Arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement planning in Further Education, Work-based Learning and European Social Fund projects

September 2018

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CSE

CONTENTS

1.   Introduction

This document sets out how the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will evaluate the effectiveness of quality improvement planning in the further education colleges, training supplier organisations and European Social Funded (ESF) projects. These revised arrangements replace the previous scrutiny evaluation process and have been effective from September 2017.

2.   Guidance for colleges, supplier organisations and European Social Fund projects

While organisations[1] can implement internal self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes that meet their individual needs, the following requirements will be common across the sectors:

- the use of robust self-evaluation, based on an appropriate range of evidence, to inform curriculum planning at strategic and operational levels;

- the development of a whole-organisation quality improvement plan informed by the self-evaluation process that prioritises appropriate actions to address effectively the key areas for improvement identified; and

- the implementation of monitoring and review processes that evaluate the impact of the actions taken to sustain improvement in the quality of the learning, teaching and training.

3.   Submission requirements

Annually[2], all organisations will be required to submit to the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) in the Department for the Economy (the Department) the following documentation:

1. a statement of assurance[3] that the organisation has appropriate arrangements in place to sustain improvement in the quality of its provision;

2. a whole-organisation quality improvement plan, informed effectively by self-evaluation, that prioritises appropriate actions to address the identified key areas for improvement;

3. a review of the organisation's previously submitted quality improvement plan including evidence of the impact of the actions taken to improve/sustain quality and outcomes;

4. a summary of the organisation's overall key strengths and areas for improvement;

5. a summary of the organisation's own evaluation of their 'Overall Effectiveness' and the three contributory performance levels of 'Outcomes for Learners', 'Quality of Provision', and 'Leadership and Management' as identified in the ETI Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework[4] ;

---

[1]   Organisation refers to further education colleges, training supplier organisations and European Social Fund projects.
[2]   The Department will write to organisations annually with a submission date.
[3]   The Department will provide a template statement that should be signed by the chair of the governing body/board/management committee/managing director/owner. The organisation will be assuring the Department that their quality arrangements reflect the effective practice outlined in Appendix 1.
[4]   See guidance in appendix 2 and https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation-4

6. a summary, where appropriate, of the organisation's performance by funded programme/project[5] informed by relevant data, and which is aligned to ETI performance measures; and

7. a summary, where appropriate, of the organisation's performance in each professional and technical area[6] and in the essential skills, including analysis of key performance measures.

The Department will share all information submitted by organisations, as listed above, with the ETI.

4.   Response to the submission

Annually, the ETI will scrutinise each organisation's submission and any other relevant supporting information such as inspection reports and history, health checks, bulletins and performance data in order to plan subsequent ETI activity and to inform the Department's written response. Depending on the outcome from this initial scrutiny process, the ETI and QIT will take the relevant actions as outlined below. A detailed flow diagram outlining the range of actions available and the associated reasons for the instigation of them can be found in Appendix 5.

Outcome A

On the basis of the information provided, there is sufficient evidence that the organisation is planning effectively to sustain improvement. The organisation may be included in the current year's sample of ETI quality improvement planning inspections[7].

Outcome B

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

Outcome C

On the basis of the information submitted, and including any additional information submitted within four weeks, there is still insufficient evidence that the organisation is planning effectively to sustain improvement. The organisation will now be included in the current year's sample of ETI quality improvement planning inspections, or, if appropriate, a full inspection. A further full resubmission of the quality improvement plan will be required, particularly to address key areas for improvement identified at this stage in the scrutiny process.

Outcome D

The organisation is already in the ETI follow-up inspection, or has been notified/scheduled for a full inspection: the scrutiny of the annual submission will be included in the evaluation of the organisation's capacity to sustain improvement. Outcome A or B then will apply.

---

[5] For work-based learning providers, this will include, for example, Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI, and include the overall performance level and the key strengths/areas for improvement. For ESF projects this would include different projects, if appropriate.

[6] The internally evaluated performance level and summary of key strengths/areas for improvement for each main professional and technical area or ESF project strand and, where appropriate, the essential skills including reference to outcomes at level 2 in literacy and numeracy. A suggested template and guidance is provided in Appendix 3.

[7] Guidance on quality improvement planning inspections can be found on the ETI website at:
https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/quality-improvement-planning-inspectionscrutiny

## 5.	Annual ETI quality improvement planning inspections

Annually, a sample of organisations will be included in the ETI quality improvement planning inspections. The key reasons for the decision to carry out a quality improvement planning inspection in an organisation typically include:

1. the organisation's previous inspection indicated a high level of capacity for sustained improvement, or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement, and it has not had a recent[8] substantive[9] inspection activity;

2. the scrutiny of the quality improvement plan (QIP) and associated documentation[10] identifies that the organisation is not submitting sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they are planning effectively to sustain improvement;

3. the organisation has evaluated itself with an overall effectiveness outcome of having to address important areas for improvement or address urgently significant areas for improvement;

4. the statement of assurance governance letter identifies only 'partial assurance' for the organisation's quality improvement planning processes; or

5. a request from the Department or an evidence-based risk is identified by the District Inspector.

The quality improvement planning inspection will be arranged by the organisation's District Inspector, normally via a telephone call and will take place over two days. The focus of the inspection will be to **evaluate the impact** of the organisation's quality improvement planning processes in two key areas for improvement[11], prioritised by the organisation and agreed with the Reporting Inspector. The most recent QIP will be the key document in agreeing the areas of focus, which may include an area for improvement from a recent inspection, or inspection activity such as a district or survey visit.

If an organisation is in the inspection follow-up process or has just received notification of a full inspection, a quality improvement planning inspection will not normally be required, as the other planned inspections will report on the effectiveness of the organisation's quality improvement planning process.

After the quality improvement planning inspection visit and oral feedback[12], a short quality improvement planning inspection report will be published with the key findings and one of the following two outcomes:

> *At the time of the quality improvement planning inspection, and in the areas evaluated, the organisation has demonstrated a high level of capacity/capacity to identify and bring about improvements in the quality of the provision.*

OR

> *At the time of the quality improvement planning inspection, and in the areas evaluated, the organisation has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision. The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation brings about improvement and the Department may consider further action.*

---

[8]	Within approximately the past three years
[9]	An inspection activity which involved a published report about the organisation.
[10]	This decision would be made after the scrutiny of any re-submitted evidence, as requested by the Department
[11]	The areas agreed should be substantive enough to enable the organisation to demonstrate with first-hand evidence that it can effect and sustain improvement through its quality improvement planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes.
[12]	This may be attended by an official from the Department's QIT.

If the organisation does not demonstrate sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision, they may be required to submit an improvement plan to the QIT to address the areas for improvement identified, within eight weeks. The outcome of the quality improvement planning inspection will inform the next steps.

A more detailed document outlining the arrangements for the inspection of quality improvement planning within an organisation is available at: https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/quality-improvement-planning-inspectionscrutiny.

Self-evaluation and quality improvement planning effective practice

The following effective practice examples are provided to help organisations determine if they have appropriate quality arrangements in place when providing their annual quality assurance statement to the Department.

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- curriculum leadership and planning is informed by systematic review of the appropriateness of the curriculum offer in meeting effectively the needs of learners/participants and stakeholders;

- self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes and systems are embedded across the organisation;

- all staff across the organisation demonstrate an understanding of how self- evaluation and quality improvement planning are used to promote sustained improvement across the range of provision and improve the quality of learning, teaching and training;

- key data and information is collated regularly and used effectively by staff at all levels to inform self-evaluation and quality improvement planning across the organisation;

- learners/participants and key stakeholders inform, and engage with, the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;

- strengths and areas for improvement, across the provision, are identified and reviewed regularly, within an appropriate reporting framework;

- quality improvement plans provide a clear 'road-map' with prioritised actions to bring about sustained improvement in the areas for improvement;

- key performance indicators are used systematically to evaluate the impact of quality improvement action plans;

- whole-organisation planning at strategic and operational levels is linked to the outcomes of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning, with a clear focus on improving the quality of the learning, teaching and training;

- the continuing professional development opportunities for staff are informed by self-evaluation and linked to ongoing quality improvement; and

- the outcomes and effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes are monitored and reviewed systematically by the governing body/management committee/senior managers.

Overall findings self-evaluation template

The tables below and the summary of key findings in Appendix 3 should be completed, informed by robust self-evaluation, and submitted to the Department annually. The tables are aligned to the ETI Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework which can be downloaded from the support material section of the ETI website, www.etini.gov.uk.

Overall effectiveness	OE outcome 1 of 4
Outcomes for learners	PL one of 6
Quality of provision	PL one of 6
Leadership and management	PL one of 6

Care and Welfare	**Level 1:** Impacts positively; OR **Level 2:** Does not impact positively enough
Safeguarding	**Level 1:** Reflects the guidance; OR **Level 2:** Reflects broadly the guidance; OR **Level 3:** Unsatisfactory

Overall quality of the programmes evaluate		
Programme/project	**Proportion of registration**	**Performance level**
e.g. Further education	%	PL one of 6
e.g Training for Success	%	PL one of 6
e.g. ApprenticeshipsNI	%	PL one of 6
e.g. European Social Fund	%	PL one of 6

Overall quality of the professional and technical areas evaluated and the provision for the essential skills	
e.g ESF project strand	PL one of 6
e.g. Essential skills	PL one of 6
e.g. Professional and technical area 1	PL one of 6
e.g. Professional and technical area 2	PL one of 6

Summary of overall organisation key findings template

Organisation/Project:

Funded programmes internally evaluated:
[Training for Success/ApprenticeshipsNI/European Social Fund]

Internally self-evaluated overall effectiveness and performance levels

Overall effectiveness outcome	OE[13]	Outcomes for learners	PL[14]	Quality of provision	PL[9]	Leadership and management	PL[9]

Key findings[15]

The organisation has the following strengths:

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

To improve further the provision, the organisation needs to:

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

---

[13] Use one of the four Overall Effectiveness levels from ISEF.

[14] Use one of the six ETI performance levels from ISEF.

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

Summary of subject area/project key findings template[16]

Professional and technical area/essential skills/project strand[17]:
[e.g. Wood occupations, hair and beauty, engineering, construction, etc]

Programmes internally evaluated:
[Training for Success/ApprenticeshipsNI/European Social Fund]

Internally self-evaluated performance levels

Overall performance level	PL[18]	Outcomes for learners	PL[13]	Quality of provision	PL[13]	Leadership and management	PL[13]

Key findings[19]

The provision has the following strengths:

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

To improve further the provision, the organisation needs to:

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

- xxxxxxxxxx

---

[16] For organisations with only one area/project the overall summary is sufficient. For organisations with multiple subject areas/project strands, complete one template for each main area/project strand.

[17] Delete as appropriate

[18] Use one of the six ETI performance levels from ISEF

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

FLOWCHART DETAILING THE ETI/QIT RESPONSE TO ANNUAL SCRUTINY SUBMISSIONS.

Following a scrutiny of the evidence submitted, the ETI will advise the Department of the relevant outcome:

OUTCOME A

There is sufficient evidence that the organisation is planning effectively to sustain improvement. The organisation may be included in the current year's sample of ETI quality improvement planning inspections

QIT will write to the organisation to confirm the outcome

ETI will contact those organisations included in the sample of quality improvement planning inspections around two weeks prior to the inspection

OUTCOME B

The organisation has not submitted sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it is planning effectively to sustain improvement

QIT will write to the organisation requesting a revised submission within four weeks

The revised submission provides sufficient evidence of planning effectively to sustain improvement

The revised submission **does not** provide sufficient evidence of planning to sustain improvement. Outcome C will apply

QIT will write to the organisation to confirm the outcome

OUTCOME C

The organisation will be included in this year's sample of ETI quality improvement planning inspections

ETI will make contact with the organisation around two weeks prior to the quality improvment planning inspection visit

One of two published outcomes:

demonstrated high level of capacity/capacity to identify and bring about improvement

OR

not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement

If the organisation has demonstrated capacity to identify and bring about improvement then no further action is required.

If the organisation has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement, QIT may write to the organisation to rquest the submission, within eight weeks, of an improvement plan to address the areas for improvement identified. The outcome will inform the next steps

OUTCOME D

The organisation is already in the ETI follow-up inspection process or is scheduled for a full inspection. The annual submission will be considered by ETI as part of that process

QIT will write to the organisation to confirm the outcome