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LMETB Quality Assurance
Guidelines for engaging with an
External Training provider

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1. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

LMETB is required in accordance with Section 30 of The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 to seek approval of its quality assurance (QA) procedures from QQI. The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for LMETB Further Education and Training programmes and services was approved by QQI in June 2018.

2. Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines

LMETB has specific responsibilities under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. QQI has put in place the following guidelines to enable ETBs to meet their statutory responsibilities:

- Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards
- Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes

3. Integrated QA Procedural framework

A central concern of LMETB FET provision is the need to provide appropriately recognised and quality assured courses including ensuring that Quality Assurance procedures are implemented in all our education and training programmes.

Due to the significant organisational change underway across LMETB Further Education and Training (FET) provision, it is intended that the Quality Improvement Plan will progress the development of an integrated procedural framework across all FET provision. It is the intention of the FET service that a single set of policies, procedures and practices will operate across LMETB - quality assuring our programmes and services at provider level.

All QA arrangements with other awarding bodies will be incorporated within this single set of policies, procedures and practices. The development of specific policies and procedures are an ongoing process with different aspects of our Quality Assurance Procedures directly informed by QQI QA Guidelines referred to above.

4. Other Awarding Bodies

Courses associated with other awarding bodies operate under their specified Quality Assurance Procedures (QAP). It is intended that the LMETB quality assurance (QA) arrangements will be comprehensive, (taking into account specific provider owned QA requirements) – covering all courses and related services regardless of whether or not these lead to QQI awards, and/or other awards recognised within the National qualifications framework. LMETB currently has QA arrangements with the following awarding bodies:

- City and Guilds
- ILM
- ITEC
- ICS

5. Contracted Training: An example of a ‘joint arrangements’ type relationship under public procurement processes with external training providers.

These programmes are delivered under what was the Transitional Quality Assurance System (TQAS)¹ and specific procurement contracts. Contracted training involves the delegation of the provision of education and training to in general private providers. Contractors currently and will into the future deliver programmes that lead to a variety of awards including vendor certification especially in the area of IT qualifications.

Contracted Training (CT) refers to the procurement, review and monitoring of training provision outsourced to contractors by LMETB under the Regional skills and Training Centre. Contracted training is used for training which cannot be provided using the existing resources of LMETB. CT is particularly useful in the following scenarios:

- to access expertise not currently available in LMETB
- to access specialist plant, technical resources of a contractor
- to pilot new courses without accumulating long term commitments in terms of staff and resources in the event that it is unsuccessful

LMETB, through its Training services, has procedures in place regarding sub-contracting of training

¹ (in the main - unless contracted under the Hybrid QA approach)

provision including CTC, LTIs, STPs and Contracted Training. Procedures include:

- The application process
- Evaluation
- Business planning
- Financial and non-financial monitoring
- Review of programmes.

Procedures are in place for tendering and awarding of contracts to second providers for the provision of delivery of training programmes within the contracted training framework. Contracted Training providers are required to adhere to LMETB Quality Assurance policies and procedures and are monitored on a regular basis by Training Services staff.

5.1 Monitoring of Contracted training

Contracted Training Officers with responsibility for Contract Training conduct regular monitoring visits of courses provided by Contract Training companies to monitor the progress of the course. The course may be visited at any stage and as often as required to ensure quality of service provision. During the monitoring visit, the Training Officer establishes learner feedback with regard to training delivery, assessment, premises and equipment, and areas for improvement. The Training Officer also discusses a range of issues with the Tutor/Contractor, including training delivery, QA requirements (Training Officer having linked with TSO prior to visit), and individual learner issues.

5.2 LMETB Approach to Contracted Training (delivered under LMETB QA)

Contracted training providers must meet a set of clear requirements to ensure the quality of provision and LMETB must ensure the requirements are met. Contracted training is also subject to same LMETB quality assurance and co-ordination approval processes for the delivery of programmes. This means that LMETB needs to know the identity and the details of how and where the LMETB programme would be delivered in order to approve the use of our programme by contractors. It would not make sense that contractors could operate under less oversight than our own colleges and centres. Under LMETB QA

governance all courses must be quality assured to the same standard regardless of whether they are delivered by LMETB directly or delivered by a contractor employed by LMETB. Learners should not be disadvantaged.

6. Entering into ‘joint arrangements’ type relationships under public procurement processes with external training providers

LMETB is required to have effective Quality Assurance procedures ² and must *‘include provision for engagement with external partnerships and second providers...including sub-contracting of provision’, which also must include ‘provisions for:*

- *due diligence on the reputation,*
- *legal status,*
- *standing and financial sustainability of any such parties or second providers involved in provider provision or related services’.*³

Publication of all such arrangement including transitional ones and including their nature is required.

6.1 Monitoring and review of LMETB programmes of education and training

LMETB is required as part of monitoring to review and evaluate qualityⁱ⁴ in terms of service delivery. A fundamental requirement of LMETB’s quality assurance system involves the monitoring and review of its programmes of education and training including the quality assurance system and procedures which underpin these. In doing so, existing effective practices is identified and maintained, while areas needing improvement are addressed ⁵. Implicit in this is the requirement that LMETB has the ability to conduct this type of monitoring and also in a position to adequately remedy deficiencies.

² Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, Section 28

³ QQI Statutory Core Quality Assurance Guidelines, 2016, Pg 20

⁴ Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, Section 284.

⁵ QQI Statutory Core Quality Assurance Guidelines, Monitoring, Self-Evaluation and Review, pg. 21

6.2 LMETB corporate planning and oversight

According to the QQI Statutory Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines - Education and Training Boards,⁶ the QA procedures for the governance and management of LMETB operate at many levels of the organisationit is important that a multi-layered system is in place so that quality and its assurance is being monitored in a consistent and appropriate way within and across the various constituent divisions or institutions of LMETB. These refer to the many FET centre, adult education services, PLC colleges, the training centres and its community-based provision, and contracted providers that are engaged in the delivery and assessment of education and training programmes.⁷

LMETBs is required to be in a position to have oversight in terms of governance and monitoring in relation to contracted training to ensure sufficient levels of quality for learners.

LMETB is responsible for the design, development, approval and monitoring, and review of all programmes, including programmes leading to QQI awards⁸. A key part of this is determining the capacity of centres where a programme of education and training is being delivered. This requires an 'assessment of the capacity of a centre to provide a (validated) programme and reporting by the centre to the LMETB on any change in its capacity to provide QQI validated programmes. Notification to QQI - Where a centre is no longer meeting the conditions or resources required for validation.⁹

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

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

⁶ The Sector Specific Guidelines are a subset of the Core Quality Assurance Guidelines (and must be read in line with them).

⁷ QQI WHITE PAPER; Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for Education and Training Boards, December 2016,

⁸ Section 3; Governance and Management, pg. 5

⁹ Supra Programme Management pgs.6-7

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- Staff planning, performance monitoring and capacity development having regard to the need for vocational trainers to keep up-to-date in their vocational skills (in addition to any pedagogical skills);
- Development and planning of systems to promote quality teaching and learning in all relevant learning environments (e.g. workplace, flexible distributed {e-learning}), classroom, and practical training environments) and monitor this at centre level and ETB level;
- Development and planning of systems to oversee the implementation of procedures for the assessment of learners to ensure fairness, consistency and fitness-for-purpose and monitor this at centre level and ETB level ¹⁰

LMETB must be assured that collaborative providers/partners meet the following:

- **Legal, reputation and compliance requirements**
 - An established legal entity, with education and training as a principal function.
 - The legal entity must be a clearly identified legal person, having rights and responsibilities under law.
 - The legal entity must be established in the European Union, having regard to arrangements in place for the UK Brexit and have a substantial presence in Ireland.
 - Have clearly specified dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries.
 - Declare any third-party relationships and partnerships.
 - Comply with applicable regulations and legislation in all jurisdictions in which it operates.
 - Be in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any jurisdictions in which it operates (or in which its parents or subsidiaries operate) or

¹⁰ QQI Statutory Sectoral QA Guidelines, pgs. 8

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enrols learners, or in which it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.

➤ **Resource, governance and structural requirements**

- Be stable and in good financial standing.
- Have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision.
- Have fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision-making structures.
- Have arrangements for providing required information to the ETB.
- Have capacity to deliver education and training as demonstrated through experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes
- Have sufficient resources, as well as corporate, structural and internal quality assurance systems in place, to sustainably provide education and training programmes.

➤ **Programme development and provision requirements**

- Demonstrate its ability to design, develop, provide and review programmes as appropriate and comply with the standard conditions for programme approval.
- Have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff.
- Have fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources.
- Have structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent fit-for-purpose assessment of learner achievement.
- Have arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners

7. Summary

A second provider/Contracted Trainer is an independent provider who is engaged by a first provider (in this case, LMETB) to deliver all or part of a programme on behalf of the first provider. The responsibility for QA and validation, and the programme generally, remains with the first provider (LMETB). The learners are the first provider's learners even if the programme is delivered and assessed by the second provider. The second provider has to be consulted on the QA and the respective responsibilities as regards who (first and / or second provider) does what, are to be set out in a Memorandum of Agreement or Service level agreement.
