members of the Results Approval Panel are required to hold a Level 6 (or equivalent) training qualification and have experience and knowledge of the Authentication Process.

Results Approval Procedure:

- The RAP meeting will be convened as required in line with QQI submission requirements and dates;
- Each centre submitting in a particular certification round will be notified of their Results Approval Meeting at least 30 days before the meeting date;
- The RAP will consider all learners' results;

- Members will treat information with confidentiality and respect;
- Relevant documentation will be submitted by the Centres, presented and reviewed by the RAP. This will include:
 - IV Reports – from each centre;
 - EA Reports – designated centre where the External Authentication has taken place;
 - Submissions from centres, if applicable;
- The reports and other documentation are discussed;
- Any concerns are discussed and, if needed, corrective actions are recommended;
- Decisions are reached by group consensus and recorded. Outcomes are communicated to Centres;
- Centres are authorised by the RAP to inform learners of the results and, if necessary, their right to appeal.
- Approved results are submitted to QQI at centre level.

Conduct of Business – Meetings

Notice of Meetings

The meetings of the Team shall be convened by the Chairperson, with a minimum of thirty days' notice of a meeting. Meeting documentation shall be circulated to members no later than fourteen working days in advance of a meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

NWTTTS assessment dates will be in line with QQI Assessment dates and scheduled on an annual basis, with provision for additional panel meeting if the need arises.

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Committee will consist of 50% of the membership +1 and must include the Chairperson.

Decisions

The RAP will normally operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a vote being required on any matter a simple majority of all members present, including the

Chairperson, will carry the motion with the Chairperson of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Tenure

Members will remain in the role whilst they hold the position in the organisation. On leaving that position their membership of the Results Approval Panel will terminate and nomination of their successor will be subject to the agreement by the Quality Committee.

Review of Terms of Reference

The RAP will review its Terms of Reference every two years.

1.4.11 NWTSS Appeals Team: Terms of Reference

The purpose of the NWTSS Appeals Team is to review appeals and make final decisions on any appeals of approved results on behalf of the Academic Council. The Appeals Team specifically manages appeals from learners seeking a review of decisions made relating to approved results.

Roles and Responsibilities

The NWTSS Appeals Team is a subcommittee of the NWTSS Academic Council and has delegated authority to make final decisions on assessment appeals. The Team reports its activities and decision making to the NWTSS Academic Council.

It has responsibility to:

- Consider the appeal based on the evidence provided by the learner and the reports related to the decision made;
- Review all information relating to any learner assessment appeal;
- May seek supporting information;
- Determine the outcome of any such appeal which can be:
 - Upheld or
 - Rejected with the original decision upheld;
- Communicates its decisions in a timely and clear manner.
- If the appeal is upheld, and results in a change to the original result, QQI are notified through QBS;
- Maintain all records in relation to the appeals process;
- Complete a report on all appeals and submit to the Academic Council

Role of the Chairperson:

The Chairperson of the Appeals Team will be nominated by the Academic Council.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Provide direction and leadership at NWTSS Appeals Team Meetings and direct discussions;
- Conduct the appeals process in a transparent, efficient and timely manner;
- Ensure minutes accurately reflect discussions and actions;

- Provide reports of NWTSS Appeals Team Meeting activities to the Academic Council;
- Review the Terms of Reference annually with NWTSS Academic Council members and amend as required;
- Inform the Academic Council of any conflict of interest that may impact on their function.

Responsibilities of NWTSS Appeals Team Members:

- All members of the NWTSS Appeals Team must declare any conflict of interest, which could include:
 - Tutor involved in the assessment process/result;
 - Key worker to the learner making the appeal;
- The Chairperson will ensure that the individual withdraws from the team and a new member is chosen by the NWTSS Academic Council for the purposes of that appeal;
- Actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion and review of minutes.

Members to the NWTSS Appeals Team:

Members of the NWTSS Appeals Team are independent of the matter being appealed. The Team may invite any person to attend, who may have evidence or information to support the Team in reaching a decision.

- Membership can include:
 - Chairperson (External)
 - Assessor external to the process
 - Member of the Academic Council
 - Member independent of the Assessment Process and the Assessment

Qualifications

Members of the Appeals Team are required to hold a Level 6 (equivalent or higher) training qualification and have experience in the role of assessor and/or external examiner.

Notice of meetings

Each member of the NWTSS Appeals Team shall be entitled to five working days' notice of a meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings of the NWTSS Appeals Team shall be agreed with the chair of the Academic Council and meetings will be aligned to QQI Certification periods and held as determined.

Quorum

Three members must be in attendance.

Decisions

The decisions of the Appeals Team will be made by consensus. If agreement cannot be reached, the Appeals Team Chairperson will have the casting vote.

2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

2.1. Introduction

NWTSS's quality assurance system is fully documented. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures have been developed to underpin the quality and standards of education and training, including community and social inclusion.

NWTSS has updated its policies to reflect the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers.

For further information, please refer to: <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf>

2.2 Policy on Policy Development and Review

Policy Statement

It is the policy of NWTSS to develop and maintain quality assurance policies and procedures that support research, programme provision and related activities and are committed to the continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures through evaluation and reviews.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and compliant with relevant legislation; are effective for the service; and are reviewed to maintain ongoing effectiveness through service changes. This policy sets out a consistent approach to how policies are developed, approved, regularly reviewed and updated.

Scope

This policy applies to all current and future policies and procedures, the policy proposers, policy developers, policy approvers and those who implement policies within NWTSS.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS's QA Policies and Procedures

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.
- Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- Site Specific Safety Statement as per each training location.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019

Development of QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

The aim of this policy is to ensure that QQI training and educational activities are fit for purpose and are underpinned by robust policies and procedures that meet QQI guidelines, national legislation and enhances service provision. NWTSS will endeavour to ensure that a comprehensive range of policies are developed and maintained to support the quality assurance systems. All policies and procedures will be made available on local shared drives within NWTSS.

NWTSS will ensure that policies are developed in line with:

- Best Practice
- National legislation and QQI guidelines
- Fit for purpose
- Promote diversity, accessibility, inclusion and a culture of quality
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders
- Reviewed and updated as appropriate

2.2.1 New Policy and Procedures Initiation, Development, Review and Approval

(Diagram 2: New Policy and Procedures Initiation, Development, Review and Approval Flowchart)

NWTSS ensures that policies and procedures are developed to reflect the mission of the service; reviewed to ensure continuing relevance and approved to ensure compliance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines and the NWTSS Quality Assurance System.

The following stages are adhered to for new Policy and Procedures:

- Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Initiation
- Stage 2: Policy and Procedure Development and Review
- Stage 3: Policy and Procedure Approval

- Stage 4: Policy and Procedure Implementation upon Approval

2.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities (New Policies)

Stage 1: Policies and Procedures Initiation:

The need for a new policy and procedures has been identified within NWTSS. The QC are notified. The QC Chairperson puts it on the agenda for the AC meeting. The AC will:

- Approve development of new policy and procedures and return to QC for development;
- Return to Centre for further information;
- Decline the development with rationale.

Stage 2: Policies and Procedures Development and Review:

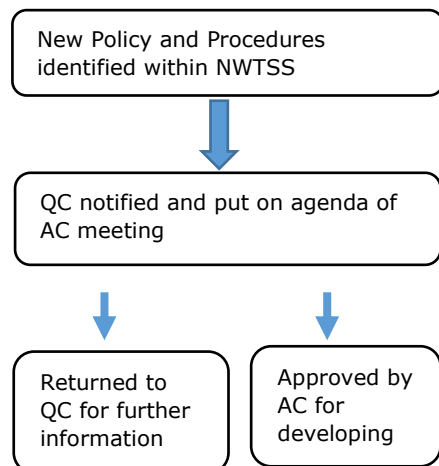
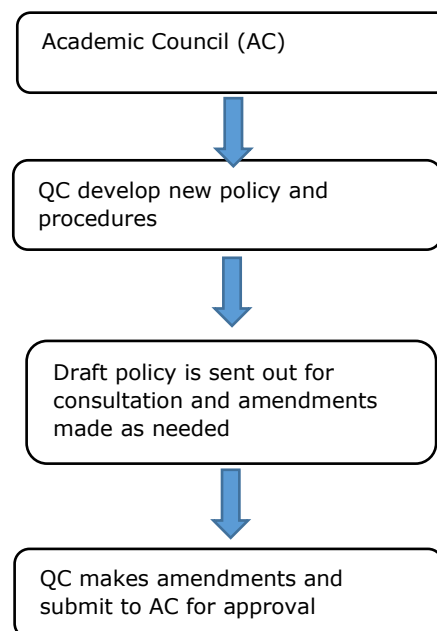
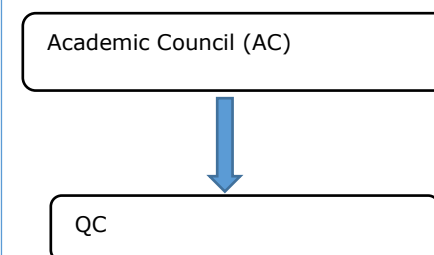
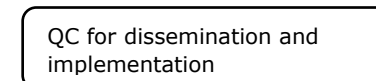
The QC Chairperson will convene the Quality Committee (QC). The new policy and procedures will be developed in line with QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines and NWTSS Quality Assurance. A draft of the new policy and procedures will be sent out the Programme Committee and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee for consultation and review. The QC will make the necessary, and agreed, amendments.

Stage 3: Policies and Procedures Approval:

The newly developed policy and procedures will be submitted to the AC for approval.

Stage 4: Policies and Procedures Implementation:

Once approved, the QC will be notified and will implement the new policy and procedures.

Diagram 2: New Policy and Procedures Initiation, Development, Review and Approval Flowchart**Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Initiation****Stage 2: Policy and Procedures Development & Review****Stage 3: Policy and Procedures Approval****Stage 4: Policy and Procedures Implementation upon Approval**

2.2.3 Existing Policy and Procedures Review and Approval *(Diagram 3: Existing Policy and Procedures Review and Approval Flowchart)*

A range of current policies have been developed. The policies, with scheduled review dates, are:

Section of QA Handbook located in:	Name of Policy and tools used
1: Governance and Management of Quality	Policy on Governance and Management of Quality Culture
2: Documented Approach to Quality Assurance	Policy Development and Review
3. Programmes of Education and Training	Policy on Programme Development Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression Policy on Recognition of Prior Certified Learning
4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	Policy on Staff Recruitment Policy on Staff Training and Development
5. Teaching and Learning	Policy on Teaching and Learning
6. Assessment of Learners	Policy on Assessment of Learners
7. Supports for Learners	Policy on Support for Learners
8. Information and Data Management	Policy on Information and Data Management HSE National Policies on Record Maintenance and Retention HSE Data Protection Policy - GDPR
9. Public Information and Communications	Policy on Public Information and Communications
10. Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	Policy on Other Parties involved in Education and Training
11. Self-evaluation and Review	Policy on Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review Also uses HSE EASI Process and Tools (Appendix 1)

The policy review will consider continued relevance, compliance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines and the NWTSS Quality Assurance System. Non-scheduled reviews (i.e. incident, legislative changes) will take place if/when required.

The following stages are adhered to for existing Policy and Procedures:

- Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review as per scheduled review date
- Stage 2: Policy and Procedures updated, if required, and approved
- Stage 3: Updated Policy and Procedures Implementation upon Approval

2.2.4 Roles and Responsibilities (Existing Policies and Procedures)

Management Team

Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review

- Management is not involved in Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review

Stage 2: Policy and Procedures Approval

- Approve amendments to existing policy and procedures and notify the AC

Academic Council

Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review

- The AC are not involved in Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review

Stage 2: Policy and Procedures Reviewed and Approved

- Review the amended policy and procedures from the QC
- Approve and submit to the Management Team for consideration
- Return not approved/referred to the QC with rationale

Quality Committee

Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review

- Consult with PC, TLAC and Audit and Risk Committee
- Amend existing policy and procedures
- Submit to AC for consideration

Stage 2: Policy and Procedures Reviewed and Approved

- The QC is not involved in Stage 2: Policy and Procedures Approval

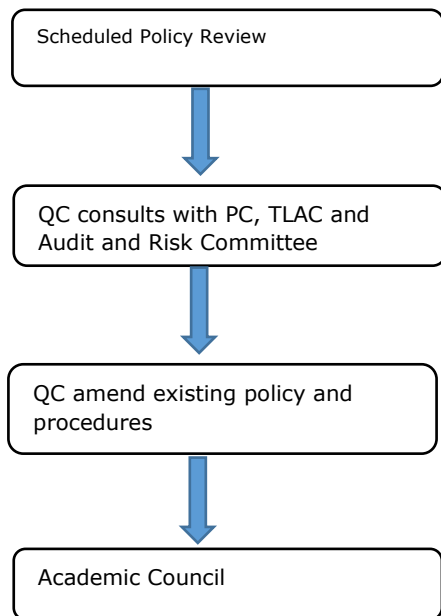
Stage 3: Policy and Procedures Implementation upon Approval

- Receives approval from AC
- Implements the amended Policy and Procedures
- Disseminates the amended Policy and Procedures

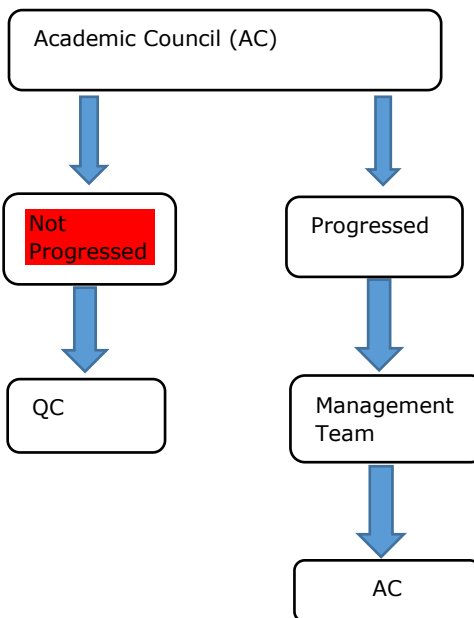
The work of all of the above committees is underpinned by clear terms of reference.

Diagram 3: Existing Policy and Procedures Review and Approval Flowchart

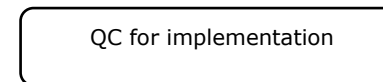
Stage 1: Policy and Procedures Review



Stage 2: Policy and Procedures Approval



Stage 3: Policy and Procedures Implementation upon Approval



Review

This policy will be reviewed December 2025.

Related Documents

- EASI Process & Tool.
- Internal Quarterly Activity Evaluation.
- Guidelines for EASI Process and Tool Evaluation, Action and Service Improvement (April 2019).
- A National Framework for Person-Centred Planning in Services for Persons with a Disability.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services.

3. Programmes of Education and Training

3.1. Introduction

NWTSS has put in place a systemic programme development process that recognises the importance of education and training and reflects NWTSS's commitment to conducting development of new programmes and review of existing provision in consultation with the internal and external stakeholders to ensure continued relevance of provision offered. Accredited provision is aligned to the National Framework of Qualification and validated by QQI. Access to programmes is inclusive and learner centred.

This section outlines the systems in place for programme development and learner access, transfer and progression.

3.2 Policy on Programme Development

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the NWTSS to ensure that programmes are developed in line with the mission and strategies of the provider, are financially viable and meet required academic standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that programmes are developed in accordance with QQI's Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, and with regard to needs that have been identified and the resources available to deliver them. This policy also sets out the schedule to review programmes.

Scope

This policy applies to all QQI validated education and training programmes developed and delivered by NWTSS. Programmes include those leading to awards from Levels 1 to 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and may lead to major or minor awards.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

Programme development will be informed by the following:

- NWTSS's QA Policies and Procedures
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.
- Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training Nov 2017, Version 1.
- Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006.
- HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation 2016.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019.

Definition

Education and Training Programmes are formal or informal programmes that provide information to and evaluate the knowledge of learners through testing, skills demonstrations or other approaches acceptable to the provider that meets the requirements of QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training.

3.2.1 Programme Development and Approval *(Diagram 4: New Programme Development Flowchart)*

NWTSS ensures that programmes are developed to reflect the mission of the service and receive approval for validity and reliability prior to being submitted for validation.

Centres wishing to introduce new programmes will adhere to the following stages:

- Stage 1: Programme Initiation
- Stage 2: Programme Development
- Stage 3: Programme Review
- Stage 4: Programme Approval
- Stage 5: Programme Implementation

Stage 1: Programme Initiation

This stage involves submission of a proposal to the **Programme Committee (PC)**. The Programme Committee (PC) will review the application to check that the programme is within the scope of NWTSS's provision, and also that there is a need for the new programme.

The programme proposal will include:

- Centre and proposer details;
- Identified needs – rationale, how the proposed programme will meet learners' needs;
- Evidence of learner demand;
- How it differs from programmes already offered;
- Progression opportunities for learners;
- Who was consulted;
- Proposed name for programme;
- Programme level;
- Learner profile and entry requirement;
- Aims and Objectives;
- Course modules;
- Expected Duration;
- Resources required to develop the programme;
- Expected broad outcomes;
- Expected no of programme participants;
- Module awards;
- Trainer profile;
- Specific validation requirement.

Following the review, the PC can respond with three options:

- Recommend the proposal for approval to the AC;
- Return to the centre / staff member who submitted the proposal for further work;
- Decline the proposal and give reasons.

The AC will discuss development costs with the Management Team and seek their approval to proceed. Approved proposals will be returned to the PC.

Stage 2: Programme Development

The PC will convene the Programme Development Team (PDT) which will include subject matter experts. The new programme will be developed in line with QQI 'Guidelines for Preparing Programme Descriptors' and following the information requirements in QQI Programme Descriptor Template for Programme(s) leading to new FET Major, Special Purpose, Supplemental and Minor Award(s).

The programme development will include:

- Programme title and module titles;
- Award type and award level;
- Credit value;
- Duration;
- Target Group;
- Detailed curriculum;
- Modes of delivery;
- Teaching and learning methodologies;
- Staff profiles and training needs;
- Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes;
- Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes;
- Aims, Objectives, Standards and mapping to outcomes.

Stage 3: Programme Review

The new programme will be reviewed and evaluated internally by the Programme Review Team (PRT) convened by the PC. The new programme will also be reviewed by the Quality Committee (QC). The QC may seek advice from the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. Amendments, if any, will be made by the PDT. The QC will ensure that all the details in the developed programme meet QQI's requirements and will transfer the information to QQI's Programme Descriptor Template for Programme(s) leading to new FET Major, Special Purpose, Supplemental and Minor Award(s).

Stage 4: Programme Approval

The newly developed programme will be submitted to the AC for submission to QQI.

Stage 5: Programme Implementation

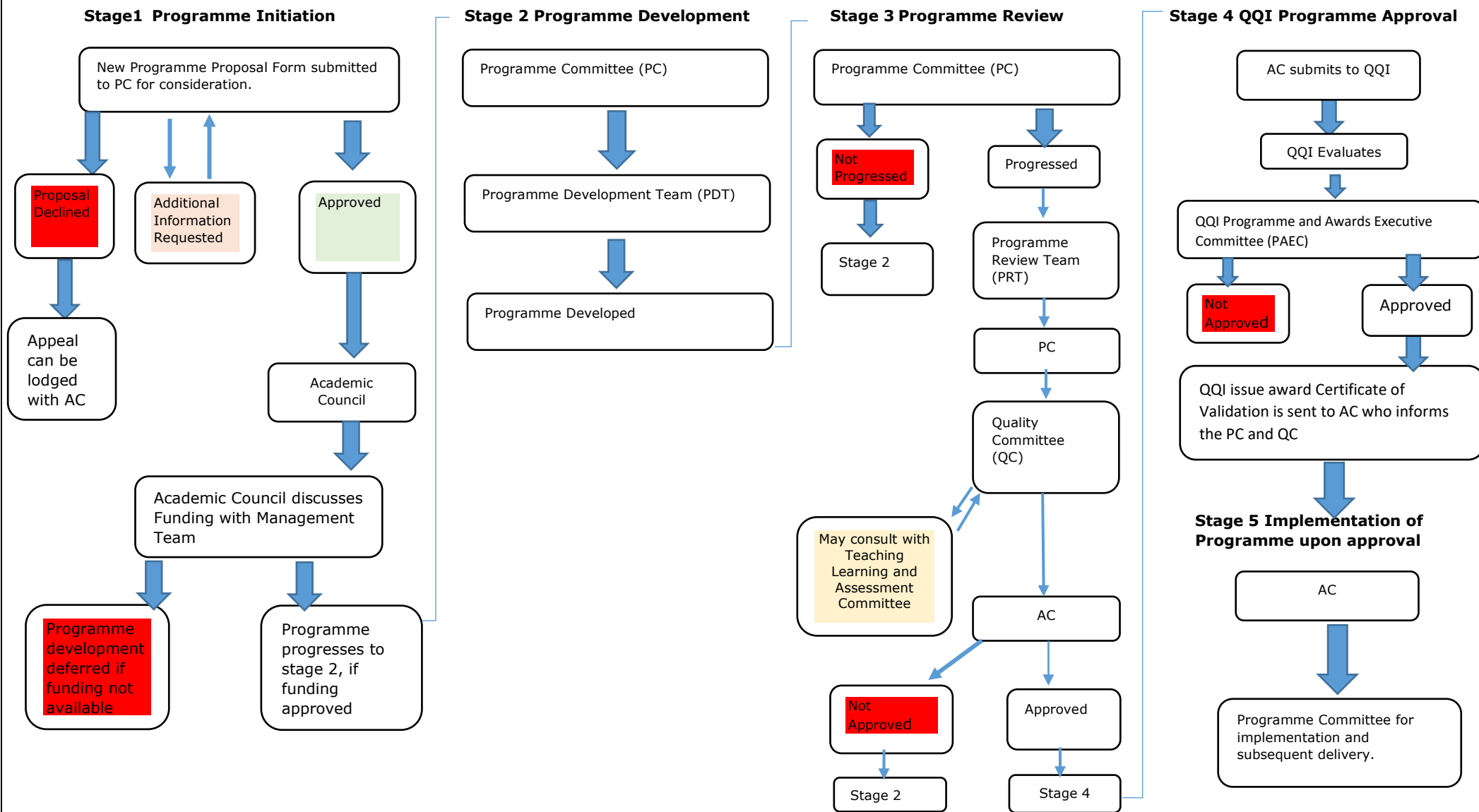
A new programme that is successfully validated by QQI will be implemented in line with the validated programme descriptor and NWTSS's Quality Assurances policies, procedures and processes. The Training Team will organise training and professional development related to the new programme. The Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee will ensure consistent approach to delivery and assessment across the entire service.

A summary of the roles and responsibilities at each stage is provided in Table 1 on the next page.

Table 1: Stages – Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities at each Stage		
Stage 1 Initiation	Programme Proposer	Prepares and submits proposal If required, modifies proposal If necessary, appeal declined proposal
	Programme Committee	Review proposal and makes decision Informs proposer
	Academic Council	Recommend proposals to Academic Council Review and approve proposals recommended by Programme Committee
	Management Team	Discusses funding with Management Team Makes funding decision Informs Academic Council
Stage 2 Development	Programme Committee	Informs proposer that programme development is starting Convenes Programme Development Team
	Programme Development Team	Develops programme as per approved proposal and submits to PC
Stage 3 Review	Programme Committee Programme Review Team Quality Committee	Convenes Programme Review Team to evaluate newly developed programme Reviews and evaluates newly developed programme.
	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	Reviews programme and ensures it is presented according to QQI's guidelines and on correct template. May seek additional expert advice (e.g. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee) Be available to advise the QC on aspects of the teaching methodologies and assessment, if needed.
Stage 4 Approval	Academic Council QQI	Reviews and submits programme to QQI Organises evaluation of NWTSS's programme
Stage 5 Implementation	QQI Centre Leads Training Team Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	Validate programme becomes part of provision Organise training / professional development related to newly developed programme Ensure that all centres delivering the programme operate to the same standard in teaching and assessment.

Diagram 4: New Programme Development Flowchart



3.2.2 Appeals

Appealing a programme proposal that has been not been approved

- Where a centre / proposer does not agree with the decision of the PC, the centre can appeal same to the AC.
- The centre will be expected to provide information to support their appeal.
- All material will be reviewed by AC or individuals appointed by the AC
- The decision will be conveyed by the AC and will be final.

3.2.3. Programme Monitoring and Review

NWTSS recognises the importance of monitoring and reviewing its programmes of education and training. Subsequently, NWTSS has a system in place to gather and review data on both the quality and relevance of provision offered across the service. The Programme Review Team, responsible to the PC, and with clear terms of reference is tasked with the review of programmes offered and programmes delivered.

Data used for monitoring and review will include:

- Learner performance and results;
- Qualitative data in the form of feedback from learners, employers who facilitate work placements, other providers and tutors;
- Learner Attendance.

3.2.4 Protection of Enrolled Learners

NWTSS offers programmes between Levels 1-3 on the NFQ and aims to ensure that learners who commence a programme of education and training will have the opportunity to complete their learning pathway. NWTSS does not charge any fees for its programmes and operates under HSE funding. PEL is not required in respect of programmes at Levels 1-3 for NWTSS.

Documentation

- In the interests of transparency all documentation (agendas and minutes for each stage) will be maintained and available upon request.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025

3.3 Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression

Introduction

NWTSS offers training to learners aged 18-65 years, who are in recovery from mental ill-health, have an intellectual disability, or have a dual diagnosis. Access to training is via two pathways: non-accredited (transition) and/or accredited. Accredited provision is through validated programmes at Levels 1, 2 and 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Purpose

This policy sets out the approach taken by NWTSS to Access, Transfer & Progression to ensure inclusivity and equality of opportunity for our prospective and current learners.

NWTSS promotes a culture of equality, inclusion and diversity in all our practice and adheres to the UN Convention on Human Rights, General Principles, article 3 and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. NWTSS also complies with the Equal Status Act 2000-2015, which prohibits discrimination under the nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Scope

This policy applies to all accredited and non-accredited education and training provision offered by NWTSS.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

Programme development will be informed by the following:

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training Nov 2017, Version 1.
- Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018.

- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006.
- HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation 2016.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019.

Definition

Access, Transfer and Progression is the pathway that NWTSS provides to learners and potential learners to enter a programme of learning, transfer between programmes at the same level and progress from one programme level to the next level.

Access

Learners accessing NWTSS are referred by either Health or Educational Professionals. Referral forms are reviewed and processed on behalf of NWTSS by the HSE Day Service Coordination Team.

To support consistent decision-making, referrals are reviewed under the following headings:

- Support needs;
- Location;
- Programme availability;
- Current level of skills, knowledge and competencies, including literacy level.

Additional information and clarification may be sought from the referral professionals.

Once a place has been identified, a meeting with the prospective learner is organised to outline and discuss their access to the service. When a learner accepts the offer of a place, the transition planning process will begin. Transition planning supports the learner to enter the service at a pace that suits their needs.

The transition stage is non-accredited and includes:

- Sample modules;
- Access to person-centred planning;

- Attendance on a part-time basis.

During this stage provision and mode of delivery is designed to support learners to gain confidence, build resilience and have an opportunity to be equipped to engage with more formal education and training.

The transition stage does not have a set duration. It varies according to the new learner's needs. This stage can be completed in a week, or can run for six months, or more. Not all learners will progress from the transition stage to accredited provision.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

NWTSS recognises that learners gain skills, knowledge and competencies informally through previous experience, community engagement and non-formal education. NWTSS values this experiential learning and determines each learner's entry level to accredited provision through observations during the transition stages and the information provided by the referral agency.

Accredited provision

Accredited provision is offered at Levels 1, 2 and 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The person-centred approach is utilized in the delivery of all accredited provision to ensure that the learner's goals are achievable.

Level 1

Learners seeking entry to Level 1 programmes must show a willingness to engage with accredited tuition. At this level they will have an opportunity to build knowledge and skills and competencies at elementary level in a supportive and structured environment.

Level 2

Learners seeking entry to Level 2 programmes must show that they have the skills, knowledge and competencies equivalent to the outcomes of the Level 1 programme. They should be willing to achieve certification through the completion of portfolios, collection of work, role play, projects, collages etc.

Level 3

Learners seeking entry to our Level 3 programmes must show that they have the skills, knowledge and competencies equivalent to the outcomes of the Level 2 programme. They

should also have basic communication skills and demonstrate a willingness to engage with all elements of the programme and want to achieve a Level 3 minor award.

Transfer and Progression

Learners are offered the opportunity to transfer between programmes at similar levels as well as the chance to progress to the next level within the service or to further education and training with a mainstream provider. The majority of learners in Disability Services choose to remain within the service, while learners in Mental Health Services may choose to progress to other mainstream providers.

Transfer

There are a number of transfer options for learners who may wish:

- To transfer to other modules at the same level;
- To transfer to the next level, e.g. from Level 1 to Level 2;
- Have completed their programme and ready to exit the service.

This is achieved in the following way:

- Learner and Tutor meet to discuss options;
- Review information from:
 - PCP Meetings with learners;
 - Module/programme Evaluations;
 - Tutor – Learner meetings;
 - Transition planning (Exit);
- Learners with support from Tutors makes decision best suited to their needs and ability level.

There are also options for learners who:

- Have difficulties with the module/programme they engaged on;
- Are not ready to progress to the next level or mainstream programmes.

This is achieved in the following way:

- Learner and Tutor will meet to discuss the difficulties;

- Meeting between QQI Provision Lead and Tutor to identify options, e.g. modifying workbooks, extra time to achieve outcomes, transfer to non QQI modules;
- Options offered to learner and decision made with the support of the tutor.

Progression

NWTSS provides opportunities for learners to progress between levels within its service or to programmes provided by external programmes. Progression opportunities are supported by *transition plans* that help guide the learners on a progression route suitable for their needs. Learners have the opportunity to progress on programmes from Levels 1- 3 and have the opportunity to progress to other educational institutions, for example Donegal ETB, Mayo/Sligo/Leitrim ETB, Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Letterkenny/Sligo campus or North West Institute of Further and Higher Education (NWIFHE) Derry or to employment opportunities.

Information gathered by staff is used to help learners make informed choices in relation to progression options. Information is collected in the following ways:

- Learner completion and progression record/results sheet;
- Quality of learner portfolio evidence;
- Tutor – Learner meeting;
- PCP Meetings.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025

3.4 Policy on the Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)

Policy Statement

NWTSS takes a positive approach and recognises prior certified learning as part of its commitment to promoting equality of access and progression onto programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation. We acknowledge that learners attending NWTSS will present with prior certification that may relate to the programmes delivered within the service, therefore NWTSS endeavours to ensure learners are aware of the approach adopted with regard to the recognition of prior learning.

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning does not form part of the entry criteria, however prior certified learning is recognised for the purpose of an exemption or for providing a pathway to a QQI major award.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that NWTSS provides clear and accurate information to learners in relation to the recognition of prior certified learning and to clarify the process adopted in recognising certification already achieved.

Scope

This policy applies to all QQI training programmes within NWTSS– where learners are requesting exemptions or the submission of previous qualifications so as to achieve a major award.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training Nov 2017, Version 1.
- Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006.
- HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation 2016.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019.

Definition

RPCL is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body such as Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) or other recognised awarding bodies such as the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

Procedure

If requests for recognition under RPCL are made, the following applies:

- Learning outcomes will be mapped against the learning outcomes of the CAS award;
- If requests are successful, an exemption is granted;
- Unsuccessful requests are notified to learners and no exemption is granted.

3.4.1. Learners:

- Learners are informed of the RPCL policy through the learner handbook;
- Learners are notified of their responsibility for producing the certified evidence to the relevant tutor;
- Copy of the certified evidence is retained in the learner's file.

An appropriate timeframe (within 5 years) is recommended for the achievement of RPCL.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025.

Related Documents

- New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services
- National Framework for Recovery in Mental Health (2018-2020)
- Staff Programme Module Feedback Sheet
- Form for New Entrants to Adult Day/Rehabilitative Training (RT) Services
- Transition Plan Template
- Training & Occupational Support Services Referral Form
- Rehabilitative Training Entry Form
- Transition Planning Record Version 1
- Transition Support Plan

4 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

4.1 Introduction

The HSE provides all of Ireland's public health services in hospitals and communities across the country. The HSE aims to be an Employer of Choice and offers a wide range of challenging career opportunities that enable our staff to make an important contribution to the health services, to public service and to the lives of everyone living in Ireland.

4.2 National Recruitment and Selection Procedures

How to apply for a job in the HSE

All positions in the HSE are advertised on the [HSE Website](#). Since 2009, most recruitment has been centralised to the HSE National Recruitment Service (NRS), Arás Sláinte Chluainín, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, though some recruitment happens locally.

The Public Appointments Service (PAS) conducts some recruitment campaigns on behalf of the HSE. If this is the case, the job advertisement will contain a link to the Public Appointments Service.

The Application Form particular to the post advertised must be used. Applications may be downloaded, details typed in and returned by email or alternatively, you may print off the form, fill in by hand and return by post. Most application forms are competency based and will contain guidelines on how to complete.

Completed application forms must be returned to the designated address no later than the time and date specified in the advertisement for the post. Application forms received after the closing date will not be accepted. Candidates must ensure that applications are posted/e-mailed in sufficient time to guarantee arrival not later than the latest time stipulated for acceptance.

The acceptance of an application form from a person desiring to be a candidate, or an invitation to attend for interview or any other selection method is not an admission by the organisation that the applicant possesses the prescribed qualifications or is not disqualified by law from holding the post.

Diagram 5: What to expect: When applying for a job in the HSE



Diagram 6: What to expect: The HSE Recruitment Journey



What you should expect from us

The aim of the HSE's Recruitment Service is to provide you with a confidential service that is:

- Professional
- Courteous and considerate
- Friendly and helpful

We strive to operate a prompt and efficient service that includes

- Detailed information on vacancies and the recruitment and selection process
- Timely acknowledgement and response to queries
- Sufficient notice for all appointments
- Clear, specific and meaningful feedback provided when requested by candidates. Detailed interview results to all candidates
- Provision of specific requirements for candidates with disabilities.

Applications will be treated in strict confidence, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997, the Data Protection Act 1988 & 2003, the Public Services Management (Recruitment & Appointments) Act 2004 and other provisions that have been identified in published documentation.

Appointments to positions in the Health Service Executive are subject to the Codes of Practice published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). The Code of Practice sets out how the core principles of probity, merit, equity and fairness might be applied on a principle basis.

The Code of Practice

- Specifies the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in recruitment campaigns.
- Facilitates feedback to applicants on matters relating to their application when requested.
- Outlines procedures in relation to
 - Requests for a review of the recruitment and selection process and
 - Review in relation to allegations of a breach of the Code of Practice.

- Additional information on the HSE's review process is available in the document posted with each vacancy entitled "Code of Practice, information for candidates".

What we expect from you in return

Your satisfaction with our service is important to us. In order to fulfil our commitment to you, you can help us by:

- Co-operating with us throughout the Recruitment and Selection process
- Providing us with complete and accurate information within specified timeframes
- Keeping all confirmed appointments
- Notifying us of your inability to attend within a reasonable time scale
- Candidates with disabilities should inform us of any specific requirements for interview.

As we appreciate feedback on our service, please feel welcome to give us your comments on your experience with the recruitment process.

If you change your address having submitted an application for a position, you should notify the designated office immediately in writing, specifying the title of the post(s) you have applied for.

Screening Process

All applications will be screened for eligibility using the essential qualifications, experience and skills outlined in the job specification. Please note that applicants with non-Irish professional qualifications may be progressed to the next stage of the selection process, however this is without prejudice to the recognition of their qualifications by the appropriate Irish competent authority under Directive 2005/35/EC. Persons cannot be employed by the HSE unless and until their non-Irish professional qualifications have been recognised. Commencing the validation process as soon as possible is highly recommended as it can take a period of time.

Eligibility Sift and Short listing

Criteria for eligibility/ short listing are based on the requirements of the post as outlined in the job specification, therefore it is very important you think about your experience in light of those requirements and that you provide detailed and accurate account of your qualifications and experience in your application form. Applications are reviewed by the relevant professions (supported by Human Resources) to ascertain eligibility. Applications may also undergo short listing based on the information supplied in the application form at the closing date of the recruitment campaign (or in other assessment processes). Only those applicants who appear to possess the required criteria will be progressed to the next stage of the selection process.

Selection Methods

The selection process may involve additional assessments, tests or preliminary interviews. Applicants will be notified of these additional stages if applicable.

Interviews

Candidates will normally be given at least one weeks' notice of interview. The timescale may be reduced in exceptional circumstances. Interviews are normally conducted by a three person board consisting of subject expert(s) and management specialist(s). Most interviews are competency based with credit awarded by the interview board to candidates who demonstrate at interview that they possess the experience, competencies and skills listed in the Job Specification and as stated by the candidate in their application form.

The interview board will maintain an appropriate record of the interview in support of its subsequent recommendations. Candidates for interview will be required to produce a form of recent photographic identification i.e. drivers licence, passport or student ID.

Results of Interview

Candidates will be notified of the result of their interview at the earliest possible date after the interview. The recommendation of the interview board does not constitute a job offer as it is only one stage of the selection process. This selection process

continues after interview and includes clearance checks such as references, Garda/police clearance, occupational health, validation of qualifications and experience.

Validation of Qualifications & Experience

Any credit given to a candidate at interview, in respect of claims to qualifications, training and experience is provisional and is subject to verification. The recommendation of the interview board is liable to revision if the claimed qualification, training or experience is not proven.

References

The HSE reserves the right to seek both written and verbal references from current and previous employers, educational institutions or any other organisations with which the candidate has been associated. The HSE also reserves the right to determine the merit, appropriateness and relevance of such references and referees. Please note that candidates are requested not to submit references with their application form.

Pre-Employment Health Assessment

Candidates will be required to undergo a medical assessment or to complete a form declaring their health status. The result of the examination or declaration will be reviewed by the HSE's Occupational Health Service.

Creation of Panels

For some competitions a panel of successful candidates may be formed as a result of the interviews. Candidates who obtain a place on the panel and who fulfil the conditions of the selection process may, within the life of the panel, be considered for subsequent approved vacancies. The candidate who obtains first place on the panel will be the first candidate considered for a position, subject to satisfactory clearances, and so on in order of merit. A panel is typically live for one year.

Expression of Interest / Recommendation to Proceed Process

Advisory notes for Expression of Interest and Recommendation to Proceed Process

HSE National Recruitment Service consider all candidates in the same manner, applying the same conditions and timescales. To ensure transparency and integrity in our recruitment process, you can access advisory notes on the "Expression of Interest" and "Recommendation to proceed" process on the links below.

An "[Expression of Interest](#)" is an invitation offering you the opportunity to express an interest in a post.

A "[Recommendation to Proceed](#)" invitation offers you the opportunity to progress to the next stage of the recruitment process i.e. pre-employment clearances.

Garda Vetting and Police Clearance

The HSE will carry out Garda Vetting Clearance on all new employees where their role is engaged in relevant work (e.g. access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults). New employees engaging in relevant work will not take up duty until the Garda Vetting Clearance process has been completed and the HSE is satisfied that such an appointment does not pose a risk to clients, service users and employees.

As part of the Garda Vetting process an applicant must disclose any and all convictions. This disclosure must include such offences as driving offences, non-payment of a TV licence and public order offences, and includes the application of probation or community service. This covers offences in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

All applicants will sign a detailed Standard Declaration which forms an integral part of their application form. Candidates who apply using the online application form and application forms submitted by e-mail will be required to sign the Standard Declaration in person when they attend for interview.

The HSE will refer to the An Garda Síochána individuals who wilfully submit, by omission or otherwise, false, misleading or inaccurate information in connection with

their application for posts with the HSE or on the Garda E-Vetting Form as provided for under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004.

Further information on the Garda Vetting process is available from the National Vetting Bureau: <https://vetting.garda.ie/Help/FAQ>

Applicants who have resided overseas for a period of 6 months or more:

If you lived in any country for 6 months or more from the date of your 16th birthday other than the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland it will be mandatory to provide security clearance for each jurisdiction in which you have resided stating that you have no convictions recorded against you while residing there. All appointments will require satisfactory security clearances. Please note if you require overseas security clearance and are unable to produce it at the time of job offer then the job offer may be withdrawn.

Your security clearance must be dated AFTER you left that country and cover the entire period of your residence. Seeking security clearances from other countries (e.g. UK, USA etc) are the responsibility of the candidate. It is a process which can take an amount of time. Therefore if you are interested in pursuing a career within the HSE we would strongly advise that you commence seeking international security clearances now.

Note: Candidates who studied outside of the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland e.g. in the UK (excluding Northern Ireland), please pay particular attention to this. You will require UK clearance to cover the entire period you were in the UK. Clearance must be dated after you left the UK.

For further information see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/jobs/recruitment-process/garda-clearance.html>

Offer of Employment

It should be noted that no offer of employment is made, or should be interpreted as having been made, until the HSE formally offers employment by way of a contract of employment. A person will not be appointed to a position until a signed contract is returned to the issuing office.

Due to the nature of service provided, there is an onus on the HSE to ensure that the successful candidate takes up duty without undue delay. Consequently the following timescales have been set so as to minimise potential disruption of its service to clients and service users:

- External recruitment candidates will be required to take up duty within 3 months of receipt of the formal offer of employment
- Internal HSE candidates will be required to start in the new role within 6 weeks from the date of notification.

The HSE reserves the right to withdraw the offer of employment should appointees fail to meet these timeframes.

Recruitment Licence – Code of Practice

With effect from the 1st April 2005, recruitment for appointments to positions in the HSE is subject to the provisions of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 (the Act) and is regulated by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). Appointments to positions in the Health Service Executive, apart from those positions which are subject to the Local Authorities (Officers and Employees) Act 1926, are subject to the Codes of Practice published by the CPSA. The Codes of Practice set out how the core of principles of probity, merit, equity and fairness might be applied on a principle basis. For further information see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/jobs/recruitmentlicence/the-recruitment-licence---code-of-practice-.html>

Codes of Standards and Behaviour

Employees are expected to comply with the Code at all times. Breaches of the code will constitute a breach of the terms of employment and may result in disciplinary action being pursued in accordance with agreed procedures. The terms and conditions of existing employees will be updated using the agreed HR processes. Each new employee will receive a copy of the Code. For further information see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/codeofstandards.pdf>

Agency Working

Employees of agencies funded by the HSE and those engaged in any capacity to provide services or advice to, or on behalf of the HSE and its funded agencies on a consulting basis are also expected to meet the standards set out in the Codes of Standards and Behaviour. For further information see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/jobs/recruitment-process/agency-working.pdf> and

Candidate Privacy Notices for candidates in recruitment process

For further information see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/jobs/recruitment-process/hse-privacy-notice-candidates-in-process-with-national-recruitment-services-nrs.pdf>

The National Recruitment Service (NRS) provides a comprehensive recruitment service for appointments in the HSE, supported by a Managed Service Provider (MSP) as required. The MSP provides end to end recruitment on behalf of the HSE and operates under HSE guidelines to ensure adherence to regulatory and legislative recruitment requirements. The NRS supports a significant number of appointments per annum in line with the Codes of Practice - <https://www.cpsa.ie/codes-of-practice/what-are-the-codes/CPSA-Code-of-Practice-2022.pdf>

The HSE complies with all applicable employment legislation in respect of equal opportunities, particularly the employment of people with disabilities.

For further information please refer to: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/hr/hse-hr-shared-services.html>

4.3. Policy on Staff Recruitment (NWTSS)

Policy Statement

It is the policy of NWTSS to employ suitably qualified personnel in such numbers as to meet the needs of programme participants in a manner consistent with its vision and principles.

Purpose

NWTSS ensures that in recruiting staff HSE policies and procedures are adhered to in order to provide learners with a quality and consistent service.



Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment of potential staff to NWTSS.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QOI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities 2015.
- Appendix 3 to SOP R2002 20th August 2007 Code of Practice Information for Applicants Review procedures in relation to the Recruitment and Selection process.

Staff Recruitment Procedures - NWTSS

NWTSS ensures that in recruiting staff, HSE policies and procedures are adhered to in order to provide learners with a quality and consistent service.

NWTSS Management identify posts in the following ways:

- Retirement
- New development – new programme, new location
- Long term sick
- Promotion

The following process takes place:

- The Service Manager creates a job order which is submitted to the General Manager (Approver 1).
- The General Manager reviews the job order and submits to the Head of Service (Approver2).
- The Head of Service submits the job order to the CHO1 Chief Officer.

- Once approved, the job order is submitted to local HR or HSE National Recruitment Service (NRS).
- The HSE Recruitment Process is then implemented.

Agency Cover - NWTSS

NWTSS has in place contingency plans to ensure that service continues in the absence of staff members – Instructions for Agency Cover (Appendix 2).

Staff Communication

The NWTSS ensure that two-way effective communication with staff, on both an individual and on a team basis, is facilitated through a number of different formats which include:

- HSE Induction Guidelines and Checklist
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/employee-resource-pack/hse-induction-guidelines-checklists.pdf>
- Email
- Noticeboards
- One-to-one meetings
- Shared learning events
- Briefing sessions (including QQI)
- HSE Website
- Written correspondence
- Staff/team meetings
- Designated training days for staff

4.4. Policy on Staff Training and Development NWTSS

Policy Statement

NWTSS supports Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to promote ongoing staff development. Undertaking CPD improves motivation, increases job satisfaction and enhances confidence which grows capacity to operate successfully in a dynamic and changing environment. Collaborative working within the NWTSS promotes opportunities to further enhance and develop knowledge, skills and experience;

strengthen educational links; build communities of practice and encourage innovation in the use of teaching and learning methodologies and technologies.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support staff in NWTSS to identify opportunities to build on or further develop their knowledge, skills and abilities. NWTSS recognises that there is a strong correlation between the importance of developing staff and the quality of education and training provided.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff that have a responsibility for individuals with an intellectual disability, mental health or dual diagnosis in NWTSS.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- HSE National HR Directorate Leadership, Education & Development Policy
- HSE People Management Strategy 2019-2024
- HSE Performance Achievement Policy and Guidance Document
- HSE Guideline on HSE Terms & Conditions of Employment.

Definition

Employee training and development includes any activity that helps employees acquire new, or improve existing, knowledge or skills.

4.5 Roles and Responsibilities

NWTSS believes that employee development is most effective when the individual employee takes responsibility for identifying any opportunities for self-development which will enhance work performance through increased skills and knowledge.

Management Team

- Promote a culture of learning and development in their role in managing learning and development needs within NWTSS;

- Examine recommendations from the Academic Council and support requests for additional resources for development;
- Assist in the identification of learning to enhance quality standards;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of learning.

Academic Council

- Provide oversight and monitoring of all academic matters as it relates to Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) programmes of education;
- Review the Annual Quality Committee Report and consider the implication of recommendations from each of the committees;
- Respond with recommendations to the NWTSS Management Team where additional resources may be required to fulfill its function to enhance quality standards through identified staff development;
- Promote best practices through shared learning and representation among Communities of Practice.

Training Team

- The Training Team will act as conduit for the analysis of training needs and implementation of appropriate training interventions.
- In this capacity, the Training Team will work co-operatively with all relevant Committees, involved in delivering training internally, including:
 - Academic Council
 - Management Team
 - Quality Committee
 - HSELand
 - Leadership, Learning and Talent Management (LLTM)
- The Training Team will take every opportunity to maximise the resources available for training and development activities and will pursue all possible sources of additional funding, internal and external.
- Conduct a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (Appendix 3) among staff to identify areas for staff development;
- Develop a training plan on the results of the survey;
- Develop a yearly calendar to address the identified needs;
- Identify suitable training providers to provide programs/trainings/workshops based on the approved training plan;
- Monitor the training and collect data/information on lessons learned.

NWTSS Staff:

- Develop/enhance their knowledge and expertise re teaching and learning via CPD;
- Explore teaching activities, materials, resources, the use of technology and online platforms for synchronous learning;
- Develop Communities of Practice, and engage in national and international fora;
- Identify learning needs and opportunities through the TNA form;
- Take a proactive approach to furthering organisational wide learning and development;
- Support a balanced and blended approach to development interventions ranging from formal academic or in-house programmes to e-learning programmes.

Procedure

- Training needs will be analysed on a regular basis;
- Training provision will be prioritised according to identified needs and demands and in line with the strategic objectives of NWTSS;
- The Management Team is responsible for supporting and sustaining the growth and development of staff as part of a planned and continuous learning process and must provide appropriate opportunities for their staff to participate in training and development initiatives;
- Training opportunities will be communicated by the Training Team and QC through all available media;
- Staff will have the opportunity to evaluate all training programmes on which they participate.

Staff Development Practices

- Staff are encouraged to complete a TNA in line with their existing local reporting relationships and available resources to proactively manage their own learning and development;
- The TNA provide individuals with a clear framework for:
 - Undertaking a self-assessment of their competencies and current situation;
 - Identifying learning and development required;

- Identifying where they would like to be in the future;
- Undertake activities that expand current knowledge e.g. education forums;
- Access online education and training resources e.g. LLTM, HSeLanD /Conferences/Webinars/Teaching and Learning in a Digital World/Education forums for teaching and learning.
- Promote Attendance at appropriate QQI briefings – as relevant to their role.
- Maintain and submit a record of attendance of education / training annually inclusive of mandatory training.

Core Learning

There are specific areas of learning which are essential for all employees which have been identified as part of a continuous programme of learning and development.

Core learning will therefore cover the following areas:

- **Induction** - All new employees complete an organisation and service induction including introduction to all policies for the organisation.
- **Information & Communication Skills Training (ICT)** - Employees are positively encouraged to become familiar with the intranet, internet, www.hseland.ie, email, other electronic facilities and computer software packages at their disposal.

Mandatory Training

The following list of mandatory training related to the health, safety and well-being of learners needs to be completed by all staff as appropriate for their work requirements. Additional mandatory training may be required depending on the service requirements. All staff are made aware of all mandatory training necessary for the service.

- Induction
- Manual Handling
- Fire Safety Training
- PCP (Person Centred Plan Training)
- Putting New Directions into Practice
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse 2014

- Protected Disclosure Act (2014)
- Good Faith Reporting Policy (2011)
- HSE Dignity at Work Policy (2022)
- Trust in Care Policy (2005)
- General Health and Safety for all staff
- Health and Safety for Managers
- Hand Hygiene & Standard Precaution Training:
- Risk Management Training
- Studio III (Managing Behaviours of Concern)
- Risk & Safety Programme for Managers
- Children First Training
- Open Disclosure Training
- GDPR 2018
- Cyber Security Awareness
- Preparing for Performance Achievement Training
- Staff Health and Well Being (The Flu Vaccine)

Mandatory Training related to Education and Training Provision to be completed by all staff:

All new staff received an induction on the delivery of QQI provision. This includes an overview of the module descriptor, indicative content and assessment strategies. While staff are encouraged to develop their own material, they are familiarized with the materials and resources that are available in NWTSS centres.

All staff will also have to avail of:

- Literacy Awareness Training;
- Literacy Tuition Training – Initial Tutor Training Course (20 hours);
- Overview of Quality Assurance Processes. The QC will deliver training on quality assurance policies, procedure and process. This will give all staff an overview of the quality assurance processes and that new templates are being used across the entire service;
- Peer mentoring and support is an important part of ongoing professional development.

Staff who have a role as Internal Verifiers must

- Participate in training which will be delivered by the QQI Provision Lead.
- Staff new to the IV process will be mentored by an experienced Internal Verifier.

Elective Training for all staff includes

- Working with learners with mental health issues;
- Preparing learning materials (NALA Training);
- NWTSS provides support for staff who do not have a teaching / training qualification to participate in the Training and Development Award at Level 6;
- NALA and Further Education Support Service Training calendars are made available to staff each year. Staff are encouraged and supported to attend relevant training.

Each QQI Provision Lead is responsible for ensuring their staff's training and development needs are identified and responded to within the staff training schedule.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025.

Related Documents

- Appendix 2 to SOP R2002, 20th 2007
- CPSA-Code-of-Practice-2022
- Guidelines for completing Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1)
- Instructions for Agency Cover
- HSE Induction Guidelines and Checklist
- Staff Training Needs Analysis

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Introduction

NWTSS is committed to creating a learning environment that allows learners to have a learner-centred holistic experience that facilitates their growth and development, both personal and academic.

5.2 Induction

Learners commencing a QQI training programme with NWTSS will receive a Learner Handbook. NWTSS QQI programmes are aligned to QQI component specification requirements, have been validated by QQI and are managed through the QA Governance Structure. A wide variety of learning materials and resources are made available in relevant and appropriate formats to deliver each element of the programme that includes lesson plans, learner and tutor workbooks, PowerPoints, handouts, quizzes.

5.3 Communicating with Learners

NWTSS adopts the Plain English (approved by NALA) approach to communicating with learners –

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/communications/communicatingclearly/communicatingclearly.pdf> and

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/communications/communicatingclearly/guidelines-for-communicating-clearly-using-plain-english.pdf> and uses numerous methods to communicate with learners that include (but not limited to) one to one meetings, Person Centred Plan (PCP) meetings, LAMH, pictures/images.

5.4 Comment, Compliment or Complaint Service

The HSE has a 'Your Service Your Say' comment, compliment or complaint service. See *Diagram 7: Complaints Process*. For further information, please refer to:

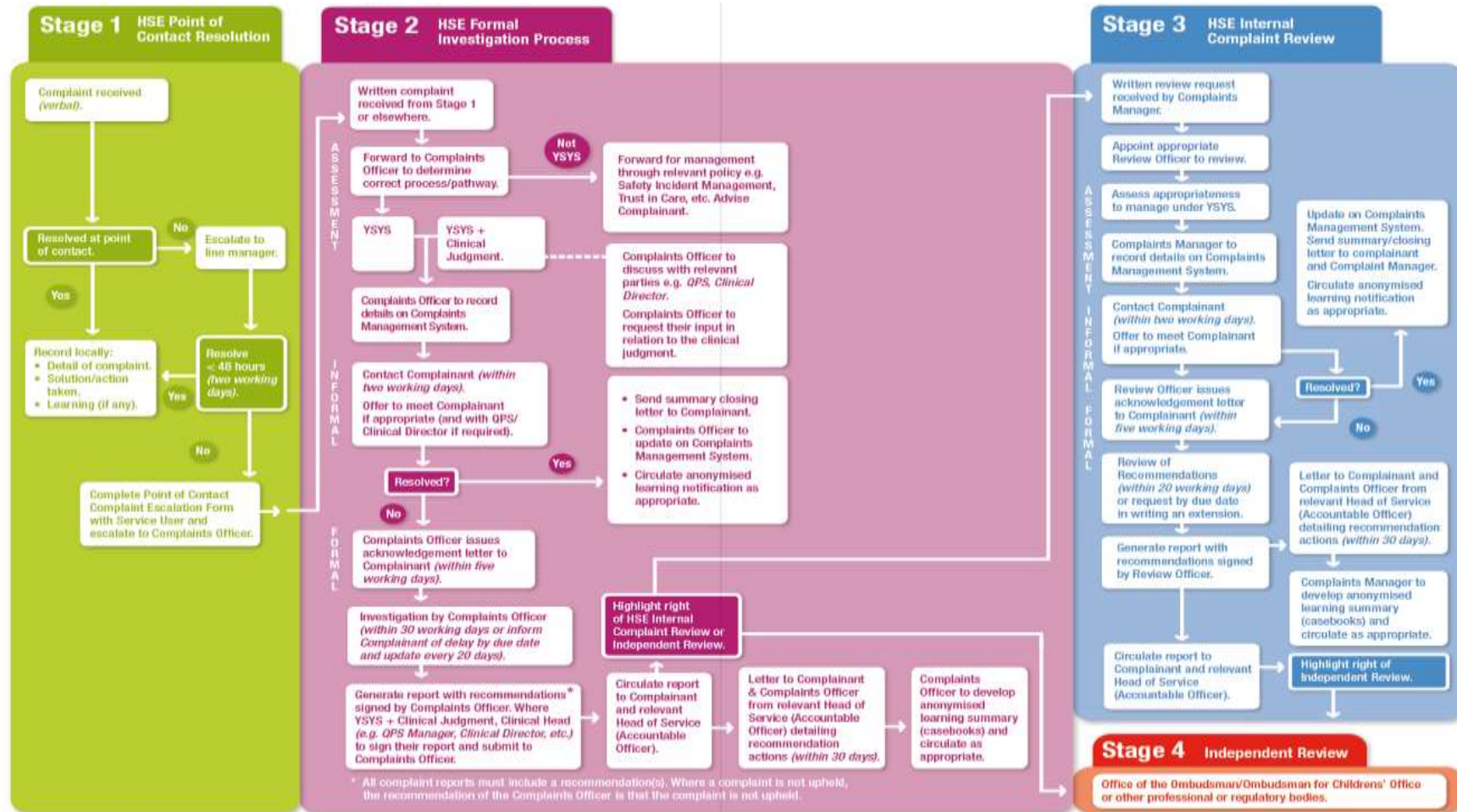
<https://www2.hse.ie/services/hse-complaints-and-feedback/your-service-your-say.html> and provide a feedback form for the purpose of having a say on the service

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/forms/your-service-your-say/>

NWTSS endeavours to provide an environment that enables learners to provide positive and negative feedback on the services being provided.

Suggestion boxes are available on all premises that enables confidential feedback from all. Staff and all other stakeholders are also encouraged to provide feedback.

Diagram 7: Complaints Process



5.5 Policy on Teaching and Learning

Policy Statement

NWTSS offers programmes from Level 1 to 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications. NWTSS commits to deliver learner-centred, quality provision that aims for excellence. This policy is part of the NWTSS Quality Assurance System and should be considered alongside Programme of Education and Training, and Staff Development Policies and also Assessment of Learner Policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote best practice in teaching and learning across all NWTSS provision. In promoting best practice, NWTSS aims to provide high-quality learning experiences that ensure that all learners reach their potential.

Scope

This policy applies to all education and training activities and practices of NWTSS. Teaching and learning practice aims to ensure a positive learning experience for all students as they are supported to gain skills, knowledge and competencies through QQI validated programmes and courses of learning.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.
- Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities 2015
- Site Safety Statement specific to each training location.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services.

Definition

Teaching and learning is a process that includes many variables. These variables interact as learners work toward their goals and incorporate new knowledge, behaviours, and skills that add to their range of learning experiences.

5.5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

A range of staff have a responsibility to support effective teaching and learning within NWTSS.

Academic Council

- Provide oversight and monitoring of QQI validated programmes of education on all academic matters as it relates to teaching and learning.

Management

It is the responsibility of all NWTSS Managers and QQI Provision Leads to regularly evaluate the resources available to support teaching and learning and keep these updated. Effective programme delivery requires the provision of:

- Well-equipped classrooms and training rooms.
- Teaching resources.
- Resources for learners.

Programme Committee

- Provide oversight, maintain and enhance the academic quality of QQI validated programmes of education, including ongoing monitoring and review of programme provision, ensuring equitable learning opportunities are provided for learners in a supportive setting;
- On receipt of the QQI Certificate of Programme Validation and approved programme schedule from the AC, the PC convenes the relevant Committees/Teams;
- Oversee the review of programmes by PRT to assure compliance with relevant strategies and quality assurance standards in determining the overall effectiveness and quality of programmes;

- Maintain and monitor programme coherence, consistency and implementation, as validated by QQI;
- Undertake a collaborative planning process for programme schedule with due regard to QQI Certification process;
- Compile a programme evaluation report including areas for improvement and enhancement in Teaching, Learning and Assessment and submit to the AC;
- Monitor academic supports and resources to meet the overall wellbeing needs of learners;
- Contribute as appropriate to the implementation and ongoing review of Quality Assurance policies and procedures within NWTSS, including evaluation of learner experience and how this feedback can support continuous programme improvement;
- Coordination of programmes, liaising with programme tutors, providing support to programme tutors and key stakeholders;
- Submit all proposed changes to programmes for consideration of the AC and maintain a record of the evolution of the programme of education since its approval by QQI;
- Collaborate with the relevant committees and teams to request and review reports specific to monitoring, review and auditing of programme quality in association with Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC):

- Emphasise examples of good practice in Teaching, Learning and Assessment and ensure effective dissemination of practices;
- Oversee the development, implementation, monitoring and review of teaching, learning and assessment aligned to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment principles ensuring compliance with legislation, statutory and regulatory external stakeholder requirements;
- Collaborate with the relevant committees in the identification of key risks associated with Teaching, Learning and Assessment, implementation of controls and maintenance and management of a risk register. Where risks cannot be mitigated, the TLAC will escalate to AC;
- Identify and implement the necessary programme learning supports and resources associated with Teaching, Learning and Assessment;
- Communicate updates of programme content; delivery modes; teaching and learning methods;

- Report on the progress of each Centres programme implementation, delivery and evaluation;
- Encourage staff to further develop/enhance their knowledge and expertise re teaching and learning via CPD;
- Provide programme tutors with a copy of this policy and associated procedures and strategies.

Programme Review Team

- Collate and analyse all programme data and submit a programme evaluation report to the Chairperson of the PC and learning methods used for the purposes of programme review to the PC;
- Discuss with the PC any instances where this policy cannot be adhered to.

Tutors

- Create an environment that encourages learners to learn;
- Utilise the characteristics and principles of adult learning to enhance the learners experience and encourage their active participation in the programme;
- Acknowledge as a rich resource for learning, the experience and knowledge which the learner brings to the programme within the classroom;
- Assist learners to link new learning to their experience;
- Support guest speakers where appropriate;
- Inform and discuss with learners how the MIPLOs/MIMLOs are connected to the module content and to assessments;
- Ensure professional standard of delivery of coursework in line with structured timetables;
- Ensure learners are provided with adequate resources to enable them complete the modules;
- Ensure learners are provided with clear and accurate information about the awards they wish to receive;
- Seek learner feedback using Learner Evaluation Form (Appendix 4);
- Support learners while taking part in work placements;
- Support learners with complaints and learners appeals procedures;
- Monitor the learners learning experience and utilise any identified actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- Promote a range of training methods to accommodate learning styles that meet the needs of the diverse learning group, to include:

- Face to face
 - Synchronised learning
 - Role playing
 - Interactive training
 - Videos/films
 - Shadowing
- Support and enable learners to improve on their own learning while providing any necessary supports and guidance. This support can be made available within group and/or on a one to one basis, whichever is most appropriate;
 - Ensure confidentiality, especially with assessments and learner information;
 - Notify the PDT of any issues with any element of the module/programme or any suggestions on programme/module development;
 - Be familiar with and promote, professional relationships, behaviours and boundaries with colleagues and learners;
 - Collaborate with colleagues to ensure high standards and academic quality as per the mission of the provider;
 - To advance personal professional expertise, skills and links, through continuous professional development, including engagement with research activities and fostering of innovation, as appropriate;
 - Attend all/any internal/external training relevant to the delivery of QQI modules;
 - Engage with extra-curricular activities consistent with the mission of NWTSS, especially with course development and professional development, while contributing to the providers strategic objectives;
 - Expand expertise relating to course delivery in line with National and International developments where appropriate;
 - Be committed to equality and inclusion, and respecting diversity.

Learners

- Comply with the timetable requirements for attendance and attend classes punctually;
- Be respectful to other learners and to staff;
- Engage in a range of learning opportunities including both in the classroom and in a practicable setting;
- Take responsibility for own learning and complete assignments on time;
- Comply with the programme assessment requirements e.g. submission of assessment/portfolios;
- Evaluate and provide feedback on teaching and learning methodologies used;

- Adhere to policies, codes of conduct and guidelines.

Learners will have a Tutor appointed to support them during their time in NWTSS. The Tutor will introduce the learner to the Learner Handbook. Additional staff will be identified by the Management Team/QQI Provision Lead to support the learner in their learning journey.

5.5.2. Teaching and Learning Principles

Teaching and Learning is underpinned by NWTSS to:

- Create an environment in which learners can take responsibility for their own learning, and provide opportunities for active learning;
- Facilitate a high-quality learning experience for a diverse range of learners that will support lifelong learning and provide learners with the knowledge and skills that they will require;
- A culture of inclusiveness and tolerance of diversity informs teaching and learning.
- Encourage teaching and learning activities in keeping with the mission, vision and values of NWTSS;
- Provide a fair effective, transparent and consistent assessment of learners;
- Promote learner engagement in relevant feedback, review exercises and appeal procedures;
- Participate in reviewing prior learning during the admissions process;
- Include a range of activities such as: - tutorial and field work and other instructional practices, including case-based learning, project-based learning, collaborative and cooperative learning, discovery learning and problem-based learning - and timely and appropriate feedback;
- A training qualification is a requirement for the delivery of programme modules. NWTSS is committed to providing support to staff in order to develop their skills and knowledge in teaching and learning;
- The importance related to teaching and learning is demonstrated in NWTSS through quality assurance processes;
- Academic support services are an important part of the delivery process for teaching and learning and provide appropriate and effective supportive learning environments to meet the needs of training staff and learners;
- Encourage application of a diversity of teaching practices and methodologies to meet the needs of a wide range of learners with a variety of abilities and competencies;

- Facilitate learning by providing the academic support infrastructure and environment conducive to the provision of the highest standards in teaching and learning;
- Develop staff who, as a result of undertaking teaching at the highest level, are particularly effective in disseminating knowledge;
- Support and encourage staff to take an active role in developing innovations in their teaching;
- Create an environment conducive to the highest standards of teaching and learning and to develop the highest level of quality in teaching;
- Value, support and recognise excellence in teaching by training staff;
- Promote staff engagement in information exchange, review exercises, feedback and communication with other staff and learners;
- Adopt a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning;
- Develop independent learning and transferable skills in learners, with the learner taking responsibility for their own learning;
- Aim to remove unnecessary barriers to learning;
- Encourage learners to become competent learners so they are equipped to undertake lifelong learning and personal development;
- Provide and request feedback from learners;
- Support access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners, to facilitate educational opportunity.

5.5.3 Procedures

Mapping learning to learning outcomes

- Identify what the learner is expected to know, understand, and/or be able to demonstrate in order to be successful on the programme and achieve certification (The Expected Learning Outcomes / Minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs));
- Identify the outcomes to be achieved for each module and to be evidenced by a learner to achieve certification (The Expected Learning Outcomes / Minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs));
- A copy of the Expected Learning Outcomes / MIMLOs and MIPLOs for each teaching session will be provided to the learners;
- The learning environment will be organised to facilitate learners' safety and achievement of Expected Learning Outcomes / MIPLOs;

- Hand-outs, e-learning/online facilities and recorded webinar's that highlight key features of learning and provide learners with alternative perspectives will be provided where appropriate;
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies for each education programme will be planned and organised in consultation with the TLAC and the PC to facilitate learners to acquire knowledge and skills as identified by programme curriculum;
- Learning activities will be designed to encourage problem-solving and critical thinking skills through insight learning so learners explore connections between theory and practice concepts;
- Enable learners to learn, as per NWTSS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, during QQI programmes (within the Centre and in an applicable practice placement);
- Promote innovative use of technologies, simulating learning and visual approaches to further enhance the teaching and learning environment;
- Learners/programme tutors evaluate and provide feedback to TLAC on teaching, learning and assessment strategies, to be submitted as a report to the Lead of the PC;
- Encourage learners to think holistically about issues and to explore how contexts influence or distort meaning;
- Utilise eclectic styles to support learners throughout the programme of education, such as reflective journals, portfolios, collaborative and cooperative learning through group work and assessment, and provision of timely feedback to learners;
- Utilise a broad range of facilitation techniques to support all learner involvement;
- Utilise strategies to manage disruptive behaviours that may arise in the teaching/learning environment.

Learning Materials

Learning materials are designed to support the learners fully engage in the module. The PDT design learning materials while adhering to the following:

- Meet the learning outcomes of the component specification for QQI modules;
- Be designed to meet the learner level and ability;
- Be suitable for practical application;
- Recognise flexible approach to delivery of material;
- Ensure best practice is adopted through evaluations, reviews and consultation;
- Contain options for learners and staff to evaluate the module.

Design of Learning Materials

In the designing of the learning materials, the PDT will follow the process below:

Plan

The following will be considered prior to commencing the drafting of modules:

- Know the learning outcomes/aims and objectives relevant to the modules;
- Understand the learner profile;
- Understand the reason behind drafting the modules;
- Consider where the material will be delivered;
- Consider how the material will be delivered.

Approval

The PDT design the learning materials, which they will submit to the PC for approval. The following can happen:

- Approved and accepted;
- Approved subject to some changes.

Delivery

Delivering the course material in the learning environment will help establish the effectiveness of the content as well as the learner engagement. Tutors will evaluate the materials against the following:

- Were the module objectives clear for the learner?
- Were the learning materials/resources appropriate to the learner?
- Were the learners able to answer questions and discuss the topic?
- Was adequate time provided for completion of the module?
- Were the learning outcomes achieved?
- Was the venue suitable for delivery of the module and for the learners?

Evaluate

To assess the level of effectiveness of module content, evaluations are conducted using the following steps:

- Learners will complete a learner evaluation form on module completion, which is submitted to the PC and PCP Facilitator;
- Tutors/Assessors will complete a staff module feedback sheet, which is submitted to the PC;
- The PC will meet to discuss the evaluation feedback prior to any amendments to the learning materials;
- The PRT and the QC will review the amended learning materials and advise the PC of any amendments;
- The programme/module will be updated in line with agreed amendments;
- The revised programme/module will be placed on the shared drive for all locations to access and older materials will be archived.

NWTSS use creative and innovative methods to maintain learner focus and support learning through the combining of physical activity with art projects or life science and/or healthy eating programmes such as 'Come Dine with Me' with a team project.

Feedback

Feedback is an essential element of continuous improvement and quality assurance. Feedback is collected and analysed through a range of methods.

Learners

Learners provide feedback through the following ways:

- Learner Evaluation Sheet (Module);
- End of Programme Evaluation;
- Interest checklist and evaluation sheet;
- Suggestion Boxes;
- Advocacy Meetings.

Feedback is provided to learners through:

- Feedback to learners sheet;

- Tutor Learner Meeting Record.

Staff

Staff provide feedback through the following methods:

- Evaluation Sheets;
- Staff Programme Modules Feedback Sheets;
- Staff/Team meetings;
- Suggestion Boxes;
- One-to-one meetings with management.

Feedback is provided to staff through the following ways:

- Monitoring Reports from external monitoring;
- Class Observation Record;
- One-to-one meetings with management/QQI Provision Leads;
- Internal Verifiers Reports;
- External Authenticator Reports;
- Results Approval Report;
- Staff/Team Meetings.

5.5.4 Learning Environments

NWTSS has purpose built or redesigned premises for the delivery of services. The learning premises are airy, bright and well ventilated and accessible for the learners and contain:

- Training rooms (IT, Music, Arts & Craft, Literacy, Exercises)
- Kitchen facilities
- Toilet facilities
- Sensory room
- Meeting rooms
- Family room
- Offices

External Learning Environments

When sourcing external learning environments, NWTSS only utilises premises with the same high level of quality. Staff risk assess premises using the Checklist for Suitable Premises Form (Appendix 5) to ensure they are suitable in supporting effective delivery of training programmes. Work placements are also recognised as hands on learning environments that are supervised onsite with additional support provided by staff from NWTSS.

In order to ensure that the learning environments meet the needs of the learner group, staff will:

- Ensure that all necessary resources are available:
 - Staff;
 - IT equipment;
 - Libraries;
 - Kitchen facilities;
 - Accessible toilets etc:
- Review resources/facilities to ensure their continued relevance.

As well as the physical learning environment, NWTSS provides an inclusive learning environment where all staff foster an environment that is warm and welcoming where every learner is respected, trust is built between staff and learners and within the learner group, all questions asked are respected and responded to and the environment is safe.

Work Placements and Work Based Learning

NWTSS completes Occupational Documents in consultation with the learner, staff member and the employer (work location). Monitoring arrangements between NWTSS staff and the employer are in place for assessment of skills to ensure that standards are being maintained.

5.5.5 A Provider Ethos that promotes learning

NWTSS seeks to ensure that a holistic person centred approach is utilized to deliver a training style in keeping with best practice. A Teaching and Learning Policy is available for assisting staff in promoting learning.

NWTSS recognises the diverse needs of the learners and utilises a wide variety of learning materials and resources available in a relevant and appropriate format to deliver each element of the programme.

Information regarding learning is communicated and delivered using a number of different formats:

- Learner Handbooks
- PCP Meetings
- Learner Workbooks
- Brochures
- Easy Read materials
- Interpreters
- Scribe
- Tablets/IPads
- Online

5.5.6 National and International Effective Practice

NWTSS seeks to ensure that staff are provided the opportunity to avail of new and developing practices (Stress Control Programme- Scotland, WRAP-Canada) through shared learning experience/events to enhance their ability to provide effective teaching and learning to the learners.

5.5.7 Tutor Handbook

Tutor handbooks (available on NWTSS shared drive) are provided for the purpose of informing and updating tutors on their roles and responsibilities in the teaching and assessment process.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025.

Related Documents:

- Easy Read YSYS
- Easy Read Learner Evaluation Sheet (Module)
- End of programme evaluation

- Interest Checklist V2-quarterly
- PCP –Support - Key Worker Review and Feedback
- Class Observation Record New Edition
- Staff Programme Modules Feedback Sheets
- Checklist for suitable premises V3
- Occupational Documents V4
- Tutor Handbook
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers 2016, Version 2. <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf>

6 Assessment of Learners

6.1. Introduction

NWTSS is committed to the fair and consistent assessment of learners. Protocols are in place to ensure the integrity of the assessment process, and that the modes of assessment used are in line with the standards while also ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners.

The summative assessment process involves:

- Assessment of skills, knowledge and competencies against criteria in the validated programme (national standards)
- Authentication Process
 - Internal Verification
 - External Authentication
 - Results Approval Process
 - Appeals Process

The function of the authentication process in NWTSS is to ensure fair and consistent approach to the assessment of learning. The authentication process is conducted in line with QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*). For further information, please refer to:

<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>

The assessment of learners is performed in line with the specific assessment requirements as per the national standard for the award. The tutor/assessor is responsible for assessing the quality of the work and making judgements. Different locations (classrooms, home, and work environment) may be utilised during the assessment process. Standardised easy read workbooks (Learner and Tutor) [.\LEARNER Writing Level 2.pdf](#) and [.\TUTOR PACK Writing Level 2.pdf](#) are provided for each component and contains a marking sheet and assessment brief. The QQI Provision Leads at centre level support the assessment process.

6.2. Policy on Assessment of Learners

Policy Statement

It is the policy of NWTSS to ensure fair, consistent and reliable assessment methods that facilitate learners to demonstrate that they have a level of skills, knowledge and competencies recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that assessment is valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic. NWTSS applies an assessment of learners' approach that includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is used to direct teaching and learning and summative assessment to check that skills, knowledge and competencies achieved are certified against the learning outcomes for the award.

Scope

This policy applies to all assessed programmes across the entire NWTSS education and training provision.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.
- Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006.
- HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation 2016.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services.

Definition

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (Hargreaves, 2005). NWTSS education and training staff use this formative approach to provide feedback to learners and to inform their own approach to teaching and use of resources. This approach demonstrates when skills, knowledge and competencies have been achieved and informs the scheduling of summative assessments.

Summative assessment of QQI validated programmes in NWTSS is criterion referenced and developed in line with specific programme component assessment techniques that have been approved through the QQI Programme Validation Process. NWTSS recognises that the integrity of the assessment is underpinned by processes that are transparent, fair and consistent.

To support this NWTSS ensures:

- Assessments are provided to learners in a suitable format;
- Learners are provided with the necessary information and resources to successfully engage in assessment;
- Assessors have gained training on assessment of learning through their trainer qualifications, are supported in-house and have the necessary information and resources to conduct assessment fairly, consistently and without bias.

The following criteria must be followed to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency:

- Assessment briefs are used to provide clear direction to learners about what is required;
- All assessment briefs are submitted to and approved by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee;
- Assessment briefs are provided to learners in a timely manner;
- Assessment briefs must contain the following information.
 - Title and Module Code;
 - Assessment Technique;
 - Guidelines (Learning Outcomes);
 - Assessment Criteria;

- Issue Date;
- Submission Date;
- Candidate Name;
- Declaration of Authenticity.

Assessment Techniques for the purpose of assessment of learners work

Learners are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved learning outcomes as follows:

- Collection of Work - (to include portfolios/workbooks, photographic and/or video evidence);
- Skills Demonstration - (to include presentations, group discussions, photographic and/or video evidence);
- Tutor verification – (when needed, confirming that it is the learner(s) own work).

Information and Communication to Learners

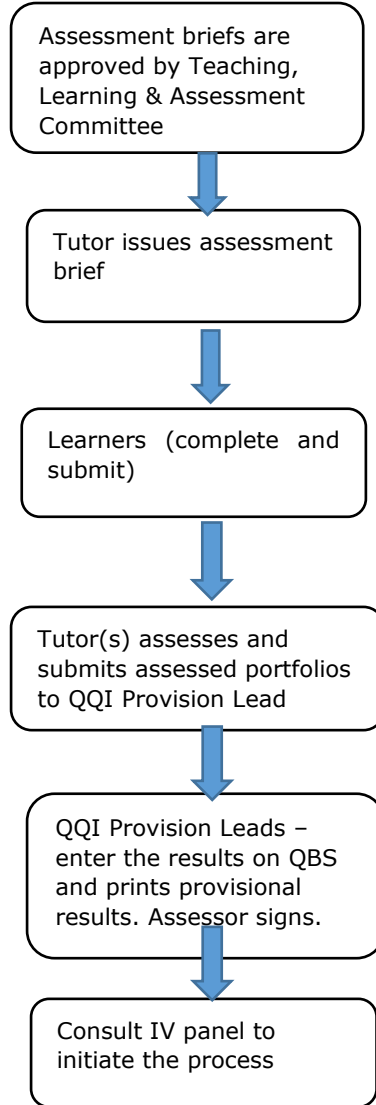
The learner handbook which is available to learners contains information on QQI assessment. Additional information on assessment is provided via tutors, QQI Provision Leads.

Assessment Process

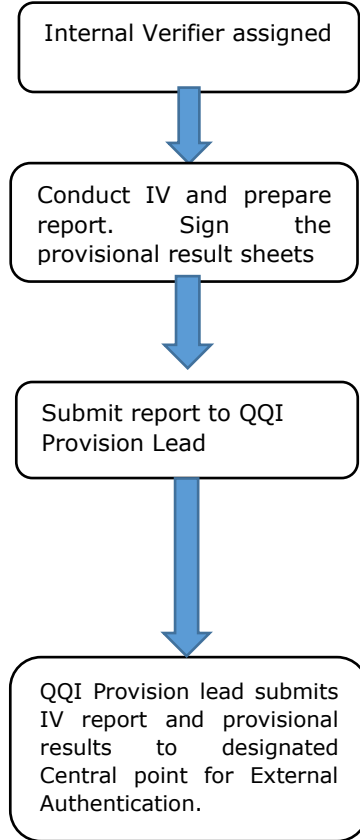
The assessment process for NWTSS is outlined as follow: *See Diagram 8: Assessment Process.*

Diagram 8: Assessment Process

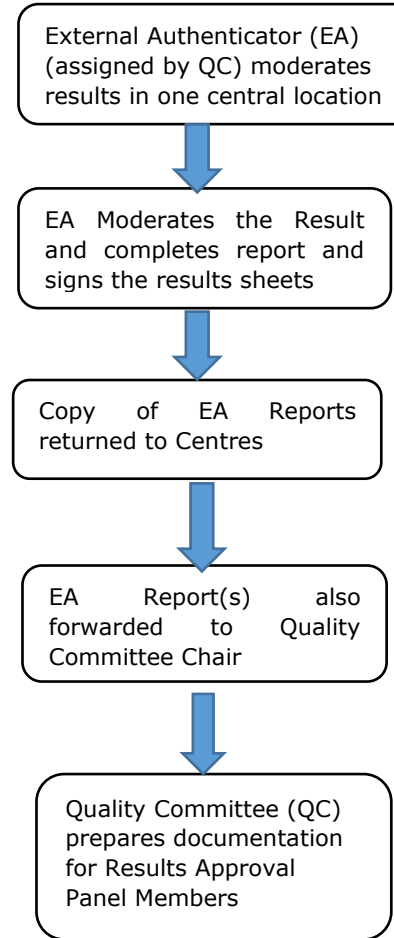
Distribution of Assessment Materials



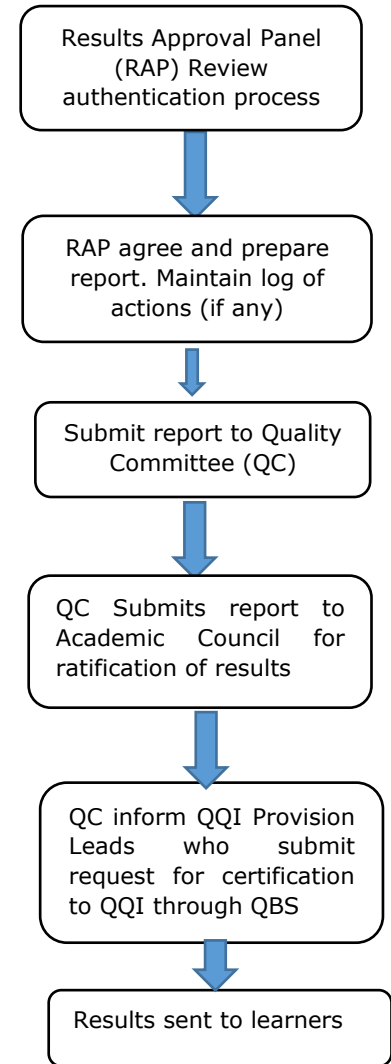
Internal Verification



External Authentication



Results Approval



6.3. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the tutor/assessor, QCI Provision Lead, Internal Verifier (IV), External Authenticator (EA) and Results Approval Panel (RAP) are outlined below.

Tutor/Assessor

- Use assessment briefs approved by the TLAC;
- Support the learners through the process and seek feedback from them;
- Attend training as identified by the QCI Provision Leads and Training Team Chair;
- Consult with QCI Provision Lead regarding any issue/queries about the assessment process;
- Maintain records of learner assessments;
- Inform learners of the assessment requirements;
- Ensure all assessment materials, including workbooks (if required) are available for the assessment;
- Provide feedback to learners regarding their submitted work;
- Sign all assessed work submitted by learners and forward completed and assessed portfolios to the QCI Provision Leads for authentication purposes;
- Identify external factors that impact on the programme, e.g. new technology, legislation, organisation/resources, numbers and ability levels;
- Ensure learner assessment materials are securely stored;
- Support learners to participate in evaluations and share their learning and assessment experiences.

QCI Provision Leads

In relation to the assessment process within the centre

- Attend QCI briefings/training/webinars provided by QCI;
- Conduct meeting updates/briefings/training with staff and ensure that they are familiar with assessment procedures;
- Ensure that all assessment briefs and tasks have been approved by the TLAC;
- Support staff in the assessment process and in implementing new assessment methods, if applicable;
- Seek feedback from learners and staff;
- Observe training classes/sessions and provide written feedback to staff;
- Examine learner completion and progress reports;

- Monitor the implementation of assessment to ensure fairness and consistency across all assessors;
- Liaise directly with the tutors in relation to all assessment related activities;
- Manage assessment records and to ensure accuracy and security of records.

In relation to Internal Verification

- Ensure that staff recognise and understand the importance of the internal verification process and understand the procedures;
- Identify suitably qualified IV's (Tutors with Training Qualification to Level 6, equivalent or higher) to carry out the internal verification process;
- Support new IV's to attend training;
- Organise the schedule for conducting effective internal verification for each assessment period;
- Provide the IV's with the following documentation on the day of the Internal Verification Process, e.g. model answers, component specifications, internal verification report template, and assessment checklist;
- Remain available to the IV's for the duration of the process;
- Ensure that the internal verification process is carried out independently of the assessor responsible for the assessment of a component;
- Obtain the Internal Verification Report from the IV's;
- Provide feedback to the assessor;
- Return all assessment related material to secure storage as soon as the internal verification process has concluded and keep available for External Authentication stage.

In relation to the External Authentication Process

- Submit the internal verification report to the centrally designated point in readiness for the external authentication process;
- Ensure assessed and verified portfolios are prepared and securely transported to the central point for external authentication.

In relation to Quality Committee and Results Approval Panel and Academic Council

- Note and action the feedback from the RAP, QC and AC;

- Process results ratified by the AC through the QBS process, ensuring learner information and results are valid and correct;
- Inform learners of the results and also provide information on the appeal process;
- Implement quality improvement recommendations within the centre.

Internal Verifiers

The internal verifier function is “to systematically check that the provider’s assessment procedures have been applied consistently across assessment activities and to verify the assessment results” (Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*, Section 4.2.1, p.24). Evidence may be presented electronically or in hard copy or a combination of both. Internal verification will take place at centre level by a verifier who will have undergone training and familiarisation with the process. All NWTSS IVs will follow the same process, use the same checklists and report templates.

The IV will verify both the assessment procedures and assessment results:

- Verify that a Portfolio of Learner evidence is available for all learners submitting for certification;
- Check that results are recorded for all learners and that grades are allocated (at levels 1, 2 and 3, the grade is successful or referred);
- Verify the results by applying NWTSS’s sampling strategy. Ensure that the sample verified represent all centres, the work of all assessors and all subject areas;
- Check that learner assessment evidence is generated as per the techniques identified in the Award Specification and using appropriate instruments as indicated in the validated programme;
- Check that assessment has been carried out in a fair and consistent manner
- When evidence is presented in soft copy, the IV must check that evidence is accessible, i.e. on shared drives or other electronic system;
- Complete the internal verification assessment checklist for each portfolio;
- Produce a report using the Internal Verification Report Template and discuss the findings with the QQI Provision Lead;
- Maintain the security of assessment related materials for the duration of the verification process.

External Authenticator

QQI defines External Authentication as the process that aims “*to provide independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners, in accordance with national standards*” (Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, May 2013, p25). NWTSS QC will appoint an external authenticator in line with QQI national standards and has in place an External Authenticator Selection Criteria (Appendix 6).

The QC will designate one central location for the external authentication process. This will ensure:

- Transparency across the entire service;
- A common standard as the same EA will be used by centres offering similar provision.

The role of the EA is:

- To review the IV report to ensure that assessment has been undertaken in a quality assured manner and authenticate the findings;
- To review the learners’ assessments to ensure that they have been assessed in a fair and consistent manner and that national standards are met;
- To authenticate that the grades given are in line with the national standards for that level.

Specifically the EA will:

Moderate a sample of portfolios in line with NWTSS sample procedure which is currently 50% in order to confirm the following:

- There is a results sheet for each piece of evidence in the folder;
- The assessment briefs are clear, concise, and correctly mapped to the learning outcomes as per the component descriptor;
- The evidence has been graded in accordance with national standards;
- NWTSS’s policies and procedures have been correctly applied;
- Ensure signatures (learner marking sheets) are in place and correct.

Furthermore the EA will:

- Note any grade change (successful or referred) recommendations on the Authentication Report;

- In the event of a grade change (successful or referred), extend the review sample;
- Complete a report for each centre that has submitted;
- Note both areas of good practice and areas for improvement on the final reports.

Sampling Procedure

NWTSS's sampling strategy is currently 50%. This sampling should be applied to each centre's submitted portfolios. Unsuccessful portfolios should be included in the overall sample. Where significant errors are found that sample may be extended to include all of that assessors portfolios. Where a new assessor has joined the team the sample may be extended to include some additional portfolios.

Results Approval Panel

As part of the Results Approval Process, NWTSS has established a RAP to review the assessment authentication process and ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, judged and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. (Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*). NWTSS has developed terms of reference for the RAP (page 62). Members of the RAP are required to hold a Level 6 (or equivalent) training qualification and have experience and knowledge of the Authentication Process.

The RAP members have a responsibility to:

- Attend the Results Approval Panel Meeting as requested by the Chair of the QC;
- Ensure that assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results (IV centre level and EA central level) has been carried out in line with NWTSS Quality Assurance;
- Review the authentication process, Internal Verifiers and External Authenticator's Reports and discuss recommendations;
- identify and document any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action;
- Ensure fair and consistent processes have been applied by checking the validity of the assessment results;
- Identify areas for improvement and document these;
- Action areas for improvement;
- Maintain a record of strengths of the process and examples of good practice;
- Agree to the submission of final results to the AC for ratification.

Academic Council

The AC will ratify the results.

6.4. Procedures

Submission Date

Assessment briefs record a submission date and tutors/assessors inform learners about this when they issue the brief. This helps both tutors and learners manage the process.

Deferrals

Incomplete portfolios will be deferred until the next Assessment Period as set out by QQI.

Security of Assessment

NWTSS maintains the security of assessment (Appendix 7) in conjunction with the HSE Data Protection Policy, HSE Privacy Notice – Patients & Service Users V1.2 and HSE Standards and Recommended Practices for Healthcare Records Management V3.0 and QQI's Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers. Revised 2013. (version2 – revised 2018*). See further information at:

<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>

This is done by means of the following process:

- The collection, storing and accessing of learner records;
- Assessment resources/materials are designed in line QQI component specification;
- Assessment resources/materials are only accessed by the relevant staff;
- Information relating to programmes is stored on secure shared drives;
- Submitted portfolios/work is held in locked filing cabinets;
- Learners' results are uploaded to secure shared drives and are password protected.

Results

Provisional results will be issued to Learners while waiting on the certificate from QQI. Provisional results are subject to a Results Approval Process (Diagram 8) and must be ratified by the AC before a request is submitted to QQI for the award. Assessed portfolios will be retained by NWTSS for 6 weeks from date of submission of results to QQI for certification before being released to Learners.

6.5. Appeals Process

NWTSS facilitates learners to appeal their approved results. Learners can appeal based on dissatisfaction with:

- Assessment result;
- Assessment conditions and/or process.

Assessment result appeal can be made when the learner is not satisfied with their assessment result. The learner believes that the grade awarded is not representative of the standard of the work they submitted for assessment.

Assessment process appeal when the learner is not satisfied with the assessment conditions and/or process. The learner believes the assessment conditions and/or process under which they performed the assessment task negatively impacted on their assessment performance.

Only approved results of work submitted can be formally appealed by the learner. No new assessment evidence can be submitted.

Approved Result

Approved results are results that have been through the internal verification and external authentication process and have been approved by the RAP and ratified by the AC.

Timeframe

The appeal must be made by completing the Appeals Form (Appendix 8) to the QQI Provision Lead within 10 days of the issuing of the approved results, and will be fully internal to NWTSS.

Appeals Procedure

A learner wishing to appeal an assessment process and / or assessment result must:

- Note the grounds for appeal on the appeals form;
- Note the timeframe for appeal within 10 days of the issuing of approved results;
- Lodge an appeal (no cost to learner) by completing the appeals form;
- The appeal should be lodged through the QQI Provision Lead;
- Should support to complete the Appeals Form be requested, it will be provided;
- The QQI Provision lead will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and then submit appeal application to the Chair of the AC;
- An independent Appeals Team will be convened by the Chair of the AC;
- The Appeals Team may engage a second assessor to review and reassess the portfolio;
- The Appeals Team may seek to meet with learner who is making the appeal, the tutor/assessor and / or the QQI Provision lead;
- The Appeals Team will provide a written report to the AC stating the outcome;
- The QQI Provision lead(s) will be informed of the outcome by the Chair of the AC;
- The QQI Provision lead will inform the learner of the outcome of the appeal within three days of receiving the outcome, both orally and in writing.

6.6. Feedback to Learners

NWTSS recognises that feedback is an important component of effective learning and that improves learner confidence, motivation to learn and ultimately, a learner's attainment. NWTSS provides feedback through the use of the Feedback to Learners Form [\Feedback to Learners Sheet.pdf](#) and also through the Learner Completion and Progression Record form.. [\Learner Completion and Progression Record.pdf](#)

6.7. Designing Assessment Instruments

This procedure has been developed to support and facilitate not only fair and consistent approaches to assessment across NWTSS, but also to ensure national standards. This procedure is informed by QQI's Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 Version 2 - revised 2018*.

The TLAC is responsible for ensuring a consistent standard and approach to assessment across all QQI provision.

The TLAC Committee will:

- Review all briefs and tasks to ensure the integrity of the assessment process;
- Tutors / assessors who design new briefs and task will submit these to the TLAC for approval;
- In the event of changes that result in the need for contingency or alternative assessment, the TLAC will take the lead on this work and will consult with centres and tutors. Account will be taken of national approaches and efforts made to not disadvantage learners while preserving the academic integrity and standards of all awards offered.

6.8. Certification

NWTSS provides QQI training programmes at Level 1 – 3 and learners are assessed to establish they have achieved the required national standards. Once the assessment and authentication process has been completed, QQI certification will be sought for successful results.

6.9. Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations are designed to remove, as far as possible, the impact of a disability on a learner's performance and enable the learner to engage and participate in assessments on an equal basis with other learners. It is done in a fair and impartial manner and does not give learners unfair advantage over other learners involved in the same assessment process.

NWTSS provides services to learners with an Intellectual Disability, Mental Health condition and/or dual diagnosis and recognises the importance of ensuring reasonable accommodation is provided to the learners.

Adaptation to assessments may include the following:

- Modified assignment briefs;
- Modified workbooks;
- Scribes/readers;
- Use of sign language interpreters;
- Practical assistants;

- Rest periods;
- Adaptive equipment/software;
- Use of assistive technology;
- Extra time.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025

Related Documents

- Learner Writing Level 2
- Tutor Pack Writing Level 2
- QQI Appeals Process V2
- Feedback to Learners Sheet
- Learner Completion and Progression Record
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers. (2016), Version 2.
<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf>
- [Hargreaves, E. \(2005\) Assessment of Learning? Thinking outside the \(black\) box. Cambridge of Education Journal. 35\(2\) p 213-224.](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40272330_Assessment_of_learning_for_learning_and_as_learning_New_Zealand_case_studies)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40272330_Assessment_of_learning_for_learning_and_as_learning_New_Zealand_case_studies

7. Support for Learners

7.1 Introduction

NWTSS is committed to providing a supportive environment inclusive of a wide range of appropriate supports to meet the needs of learners at all levels.

7.2 Policy on Support for Learners

Policy Statement

It is the policy of NWTSS to provide support for learners through an integrated and person centred approach that includes adequate resources, emotional and personal support for the general wellbeing of learners, provision of up to date information and support as well as relevant guidance to enable learners to actively achieve their learning goals.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to offer adequate support to the learners while reviewing, updating, amending where identified improvements should be implemented.

Scope

This policy applies to all learners enrolled on a QQI programme of education and training within NWTSS.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.
- Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- A National Framework for Person Centred Planning in Services for Persons with a Disability.
- New Directions. Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities.

Definition

NWTSS has a range of both academic and non-academic supports in place for all learners. The supports are integrated through all engagements and interactions to create a positive learning environment. This approach to learner supports goes beyond the formal delivery of content, or skills development, and NWTSS endeavours to provide an environment that promotes and supports the whole person.

Holistic Care

A key aim of NWTSS is to support the whole person by ensuring that all learners are fully supported through physical, mental, spiritual, and social needs to engage fully. Embedding this approach within the organisation will connect teaching and learning to learner development ensuring they achieve their potential.

This is achieved through the following supports:

- Access to a key worker for support. This support ensures that learners can engage on a one-to-one basis in order to identify issues, set goals, develop action plans and identify the supports needed to overcome issues;
- Access to a Centre Coordinator. This support ensures that learners can engage with specific supports such as social worker, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapy and behaviour management support;
- Access to the Tutor to whom they can approach for specific course questions and/or issues;
- Access to a QQI Provision Lead for specific support to whom they can approach for advice, supports, additional resources at any stage;
- Access to advocacy supports that provide the learners with the opportunity to express their views and wishes and stand up for their rights;
- Access to an interpreter and translation service, as required. For further information see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/translation-hub/translation-interpreting-companies/>

7.3 Learner Supports

NWTSS aims to ensure that the necessary resources and supports are available for the successful participation by learners on the programmes. These resources and supports

are monitored in a number of ways including the EASI Process & Tool with the collaboration of learners and staff.

Learners within NWTSS will receive the following supports:

Transition Plans

Transition plans are in place to support learners' to enter into the service at a pace that suits their needs and is non-accredited. Transition planning is also available to help guide the learners on a progression route suitable for their needs.

Literacy Assessment (If Applicable)

NWTSS deliver programmes at Levels 1, 2 and 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications. These programmes build literacy and numeracy skills. An assessment of literacy skills should take place to help identify the learners' correct entry level and any additional supports they may require.

Assessments are linked to the daily living activities of learners and can include determining if a learner is able to:

- Recognise and match daily living signs, symbols and written words e.g. visual timetables, days of the week, personal details and/or the ability to write and recognise own name;
- Recognise and match social sight words, phonics, sequencing, and picture and object words and basic numeracy e.g. date of birth, numbers 1-20, personal address, months of the year and seasons;
- Recognise word lists (up to 25) and read vocabulary to include using a phone, telling time, recognising other's names, recognising numbers 20-100, and recognising coins and notes and matching amounts;
- Display the ability to read a menu or TV guide, recognise dates, reading books/magazines, writing a card, addressing an envelope, simple addition and subtraction and recognise price tags and bus timetable.

The assessment produces information, which will help Tutors/assessors in aiding the learner, choose appropriately with regard to their learning as well as ensuring the learner engages on accredited and non-accredited modules at a level most suitable to their literacy level.

Language Support (if needed)

Learners whose first language is not English will receive English language support from a qualified English Language Teacher.

Induction Manual

NWTSS QQI learners are learners who have entered the service (HSE) at non-accredited transition level and progressed to accredited provision. Induction manuals are provided for the learners at the point when they access HSE services, with induction taking place during the transition planning stage. This role is performed by staff in consultation with the learner and other relevant stakeholders (family member/SNA)

Learner Handbook

Learner handbooks for QQI accredited provision are referenced and discussed during induction. They are provided to learners, with clear explanation given when they progress to, and participate on accredited training programmes in NWTSS.

Timetables/Schedules

NWTSS operates weekly timetables that informs the learners of the modules in the morning and afternoon, the name of the tutor delivering the module and other staff on premises should they require additional support.

7.4 Person Centred Planning (*Diagram 9: Four stages of Person Centred Planning*)

NWTSS adopts the person-centred planning (PCP's) approach which is a key process to focus the delivery of services which supports and enables a person to make informed choices to identify their dreams, wishes, goals on how they want to live their life, now and in the future and what is required to make those choices possible.

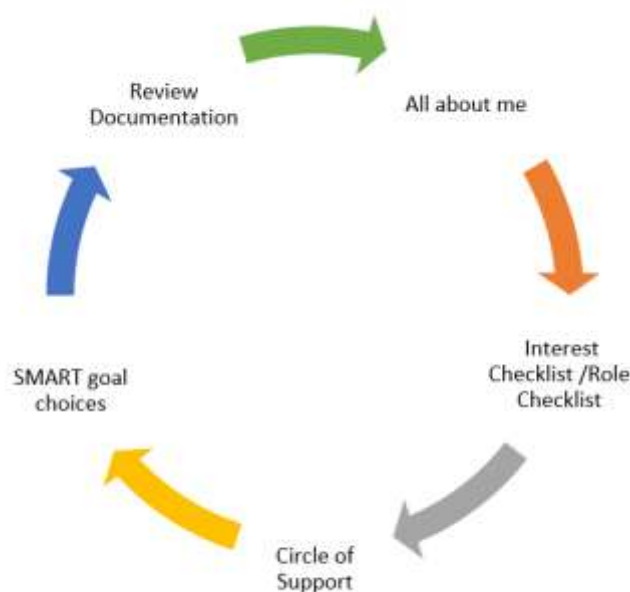
Person-centred planning has been divided into four main stages:

- Stage 1: Getting ready to do a person-centred plan;
- Stage 2: Putting a person-centred plan together;
- Stage 3: Putting a person-centred plan into action;
- Stage 4: Finding out if person-centred planning is working.

Diagram 9: Four stages of Person-centred Planning

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Getting ready to do a person centred plan	Putting a person centred plan together	Putting a person centred plan into action	Finding out if person centred planning is working.

The PCP approach is adopted within NWTSS and implemented in each location in line with the PCP Framework to suit the learners (*Diagram 10: PCP Framework*).

Diagram: 10 PCP Framework

Further information regarding the PCP Framework can be found at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/newdirections/framework-person-centred-planning-services-for-persons-with-a-disability.pdf>. The PCP framework also contains an evaluation tool for the organisation to find out how staff are doing with person centred planning, (New Direction pages 99-122). PCP Framework training is provided for staff on www.hseland.ie.

Circle of Support

A Circle of Support is a way of connecting a person with a disability to their community. A group of people who are known to the person with the disability, is established to support the person to identify things they would like to achieve or alter in their life. This Circle of Support explores ways to put the necessary supports in place to make things happen and play a key role in the person centred planning process.

For further information please refer to:

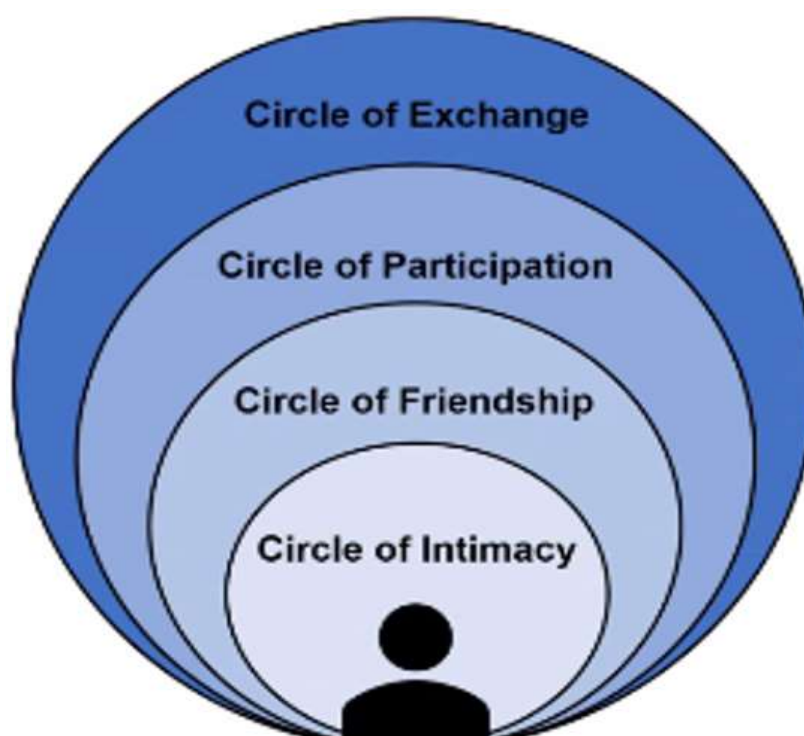
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/newdirections/a%20guide%20to%20circles%20of%20support.pdf>

NWTSS endeavours to maintain a circle of support by putting the learner at the centre with all identified supports forming the circle of support.

The supports that are involved (but not limited to) include:

- Family – Circle of Intimacy
- Friends – Circle of Friendship
- Community – Circle of Participation
- Professionals – Circle of Exchange

Diagram 11: Circle of Support



Multi Me PCP Tool

NWTSS currently have a number of staff engaging in Multi Me which is a self-advocacy and person centred planning platform for individuals with disabilities and the circle of people who supports them in their daily lives.

7.5 Additional Supports

NWTSS has put in place additional supports to aid learners in availing of every opportunity to be successful while participating in the service.

These supports include:

- Easy read materials and workbooks;
- Adapted materials to suit the learning levels;
- Different learning modes utilised;
- Active supports – which help service users/learners, to lead full lives;
- One-to-one supports;
- Extra time to complete modules.
- Reasonable accommodation for assessments

7.6 Roles and Responsibilities

- Staff are responsible for monitoring the learners support needs, both academic and non-academic:
 - One-to-one meetings
 - PCP meeting
 - Staff/team meeting
- Staff will ensure that learners are facilitated to express their opinion with regard to any concerns, issues or ideas relevant to the learner group:
 - Your service your say (YSYS)
 - Suggestion boxes
 - Group sessions
 - Advocacy meeting
 - One-to-one meeting

- Staff will provide learners with clear and accurate information on progression routes that include career and further education opportunities:
 - PCP meetings
 - One-to-one meeting
 - Exit transition planning
 - Adult Education Officers – ETB/ATU
 - Adult Education Fairs
 - ETB’s Adult Guidance Service

7.7 Complaints Process

NWTSS welcomes feedback about the services provided including compliments, comments and complaints from service users, visitors and the community. Any comment or complaint will be viewed as an opportunity to inform service provision to improve the quality of the services that we provide and to learn lessons to prevent similar occurrences in the future. Complaints, comments or suggestions, whether oral or written will be taken seriously, handled appropriately and sensitively in line with the HSE Your Service, Your Say Policy, <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/complaints/ysysguidance/ysys-feedback-policy-guidance.pdf>

In addition, it is the role of staff to:

- Ensure they are aware of the Your Service Your Say, the Management of Service User Feedback for Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy and processes.
- Participate in Complaints Management in house training provided;
- Be able to distinguish between and identify issues that constitute either a comment, compliment, a safeguarding matter, a Point of Contact Complaint or a Formal Complaint using their training, judgment and discretion or by seeking advice from their line manager;
- Support learners to be aware of the options and the distinct processes for dealing with a Point of Contact complaint or a formal complaint;
- Offer support to the Complainant and their family in dealing with the complaint;
- Complete the Point of Contact Complaints Recording Form for all complaints they receive and place this in the Centres Complaints/Compliments Folder. Report the complaints using the line management structure;
- Partake in any investigation of a complaint where necessary;
- Be involved, support and facilitate improvement initiatives within their service;

- Provide data relevant to complaints to the Complaints Officer/Centre Coordinator/Manager;
- Only attempt to manage complaints received at the point of contact if due care has been taken to establish that all issues can be addressed appropriately at the point of contact;
- Be aware that a person may express their concerns through behaviour changes or challenges and these must be taken as seriously as a verbal or written complaint.

NWTSS has in place a Policy on Management of Complaints that can be accessed on NWTSS's shared drive.

7.8. Health and Safety

Hazard Analyses are conducted on all locations by the Health and Safety Reps/Officer on a yearly basis and risk assessments are completed on identified hazards and submitted to the manager

Health and Safety Reps/Officer or other assigned staff member conduct fire drills on a quarterly basis along with weekly checklist on fire equipment/systems at each training location and recorded in the fire register.

Site Specific Safety Statements are available at all NWTSS premises and Health & Safety Representatives conduct inspections of the premises and complete a Safety Representative Inspection Checklist. Maintenance checks are also conducted on the premises to identify any additional supports required by the learners.

NWTSS adheres to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (as amended) and Safety, Health and Work Act (General Applications) Regulations 2007 – 2020.

For further information, please refer to:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_and_forms/publications/general_application_regulations/guide_to_the_safety,_health_and_welfare_at_work_general_application_regulations_2007.html

7.9. Safeguarding

NWTSS is committed to the safeguarding of vulnerable persons from abuse. It acknowledges that all adults have the right to be safe and to live a life free from abuse.

All persons are entitled to this right, regardless of their circumstances. Please see: <https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/personsatriskofabuse.pdf>

7.10. International Learners

NWTSS does not recruit International Learners. NWTSS is inclusive and has a range of supports in place for other EU and non-EU nationals who are living in Ireland and whose first language is not English. Additional supports provided are outlined under **Holistic Care and 7.3 above.**

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025.

Related Documents

- Learner Handbook
- Weekly Timetable – Sample
- A National Framework for Person Centred Planning in Services for Persons with a Disability (2018)
- A Guide to Circles of Supports
- Hazard Analysis Template
- Risk Assessment Form
- Safety Representative Inspection Checklist-template
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures

8 Information and Data Management

8.1. Introduction

NWTSS collects, manages and maintains information in compliance with HSE National policies and procedures and legislation.

8.2. Policy on Information and Data Management

Policy Statement

This policy document outlines how information and personal data collected and processed by NWTSS are kept and how the data are protected.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to assist NWTSS to meet its statutory obligations in respect of information and data management, including implementation and adherence to the Data Protection Acts that apply to the keeping and processing of Personal Data, both in manual form and on computer.

Scope

This Policy applies to all NWTSS staff, external experts on governance groups and any third parties who handle or processes information and data in the course of their engagement with NWTSS.

8.3. Information Systems

NWTSS seeks to ensure that relevant information/data collected and stored meets our commitment to the continued delivery of quality assured training programmes. NWTSS utilises a range of methods to gather information to ensure continued relevance of training programmes/modules such as learner evaluation sheet and PCP reviews.

8.4. Learner Information Systems

NWTSS seeks to ensure a robust, comprehensive and secure information management system for learner information. Learner information is stored on shared drives that require management permission for access. Locked filing cabinets are also used to store learner information that is retained in hard copies.

All HSE laptop computer devices must have HSE approved encryption software installed prior to their use within the HSE. In addition to encryption software, the laptop must be password protected and have up to date anti-virus software installed and mobile computer devices & smart devices must have device encryption enabled or HSE approved encryption software installed prior to their use within the HSE.

For further information, please refer to

<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/encryption-policy.pdf> and
<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/information-security-policy.pdf>

Tracker - Storage Log Sheets are used to track the removal and return of learners' assessment portfolios and materials. [..\Tracker - Storage Log Sheet.xls](#)

8.5. Management Information Systems

NWTSS endeavours to ensure that all necessary information is appropriately stored and forwarded to relevant staff as needed.

8.6. Information for Further Planning

NWTSS conducts review meetings in consultation with learners, staff and management to gather information to enhance further planning via the EASI Process & Tool. Reports are developed from the consultation process and Quality Improvement Plans (QIP's) are utilised to implement recommendations for improvements.

Records of programme/module completion rates, learner evaluation sheets, PCP trackers..[\PCP Goal Tracker 2022.pdf](#) for the purpose of further planning and statistical analysis are kept on shared folders by NWTSS.

8.7. Records Maintenance and Retention

NWTSS ensures that all recorded information is maintained, updated and retained in line with HSE and QQI policies and the policies of relevant stakeholders. Shredding of learners personal files is conducted at the appropriate length of time with a log recording the name and date of entry/exit.

The HSE's Standards and Recommended Practices for Healthcare Records Management (Section 5-retention and disposal schedule for healthcare records) at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/quality-and-patient-safety-documents/v3.pdf>

and the HSE's National Financial Retention of Financial Records at:

[https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/HSE_Record_Retention_Policy_V1_101123.p](https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/HSE_Record_Retention_Policy_V1_101123.pdf)

[df](https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/Record_Retention_Periods_Policy.pdf) and the Record's Retention Periods, Health Service Policy 2013, at https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/Record_Retention_Periods_Policy.pdf all help

ensure the HSE is maintaining necessary records for an appropriate length of time. This is a controlled document and is subject to change at any time.

8.8. Data Protection

NWTSS ensures that the privacy rights of individuals are protected in accordance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation and in line with the HSE Data Protection Policy and HSE Privacy Notice – Patients & Service Users. The HSE as a Data Controller must adhere to the principles of data protection which are set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018.

Furthermore the HSE must be able to demonstrate compliance with the above principles and respond to requests by individuals seeking to exercise their data protection rights (for example the right of access).

For further information, please refer to the HSE Data Protection Policy at <https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/hse-data-protection-policy.pdf>

Staff working in NWTSS attends mandatory training that includes (but is not limited to):

- GDPR 2018
- Good Information Practices
- Freedom of Information
- Cyber Security Training

For further information, please refer to: <https://www.hseland.ie/dash/Account/Login>

In line with the HSE Encryption Policy, NWTSS ensures that all computers/laptops and databases are password protected. USB memory sticks are also encrypted, <https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/usb-memory-stick-form.pdf>. Easy read consent forms [Easy Read Photographic Consent for QQI Modules V3.pdf](#) and Easy Read Consent form for data required by QQI (Appendix 9) are provided to learners explaining the purpose of the information collected.

The HSE adheres to consent regulations through the Consent for Photography/Video and Audit information leaflet at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/communications/branding/1hse-consent-information-leaflet-for-photography-audio-video.pdf> and requires written consent via the Guidelines for National Consent Form for Publicity/Filming/Photography (Appendix 10).

8.9. Freedom of Information

The HSE adheres to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 which gives each individual legal rights to access both personal and non-personal (corporate) records, to have personal records amended or deleted where the information is incorrect or misleading and the right to seek reasons for decisions that affect him/her.

For further information, please refer to:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/info/foi/>

This policy will be reviewed December 2025.

Related Documents

- Easy Read Learner Evaluation Sheet (Module)
- Initial Assessment Form
- Encryption Policy Version 3.0
- Information Technology (I.T.) Security Policy Version 3.0
- Tracker – Storage Log Sheet
- PCP Goal Tracker 2022
- Standards and Recommended Practices for Healthcare Record Management V3.0
- Retention of Financial Records NRF-08

- Record Retention Periods Policy 2013
- HSE Data Protection Policy Version 1.1
- USB Memory Stick Usage Agreement
- Easy Read Photographic Consent for QQI Modules V3
- Easy Read Consent Form for data required by QQI V3
- Consent for photography, video and audio Information leaflet
- Guidelines for National Consent Form for Publicity Filming Photography

9. Public Information and Communication

9.1. Introduction

NWTSS is a Health and Social Care Service with learners referred via the HSE Day Services Coordination Team. Public information and communications are published through the Local Area Communications Team and the HSE Digital Communications Team. Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, Self-evaluation Reports and Quality Improvement Plans will be published on the HSE website

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/hse-north-west-training-and-support-services-nwtss-/>

9.2. Policy on Public Information and Communication

Policy Statement

This policy has been developed in recognition of the importance that clear and accurate communication can both protect and enhance the effectiveness and value of the service that NWTSS provides.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that NWTSS commit to providing effective communication with all stakeholders.

Scope

This policy applies to all NWTSS staff and relates to all types external communications. Communications should always be clear and carried out in a timely, appropriate and effective manner. This policy is informed by the following Legislation

- Related Policies, Reports and Standards
- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Education and Training Act 2012, Education and Training Amendment Act 2019.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of

- HSE Funded Adult Day Services.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities 2015.
- A National Framework for Person Centred Planning in Services for Persons with a Disability.

Definition

Communications is the process of sharing information with external stakeholders and the wider public. Public and published **communications** may include, but are not limited to, information published about NWTSS's programmes of education and training, quality assurance policies and procedures, information on website, data on completion and accreditation, press releases, newsletters, social media, presentations, seminars, radio and newspaper interviews, noticeboards, posters, exhibitions, meetings, evaluations, feedback and reports.

NWTSS is committed to using a wide range of public communication techniques to:

- Raise awareness of the opportunities that the service provides;
- Ensure respectful communication that is inclusive of diversity;
- Disseminate information about activities and provision;
- Respond to requests and queries in a timely and effective manner.

Forms of communication used will include:

- **Verbal:** interpersonal communication, announcements, meetings and phone calls;
- **Written:** Letters, notices, calendars of events, schedules, reports, and learner handbooks;
- **Meetings** with stakeholders (other education providers, employers);
- **Electronic:** Emails, presentations and Text messaging;
- **Digital:** Website, social media platforms.

Responsibility

Effective communication is the responsibility of **ALL** NWTSS staff and relates to all types of verbal and written communications for and with the general public, including learners and external stakeholders.

9.2.1. All staff have in their day-to-day interactions a responsibility to:

- Maintain courteous and professional relationships with external stakeholders and the public at all times;
- Actively create a culture that ensures a two-way communications process, with requests for information or clarification of information responded to in a timely manner;
- Ensure a flow of positive and current information that reflects the work and activities of the service;
- Ensure that all information, including statistical data that contributes to reports, social media, website, notices, press releases, and evaluations is accurate;
- Ensure the security of all recorded communications;
- Exercise caution in respect of security of information when relaying information verbally;
- Treat all communications with respect and, where needed, with confidentiality;
- Seek constructive feedback from relevant stakeholders utilising a variety of methods to inform programme development, practice and our quality assurance systems.

9.2.2. All staff have a responsibility to follow HSE and NWTSS's Quality Assurance Governance and Management protocols in respect of published information.

This includes:

- Submitting information for publications to the relevant governance groups (Programme Committee; Quality Committee and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee). The governance group will:
 - Verify that the information is accurate and reflects the activities and outcomes of NWTSS's education and training provision.
 - Adhere to NWTSS's governance structure and implement quality assurance policies and procedures.
 - Seek prior approval from the HSE's National Press and Media Relations Office or the Local Area Communications Team when providing information connected with our services to media outlets.
 - <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsresources/commstoolkit/medi-a-relations-protocols.pdf> and

- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/communications/requesting-communications-support/>
- Adhere to the Social Media Staff Use Guidelines
https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/HSE_Social_Media_Staff_Use_Guidelines.pdf
- Submit all contributions from learners, tutors and other relevant stakeholders to the Quality Committee for review before publishing.

9.2.3. All staff at Centre Level have a responsibility to:

- Submit all materials for publication to their manager who will follow the protocols in respect of published information outlined at 9.2.2 above, and submit to the relevant governance group. This may result in editing of materials, including publicity materials;
- Only materials that have been reviewed and agreed by the relevant governance committee or group will be uploaded to the HSE website on the agreed page by the HSE Digital Communications Team. Information may include:
 - Programme descriptors (Programme Committee), with accurate and clear information about its status (award level, awarding body and title of the award).
 - Policies and procedures (Quality Committee), with clear, accurate and accessible information
- Adhere to all policies that relate to their role, including programme policy and policy for developing policies;
- Use the QA Manual, Tutor and Learner Handbooks that have been approved by the Quality Governance and Management Groups.

9.2.4 In addition to 9.2.2 and 9.2.3, above staff involved directly in promotions of programmes and courses should:

Ensure that all information prepared to inform potential and current students about courses and programmes is clear, accurate, and objective and complies with regulatory requirements.

Information should be made available in appropriate formats which can include:

- Induction booklets (approved by Management);
- Learner Handbook (Developed by Programme Development Team and approved by Academic Council);

- Programme Brochures (Programme Committee oversees development, approved Academic Council, with final approval by the Management Team).

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025.

Related documents

- Media Relations Protocols for HSE Employees
- Communications Support Request Form

10. Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

10.1. Introduction

NWTSS endeavours to support learners to gain skills that will assist them become active citizens in collaboration with their peers.

10.2. Policy on Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

Policy Statement

It is the policy of NWTSS to provide learners with quality assured accredited awards.

NWTSS is not engaged in sub-contracting, utilising or procuring external partners or second providers for programme delivery.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that NWTSS by linking with other parties involved in programmes of education and training provides learners with access to suitable programmes leading to quality assured awards both within and external to our centres.

Scope

This policy applies to all parties external to NWTSS that support the education and training provision of NWTSS learners. These include: providers and funders who create additional education and training opportunities, students availing of work experience placement opportunities with NWTSS, education providers and employers who support work placement opportunities for NWTSS learners, External Authenticators, External Chairs and members of Governance committees, and external subject matter experts.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.
- Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- HSE New Directions Policy 2012.
- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities 2015.
- Policy on Programmes of Education and Training NWTSS

10.3. Peer Relationships with the Broader Education and Training Community

NWTSS engages with reputable education and training bodies in a number of ways:

- Face to face;
- Email;
- Education Fairs;
- Open Days;
- Shared Learning Events;
- Workshops;
- Webinars;
- Presentations;
- Membership of committees, where expertise will enhance provision.

NWTSS has developed links with the broader local education and training community in order to promote and support inclusion in the provision of education and training opportunities for learners with a disability.

NWTSS currently links with the following:

- Donegal ETB;
- Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB (MSLETB);
- ATU Donegal;
- ATU Sligo;
- Sligo Leader Partnership;
- North West Regional College (NWRC), Derry;
- Second level schools who may refer learners to NWTSS.

Donegal ETB/ MSLETB

NWTSS collaborates with Donegal ETB and MSLETB Adult Literacy programmes. This can be either:

- Sharing expertise through representation of Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Coordinator on Academic Council;
- Shared training and professional development for literacy tutors;
- Shared panel of part-time literacy experts / tutors;
- Support in the implementation of Person Centred Plans (PCP'S) through transfer and progression options for learners, with NWTSS continuing to support learners.

ATU Donegal/Sligo

NWTSS provides the opportunity for work placements for Social Care Students from ATU Donegal/Sligo where they fully engage with learners while implementing and sharing their own learning experiences. Learners from NWTSS have engaged with ATU Donegal/Sligo facilities such as training rooms, sports and canteen facilities.

In ATU Sligo, learners from NWTSS participate in some class work and projects with students from the [Bachelor of Business \(Honours\) in Sport with Business](#), and [Bachelor of Science in Health Science and Physiology](#) courses.

Student Placements from ATU:

- ATU contacts NWTSS requesting commitment to facilitate a student;
- An online application form is completed to register as a placement provider;
- Student makes contact with NWTSS to visit the location;
- Member of staff is assigned to the student and meets with him/her;
- Induction takes place to include timetable, role, site visit etc;
- Assigned staff member will have weekly meeting with the student;
- ATU placement facilitator will make a visit every four weeks.

Learners progressing to ATU:

- Tutor/assessor organises for ATU information sessions for learners;
- Access to programmes is highlighted/discussed;
- Learners make application to progress to ATU to programme of interest;
- Learner accepts the place at ATU;
- Support meeting held between learner, tutor/assessor and ATU Access Officer.

Sligo Leader Partnership

NWTSS liaise with Sligo Leader Partnership in order to provide learners with the opportunity to avail of an integrated range of programmes covering employment supports, social inclusion, training and wellbeing.

- Sligo Leader Partnership provide programme information via email;
- Tutors discuss this information with learners;
- Learners chooses a programme;
- Tutor/assessor registers the learners with programme;
- Learners attend programme.

North West Regional College (NWRC)

NWTSS liaises with the NWRC in Derry to support learners' avail of a range of programmes in a supportive environment.

- Tutor/assessor organises for NWRC information sessions for learners;
- Access to programmes is highlighted/discussed;
- Learners make application to progress to NWRC to programme of interest;
- Tutor/assessor arrange one-to-one meeting for learner with Access Officer;
- Learner accepts the place NWRC;
- Support meeting held between learner, tutor/assessor and NWRC support staff.

10.4 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are carried out (where necessary) on premises prior to commencing training/work placements that include appropriate public liability insurance, emergency plans, emergency lighting, firefighting equipment etc. Provider or employer is made aware of NWTSS policies and related procedures and format for monitoring and recording learner engagement.

10.5 External Expert Panellists, Subject Matter Experts, Examiners and Authenticators

External members of committees and external subject matter experts are provided with an induction on the work of NWTSS, including the Quality Assurance system.

NWTSS ensures that independent external authenticators assess the learners' portfolios in a fair and consistent manner in line with the required standard for the award.

NWTSS sources External Authenticators with subject matter expertise from the ETBI database and has an External Authenticators Selection Criteria in place in line with national standards.

For the purpose of programme evaluation, external evaluators are selected and engaged based on their qualifications and expertise in the area of programme evaluation and according to the following criteria:

- Be independent of the provider;
- Declare actual or perceived conflict of interest;
- Have a background in training and education;

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025

11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

11.1. Introduction

NWTSS is committed to the improvement of our training programmes and related services by identifying gaps that require improvement. This is done through the use of the EASI Process & Tool and a QCI Self-evaluation Checklist.

11.2 Policy on Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Policy Statement

It is the policy of NWTSS to commit to the ongoing improvement of our training programmes and related services in line with national standards through the implementation of a rigorous review, evaluation and monitoring system thereby identifying existing best practice and addressing areas requiring improvements.

Purpose

The purpose of the self-evaluation, monitoring and review policy is to ensure that NWTSS upholds its commitment to the delivery of quality, fit for purpose, relevant QCI validated training programmes in line with national standards.

Scope

This policy applies to NWTSS's QCI programmes of education and training and all related quality assurance processes.

Legislation/Other Related Policies/Reports/Standards

- NWTSS's QA Assurance Policies and Procedures
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QCI for use by all Providers, 2016, Version 2.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- HSE New Directions Report of the National Working Group for the review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services.

- Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities 2015.
- A National Framework for Person Centred Planning in Services for Persons with a Disability.

Definition

Monitoring: is the ongoing, continuous process of regularly collecting and analysing relevant information as programmes are delivered to determine relevance and measure the outcomes to ensure the programme has achieved its aims and objectives.

Evaluations: take place mid/end of a module/programme, quarterly or 3-yearly of the service and/or programme in order to measure success.

Review: focuses specifically on the impact of the combined analysis of programme monitoring and evaluation. The findings and recommendations for change are documented in a Programme Improvement Plan.

11.3 Internal Self-Monitoring

NWTSS seeks to ensure that areas of effective practice are consolidated; areas for improvement are addressed; and agreed actions are implemented through a range of methods such as:

- Monitoring of interest checklists, [..\Interest Checklist V2-quarterly.pdf](#)
- PCP goal tracker,
- PCP/Support/Key worker reviews [..\PCP-Support-Keyworker Review and Feedback.pdf](#)

Self-evaluation

To ensure that a high quality service and fit for purpose, effective training programmes in line with national standards are provided to learners, the HSE North West Training and Support Services will implement a system of self-evaluation and review through the following:

- Learner Evaluations;
- Staff Feedback/Evaluations;

- Programme Review;
- File Review;
- Class Observations;
- EASI Process & Tool;
- Self-Evaluation Checklist;
- Internal Verification reports;
- External Evaluator reports.
- Analysis of outcomes (results and progression)

Self-evaluation Timeframe:

NWTSS commits to:

- Evaluating a QQI validated programme every 3 years;
- Generating an annual self-evaluation plan and schedule, and circulate to all stakeholders.

Table 4: Internal Monitoring & Self-Evaluation Timelines

Internal Monitoring & Self-Evaluation Timelines		
Activity	Timeframe	Input / Output
Internal programme monitoring and review	Annually	Learner and tutor module /programme evaluation. Monitoring reports. IV and EA reports.
Programme Reviews	Quarterly	Learner evaluations of programme and activities. Action plans /schedules.
EASI Process & Tool Evaluation	Annually	Learner, staff and management evaluations and review. Reports from the EASI Process & Tool Evaluations.
Self-evaluation of programmes	3-yearly or more frequently if required	Self-evaluation checklist. Completed Report and PIP. Independent expert assessor report.

Learner Evaluations

The learner evaluations should take place either midway or at the end of the module/programme. The information collated from the evaluations will be used to improve the training programmes and includes but is not limited to:

- Module rating;
- Level of satisfaction;
- Level of engagement/understanding;
- Supports available.

Staff Feedback/Evaluation

Staff feedback/evaluations will also form part of the self-evaluation process within NWTSS. Staff is provided with a feedback/evaluation sheet which should be completed at the end of the module/programme. Best practice and suggestions for improvement are elements of the evaluation. This feedback is used to make recommendations for improving the programmes of education and training.

Programme Review

Programme evaluations take place each quarter over the term of the one year programme. Interest checklists and Personal Needs Analysis aligned to the programme modules are provided to the learner as programme commences. This information is then collated to review the programme to assess the satisfaction level and benefits for the learner and to plan the next quarter of the programme.

File Checks

Files are checked on an annual basis to ensure that they are maintained and updated as necessary. Best practice is identified and recommendations for improvement made.

Class Observations

Class observations are conducted on 6- 12 month basis or as required. Written feedback is provided which includes highlighting best practice and making recommendations or suggestions.

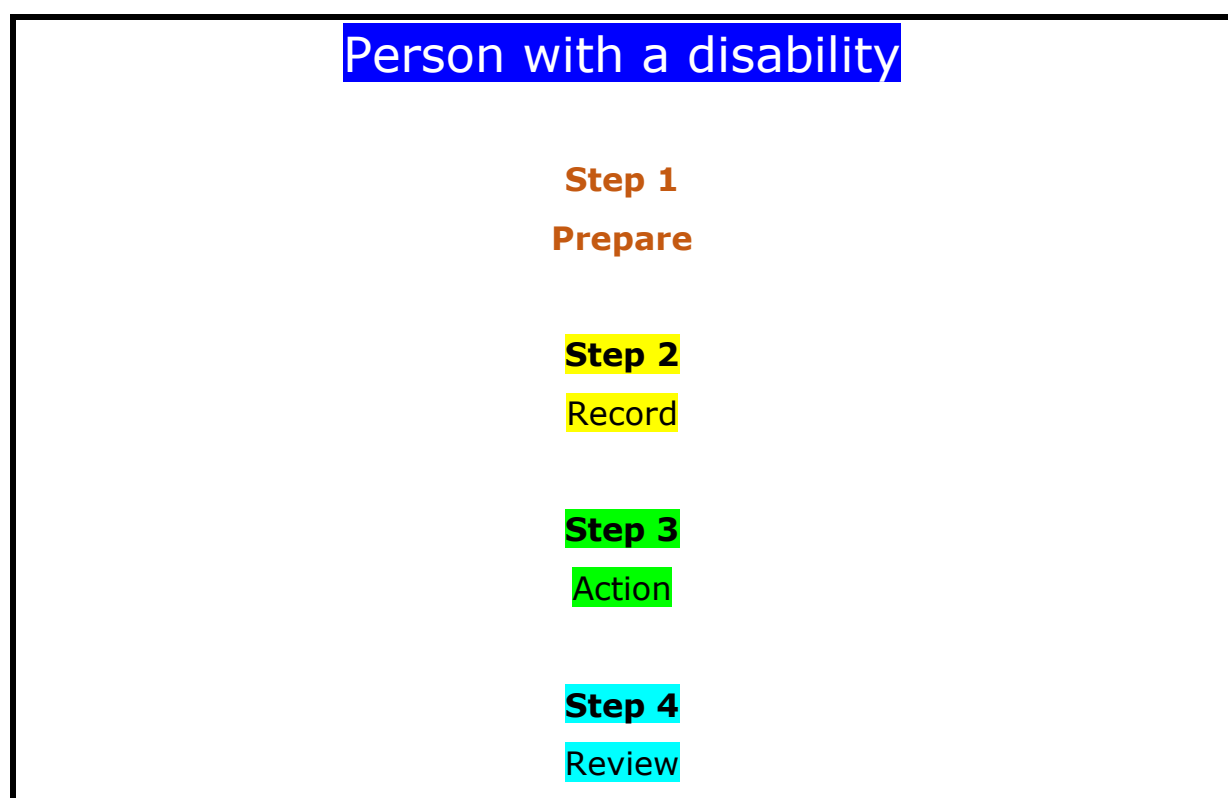
EASI Process & Tool

The EASI Process & Tool is a self-evaluation process utilised by the provider and is a fundamental part of the continuous quality improvement process and key to the delivery of the New Directions Policy.

NWTSS utilises the EASI Process & Tool to ensure that specific findings/outcomes identified by the self-evaluation review have been analysed and made available for the external review. The EASI Process & Tool is a Self-Evaluation process conducted by each service location within the provider and is a fundamental part of continuous quality improvement process and key to the delivery of the New Directions.

The aim of the EASI Process & Tool is to produce a report which will help each service location provider to maintain and improve the quality of its services and supports under New Directions. [..\EASI Process & Tool Template.xls](#)

Diagram 12: Outlining the 4 Steps Self-Evaluation Process



The EASI Process & Tool evaluates the NWTSS under the following themes:

Table 5: EASI Tool & Themes

Theme 1:	Individualised Services and Supports
Theme 2:	Effective Services and Supports
Theme 3:	Safe Services and Supports
Theme 4:	Leadership, Governance and Management
Theme 5:	Responsive Workforce
Theme 6:	Use of Resources
Theme 7:	Use of Information

The EASI Process & Tool self-evaluation is completed on an annual basis to ensure compliance by NWTSS to the Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for People with Disabilities. A constructive report of the self-evaluation findings are submitted to the National New Directions Implementation Group. The EASI Process & Tool Lead person conducts a self-evaluation of the service and its supports with the learners, staff and management as follows:

- Self-evaluation of the seven themes of New Directions;
- Collate the findings and apply a grading system to the results;
- Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) drafted with management outlining the actions to be completed, which sets out the priority level for each action, who is responsible date of implementation, as well as identifying any barriers to the implementation of actions identified;
- Each Service uploads their full EASI Tool annually (November) to the National New Directions Implementation Group who review the National Report. A progress upload of the EASI Tool takes place in May each year;
- The CQIP is made available for all staff on the local shared drive.

Self-evaluation Checklist

NWTSS recognises that self-evaluation is essential to the success of the training programmes so as to enhance the learners' experience. Therefore the provider has introduced an updated self-evaluation checklist which evaluates:

- Governance and Management of Quality;
- Documented Approach to Quality Assurance;
- Programmes of Education and Training;
- Staff Recruitment, Management and Development;
- Teaching and Learning;
- Assessment of Learners;
- Support for Learners;
- Information and Data Management;
- Public Information and Communication;
- Other Parties Involved in Education and Training;
- Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review;

The provider will implement the following:

- Conduct a self-evaluation checklist on a selected training programme every three years or more frequently if required;
- Collate the learner and staff evaluation sheets;
- Review previous self-evaluation checklists;
- Develop an action plan with the self-evaluation team and assign responsibilities;
- Complete and grade the self-evaluation checklist;
- Draft a report in identifying the overall programme findings, strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations;
- Devise a Programme Improvement Plan (PIP) outlining the actions to be completed, person responsible and date of implementation;
- Have the self-evaluations report and PIP reviewed by an independent external assessor;
- The report and the PIP are submitted to the AC for approval. Once approved both are submitted to QQI;
- Both the report and the PIP are uploaded on the local shared drive.

Internal Verification

The Internal Verifiers review and check the assessment portfolios prior to submission to the External Authenticator and use an IV checklist which helps identifies best practice and areas for improvement and adhere strictly to the IV Guideline located on the shared drive.

The External Evaluator

The external evaluator, a person who is independent of programme delivery and capable of comparing the quality of the programme(s) being evaluated with that of similar programmes elsewhere. The external evaluator will be selected from the existing External Authenticator panel using the current selection criteria.

The external evaluator will:

- Be independent of the entire process;
- Able to make recommendations and comparisons with similar programmes;
- Support the provider in the self-evaluation process;
- Assist in the drafting of the Self-Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan.

Analysis of Outcomes and Progression rates

The Quality Committee will keep a record of results and also progression rates to employment, other training and between levels. This data will form part of the evaluation process and determine required improvements.

11.4 External Monitoring

NWTSS provides services to people with intellectual disability, mental health and/or dual diagnosis and are governed by national standards. These standards are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure compliance and best practice.

NWTSS ensures that each location has a risk register, which outlines and measures risks specific to each location. Internal risk audits are conducted annually or when required which aid the provider in identifying risk and developing controls to mitigate risk.

Those involved in monitoring and reviewing are:

New Directions Implementation Group Service

The New Directions Implementation Group Service are a monitoring body which include the monitoring of all the training locations within the NWTSS.

External Authenticator

NWTSS QC Chairperson will appoint an external authenticator as per the provider's Criteria for Selecting External Authenticators. The External Authenticator ensures that a fair and consistent assessment has been applied to all learners and in line with national standards and produces a report which identifies areas of best practice and/or highlights areas of improvement. A copy of this Selection Criteria is located on the shared drive.

Health and Safety Authority

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has overall responsibility for the administration and enforcement of health and safety at work in Ireland. NWTSS are monitored by the HSE / APEX to ensure compliance with legislation at the workplace.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in December 2025.

Related Documents

- Interest Checklist V2-quarterly
- PCP Goal Tracker 2022
- PCP-Support-Keyworker Review and Feedback
- EASI Process & Tool Template
- QQI Self-evaluation Checklist 2022
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013 (Version 2 - revised 2018*) <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>
- Role of the HSA. https://www.hsa.ie/eng/about_us/role_of_the_hsa/

Appendix 1:

Please refer to A Comprehensive System on ShareFile

Appendix 2

Please refer to Instructions for Agency Cover on ShareFile

Appendix 3: Training Needs Analysis

Please refer to Staff Training Needs Analysis on ShareFile

Appendix 4

Please refer to Learner Evaluation Sheet of module/group/class/project work on ShareFile

Appendix 5:

Please refer to Checklist for suitable premises on ShareFile

Appendix 6

Please refer to External Authenticator Selection Criteria on ShareFile

Appendix 7

Please refer to Security of Assessment on ShareFile

Appendix 8:

Please refer to Appeals Form on ShareFile

Appendix 9

Consent Form for data required by QQI for the purpose of Certifying Learners on ShareFile

Appendix 10

Please refer Consent Form for photography/audio/video on ShareFile