



Seirbhís Tacaíochta  
don Bhreisoideachas  
FURTHER EDUCATION  
SUPPORT SERVICE

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Bhreisoideachas  
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# SELF EVALUATION

Resource to support FETAC  
Registered Providers in  
implementing Quality Assurance  
Policy B9: Self Evaluation of  
Programmes and Services



SUPPORTING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS PROVIDERS

This resource is part of a series of publications developed by FESS to support DES funded Providers / Centres in the effective implementation of their FETAC Quality Assurance Requirements.

The publications are available to download at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie).

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# Preamble

According to FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training Policy and Guidelines, v1.3,

*“The self evaluation by a Provider of its programmes and services is a fundamental part of its quality assurance system. It is a way of developing the programme through constructive questioning leading to positive recommendations and improvement planning. It should be viewed as a process primarily for the benefit of the programme, its current and future learners and the staff working on it”.*

Section B9 of a Provider’s Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC should be detailed as follows:

## Policy Area

B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services

## Procedures

- B9.1 Assignment of Responsibility
- B9.2 Frequency
- B9.3 Range
- B9.4 Learner Involvement
- B9.5 External Evaluator
- B9.6 Methodology

To assist Providers in implementing these procedures *A Phased Approach to Self Evaluation Processes for the Further Education Sector* was developed and compiled by the Further Education Support Service (FESS) in partnership with Providers and FETAC, through a task group.

The resource may be used as a complete package, or Providers may prefer to use individual sections when appropriate.

## The Task Group comprised members of FESS and representatives from FETAC and Further Education Providers;

<b>JOE ENGLISH</b>	Assistant Principal	Co. Cavan VEC
<b>ANGELA LAMBKIN</b>	Development Officer	FETAC
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<b>JOANNE WALSH</b>	Quality Assurance Officer	Co. Mayo VEC

*FESS would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Task Group and their employers for facilitating and contributing to this process.*

## **Structure of A Phased Approach to Self Evaluation Processes for the Further Education Sector**

This resource is structured in five distinct sections comprising information booklets, a sample question bank developed by the FESS Task Group, and Self Evaluation resources and materials submitted by Further Education Providers.

### **Section 1**

This comprises the *Self Evaluation Information Booklet for Providers*. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance and support for those with responsibility for the Self Evaluation of Programmes and Related Services as required under the Provider's Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC. It is presented in two parts.

*Part One* presents an overview of the Self Evaluation Process covering legislative, FETAC and Provider Quality Assurance requirements.

*Part Two* presents a model outlining suggested phase in the Self Evaluation cycle including; preparation, planning, implementation, follow-up, review and forward planning. Part two also includes reference to tools and templates that may be of use when conducting a Self Evaluation.

### **Section 2**

This comprises *The Role of the Self Evaluation External Evaluator* handbook. It is intended for External Evaluators who have been engaged by Providers, and outlines five steps in the process of External Evaluation.

### **Section 3**

This section comprises the *Self Evaluation Sample Question Bank to Support the Collation for Information of the Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services*. These questions have been developed by the FESS Task Group to ensure effective Self Evaluation procedures across a range of Quality Assurance areas.

### **Section 4**

This section comprises *Sample Self Evaluation Learner Feedback Questionnaires* developed and used by a range of FE Providers. These should be used for reference and may be adapted to suit all Provider contexts.

### **Section 5**

This section contains *Exemplar Samples of Provider Self Evaluation Documentation / Reports*. A number of sample extracts from Providers' completed Self Evaluation reports / documentation have been selected and are included here to illustrate the type of material generated in Self Evaluation reports. These may be used for reference purposes.

*FESS would like to acknowledge and thank all of the Providers who submitted sample materials for inclusion in this resource.*

## Part 1

# Introduction to Self Evaluation

### **Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999)**

Section 18 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999) requires that all Providers of Further Education and Training establish:

- A Quality Assured System and
- A Self Evaluation System

Under Section 14 of this Act, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) was established. FETAC makes awards to Learners who have completed one or more of a vast range of programmes offered by Providers. To ensure the standard of the awards FETAC:

- agrees Quality Assurance Systems with Providers
- validates programmes submitted by Providers
- monitors and evaluates the programmes

“ . . . a provider of a programme of education and training . . . shall, having regard to existing procedures, if any, establish procedures for Quality Assurance for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training. . . ” Section 18(1)

“ . . . the procedures established under that subsection shall include:  
(a) the evaluation at regular intervals and as directed from time to time by the Council of the programme of education and training concerned, including evaluation by persons who are competent to make national and international comparisons in that respect,  
(b) evaluation by learners of that programme, and  
(c) evaluation of services related to that programme,  
and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the Council thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures.” Section 18 (2)

*The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999*

### **FETAC Requirements**

All Providers offering programmes leading to FETAC awards are required to agree a Quality Assurance system with FETAC. The Provider’s Quality Assurance agreement must demonstrate that the Provider has the capacity to deliver programmes which ensure the integrity of the award standard. The Quality Assurance system must demonstrate the Provider’s capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve on an ongoing basis, the quality of programmes and services it offers to Learners. FETAC’s requirements for Quality Assurance systems are documented in *Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3*.

### **Provider’s Quality Assurance Agreement with FETAC**

Providers in the Further Education and Training sector offer programmes to Learners in a variety of systems and contexts. There may already be Quality Assurance systems in place within these organisations, such as the Youthreach and STTC Quality Framework, NALA’s Evolving Quality Framework or School Development Planning in the post-primary sector. While these quality frameworks may complement the FETAC Quality Assurance systems they are separate and distinct structures and may have separate requirements.

**FETAC’s Quality Assurance requirements;**

Each Provider must document nine policy areas and related procedures. These policy areas are:

- B1 Communications
- B2 Equality
- B3 Staff Recruitment and Development
- B4 Access, Transfer and Progression
- B5 Programme Development, Delivery and Review
- B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners
- B7 Protection for Learners
- B8 Sub-contracting/Procuring Programme Delivery
- B9 Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services



**What is Self Evaluation?**

Self Evaluation allows the Provider to reflect on their work in a considered and structured way. It is a way of learning from experience so that the Provider can structure provision and use available resources in the most productive and effective way. It is a means by which existing good practices can be identified and maintained and areas needing improvement can be targeted and addressed.

*“Evaluation is a structured and systematic process to explore, reflect and report on the effectiveness of an activity. It aims to capture, interpret and disseminate learning from any actions undertaken. It seeks to identify good practice and to use the findings to inform future policy and practices. . . . In the context of further education and training, the activity to be evaluated is the provision of programme(s) and related services and providers are required to self evaluate.”*

*(FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, p.43)*

Self Evaluation helps to determine the success of a programme and related services and identify areas for improvement.

The formal evaluation of programmes and related services is an important means of ensuring, among other things, that quality improvements are made to programmes of Further Education and Training, and that programmes remain relevant to Learner needs.

Such evaluation processes should incorporate both an internal aspect commencing with Self Evaluation, and an external aspect using the expertise of an External Evaluator. In response to FETAC requirements the Self Evaluation process should lead to the production of the Self Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan.

Note: It should be borne in mind that the products of the Self Evaluation process contribute directly to the FETAC Monitoring process. (FETAC has devised a Monitoring process where a review of the Provider’s quality system is undertaken, and a standard Monitoring report is completed, identifying good practice and areas for improvement as appropriate).

**Section B9, the Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services** is a fundamental part of the Provider's Quality Assurance system. This section allows the Provider to continuously review their programmes and services through constructive questioning, leading to positive recommendations and ongoing planning for improvement. The procedures for this section of the Provider's Quality Assurance system must be documented as follows:

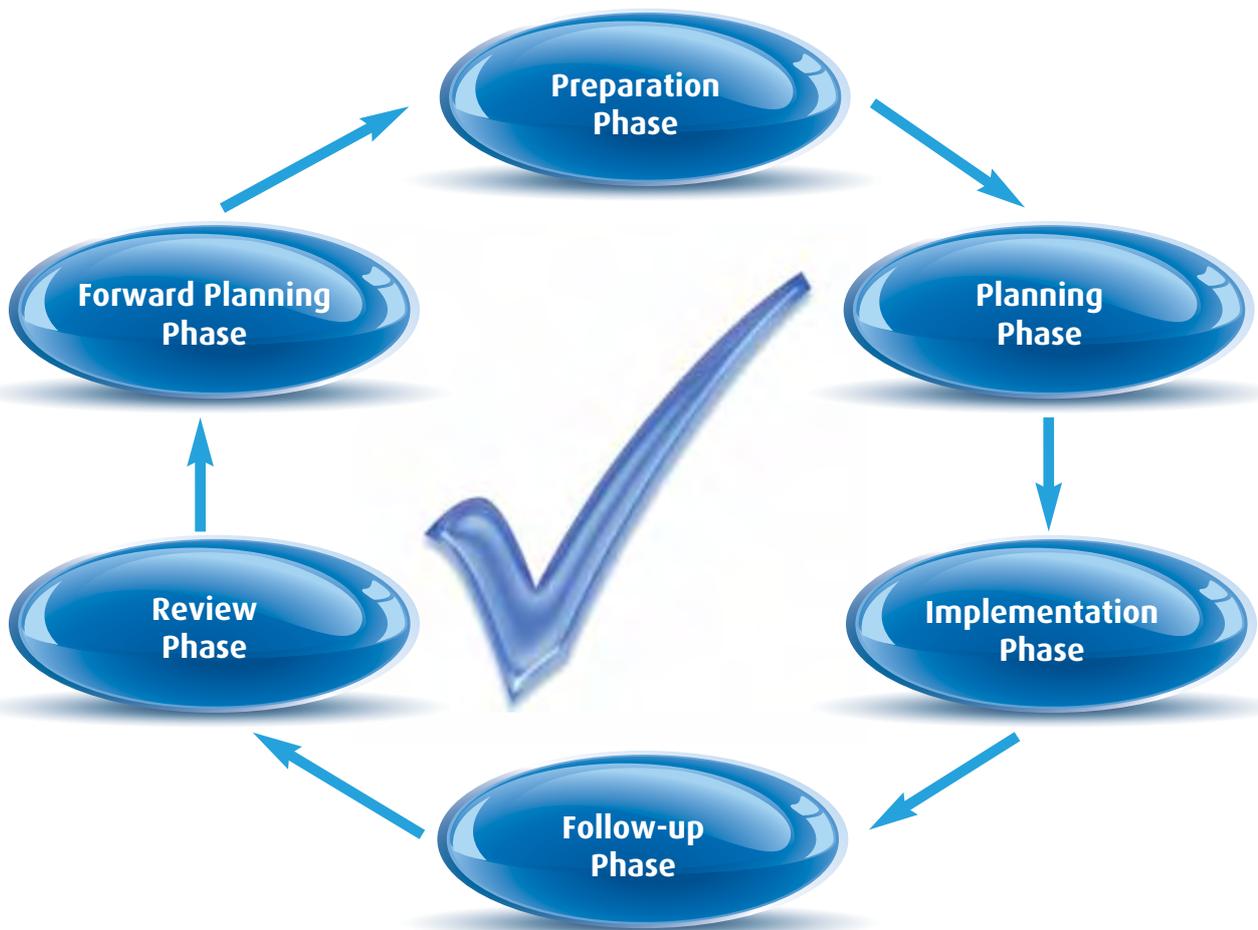
B9.1	Assignment of Responsibility	Job title(s) of the person(s) responsible for coordinating/conducting the Self Evaluation process
B9.2	Frequency	Criteria used for setting out how often the Self Evaluation of programmes will take place
B9.3	Range	How programmes will be grouped for the purpose of Self Evaluation
B9.4	Learner Involvement	How Learners will contribute to a Self Evaluation
B9.5	External Evaluator	Criteria to be used to select and appoint the External Evaluator for a particular Self Evaluation
B9.6	Methodology	How the Self Evaluation will be carried out

#### Self Evaluation Requirements

- The Provider should appoint an internal person to co-ordinate/conduct the Self Evaluation
- At least one programme and related services, within a Provider, must be Self Evaluated within one year of registration with FETAC. Each programme and related services must be Self Evaluated at least once every five years. **All** programmes being delivered by a Provider must be Self Evaluated within a five year period
- The Provider must clearly identify how programmes will be grouped for the purpose of Self Evaluation. Self Evaluation of programmes may be carried out on an individual programme or on a group of related programmes. The selected programme or group of programmes must be representative, relevant and meaningful to the Provider
- Under Section 18 (2) *b* of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999) procedures to allow for the evaluation of programmes by Learners must be developed and implemented
- FETAC states that a person independent of programme delivery and capable of comparing the quality of programmes with that of similar programmes elsewhere should be appointed to the role of **External Evaluator** (*FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, p.45*)
- The Provider must state the methodology to be used for the Self Evaluation process
- The products of the Self Evaluation process must include:
  - ◆ The Self/Programme Evaluation Report
  - ◆ The Programme Improvement Plan

**Part 2**

**Conducting a Self Evaluation**



**Figure 1.** A six phase model for conducting a Self Evaluation

Self Evaluation is an internal process of self-reflection and assessment. Evaluation is a systematic and structured process of reviewing an experience, determining its worth or value and deciding what needs to be changed or further developed. Self Evaluation is a continuous cycle of reflection and review with the objective of bringing about positive change and improvement which in turn feeds into further reflection and review.

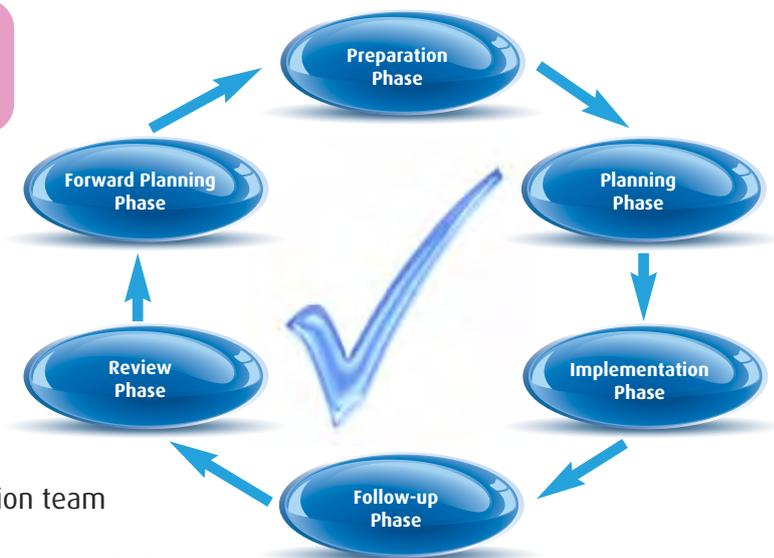
Self Evaluation is one aspect of the Provider’s Quality Assurance system. It is the aspect that ensures that the Quality Assurance system in place is meeting its’ objectives and allows for the continuous improvement of the system and the programmes and services which it supports.

The Self Evaluation cycle outlined in this Resource is a model which Providers may choose to adopt when conducting a Self Evaluation exercise. The six phases identified above are referenced throughout.

#### During the Preparation Phase the Provider will:

- Assign/ identify personnel with responsibility for planning and implementing the Self Evaluation

(Procedure B9.1 FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, p49)



Providers may choose to form a Self Evaluation team where key members of staff are identified.

Depending on the Provider context this team may include:

- Principal/Manager
- QA coordinators
- FETAC coordinator
- Programme/course coordinator(s)
- Teaching staff
- Members of staff with responsibility for the related services to be evaluated

- Be familiar with relevant background information policies, procedures and supporting documentation which inform the Self Evaluation process including:

- Provider Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC
- FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training; Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3
- FETAC Self Evaluation templates:
  - ◆ Self Evaluation Checklist
  - ◆ Programme /Self Evaluation Report
  - ◆ Programme Improvement Plan

(Please see appendices for a list of resources that may be of use during this stage)

- Train/brief members of Self Evaluation Team

Key staff should be trained and/or briefed on the process of carrying out a Self Evaluation and must be familiar with the Provider's Quality Assurance agreement and section B9 of FETAC's Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training; Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3. (See [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie) for details of supports that are available)



## Appoint External Evaluator

This person should be "... a person who is independent of programme delivery and capable of comparing the quality of the programme(s) with that of similar programmes elsewhere" and should have:

- Education, training or industry experience in the broad subject area of the programme being evaluated
- Experience in national/international certification systems
- Experience in one or more of the following:
  - ◆ Programme design
  - ◆ Programme delivery
  - ◆ Programme evaluation
  - ◆ Cross moderation of standards
  - ◆ External verification of standards
  - ◆ Auditing of quality systems
  - ◆ Centre accreditation

*(FETAC: Quality Assurance for Further Education and Training: Policy & Guidelines for Providers V1.3, p.45)*

(Please refer to the criteria outlined for the appointment of External Evaluators in your Provider's Quality Assurance agreement [Procedure B9.5])



## Draft an overall plan for the continuous cycle of Self Evaluation to ensure the inclusion of all programmes and related services within the Provider

Depending on the Provider context this may take the form of a five year plan for Self Evaluation. The plan will incorporate annual Self Evaluations of a specific range of programmes and related services (see appendices for planning templates for Self Evaluation).

Within a five year cycle all programmes and related services within the Provider must be Self Evaluated.

*Self Evaluation should be carried out to a frequency appropriate to the duration and nature of the programmes concerned. The maximum period between evaluations will be five years but this would be appropriate only in exceptional circumstances.*

*(FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, p.45)*



#### During the **Planning Phase** the Provider will:



#### Determine an Action Plan for the process

- Determine tasks and timeframe
- Assign responsibility for the tasks



#### Decide what is to be evaluated

- Refer to the overall plan determined at the Preparation Phase to establish which programme/s and related services are to be evaluated this cycle



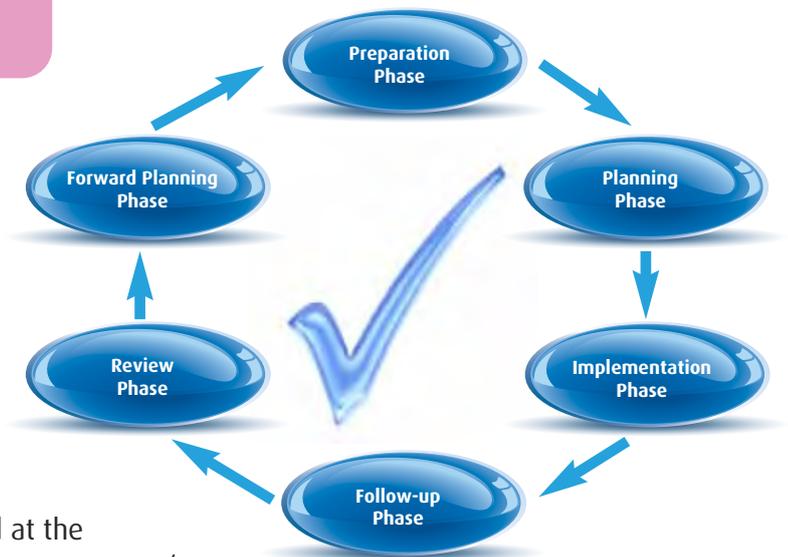
#### Determine the aim and objectives of the Self Evaluation

- For example: Is the programme and its related services maximizing the potential for the Learners to achieve the aims and objectives of the programme?



#### Determine the criteria with which the Provider will determine level of success. This will include criteria to measure the following:

- The quality of the programme and its related services
- The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance system supporting the programme and related services
- Any other issues particular to the Provider's own mission. These may include:
  - ◆ Demand for the programme
  - ◆ Completion of the programme by Learners
  - ◆ Results and Certification
  - ◆ Progression to third level and/or employment
  - ◆ Learner experience while on the programme
  - ◆ Levels of Learner engagement



These criteria are statements of 'how things should be' within the programme and will be determined by the priorities for the Self Evaluation. The programme details (targets, tasks) should also be consulted when outlining criteria. The selected criteria will form the basis for the collation of evidence so that the Provider can judge actual outcomes against expected outcomes.

**For example:**

- *The quality of the programme – suggested criteria with which to determine success;*
  - ◆ Enrolment figures are high
  - ◆ Learners are progressing to employment and/or further education
  - ◆ Learners are attending classes regularly
  - ◆ Learners are completing the programme
  - ◆ Learners are achieving high results
  - ◆ Delivery methodologies are appropriate for the Learner profile and the content of the programme
  - ◆ Resources are adequate and appropriate
  - ◆ Learners are availing of the support services as appropriate (e.g. Guidance, Counselling, Mentoring, Learning Support, etc)
  - ◆ The supports in place are meeting the needs of the Learners
  - ◆ Programme-related services are sufficient to support the programme (e.g. IT, Administration, Library, etc)
  - ◆ Learners are positive about their experience/s on the programme
  - ◆ Teachers/Tutors are positive about the quality of the programme
  - ◆ The programme caters to the needs of industry
  
- *The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance system supporting the programme – suggested criteria to measure success;*
  - ◆ Appropriate evidence is generated to prove that procedures were adhered to (e.g. B1.1 Communication with Learners – Agendas and Minutes of student council meetings, student handbook produced and received by all Learners, Learner notice board kept up-to-date, etc)
  - ◆ Stated procedures are meeting the policy objectives
  - ◆ Staff are familiar with the Provider’s Quality Assurance system



**Identify the people that are to be involved  
in the Self Evaluation process**

- **Learners**  
Under Section 18 (2) *b* of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 procedures to allow for the evaluation of programmes by Learners must be developed and implemented. Effective methods of gathering Learner feedback must be used. These methods may comprise questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, etc. Ideally the views of past Learners should also be included. (Please see Section 4 for Sample Learner Questionnaires)
  
- **Management**  
The Self Evaluation process should be “promoted and supported by Management in the allocation of time, expertise and resources” (*FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, p44*)
  
- **Staff/Personnel**  
Staff/Personnel attached to the particular programme and related services will include: Programme co-ordinator, teachers/tutors, guidance counsellor, learning support staff, recruitment and admissions staff, librarian, catering staff, IT support, administration staff, etc.

#### ■ Other Stakeholders

Stakeholders who may be relevant to the Self Evaluation cycle may include:

- ◆ Employers
- ◆ Professional Organisations
- ◆ Work Experience Supervisors
- ◆ Community Organisations
- ◆ Parents/Guardians (if Learners are under 18 years)
- ◆ Board of Management

Data from the above persons/stakeholders may be obtained by selecting a representative sample.

#### ■ External Evaluator

Plan the role of the External Evaluator in the process (i.e. will the External Evaluator be involved on a consultative basis throughout the Self Evaluation or introduced to the process at a later stage when the first draft of the Programme Evaluation Report has been produced?)



#### Decide on the methodology to be used

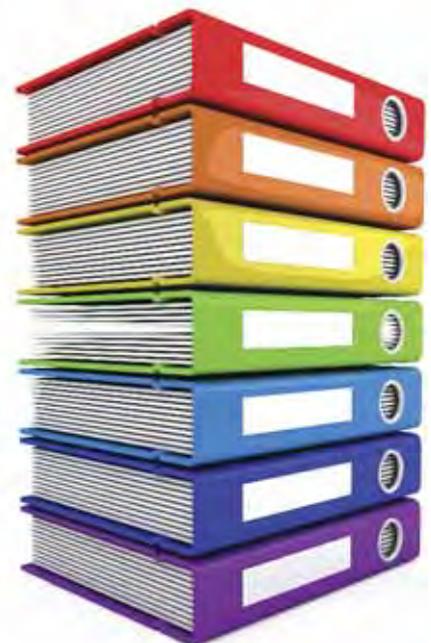
Methodology will comprise a series of steps that will be planned and implemented in order to capture the required information. The Provider should state clearly the information being sought and the most effective ways of obtaining it. A broad based approach, which is inclusive and evidence-based, is preferable. (See Section 4 for Questionnaire Resources)



#### Identify data required

This may include data already available within the Provider and/or data generated for the Self Evaluation process:

- Enrolment statistics
- Drop-out rates
- Assessment results
- Attendance records
- Assessment records
- Minutes of meetings
- Progress reports
- Records of activities such as guest speakers, field trips, etc.
- Work experience placement reports
- Learner response from questionnaire/focus group/interview findings
- Staff response from questionnaire/focus group/interview findings
- Stakeholders' response from questionnaire/focus group/interview findings
- Data from the Self Evaluation Checklist
- Any other relevant information





**Plan and design tools to capture evidence from Learners, staff and stakeholders**

Produce valid and reliable tools, which can be used to gather information on the programme/s and related services. These tools can be designed to produce both quantitative and qualitative data.

Examples of tools include:

- Questionnaires
- Focus Group format and questions
- Interview format and questions (individual, group, telephone)
- Observations
- Visits
- Checklists (e.g. Self Evaluation checklist)

The Provider must determine how the qualitative and quantitative evidence is to be extracted from the data for analysis, for example:

- Coding of data
- Spreadsheets
- Templates
- Statistical analysis software package

(See Section 4 for Questionnaire Resources)



**Conduct Staff Training/Briefing**

Procedures / Briefings should be implemented to ensure that all Staff members are informed of the Self Evaluation process and Action Plan. The Provider should provide training for Staff involved in data collection specific to the instrument being used.

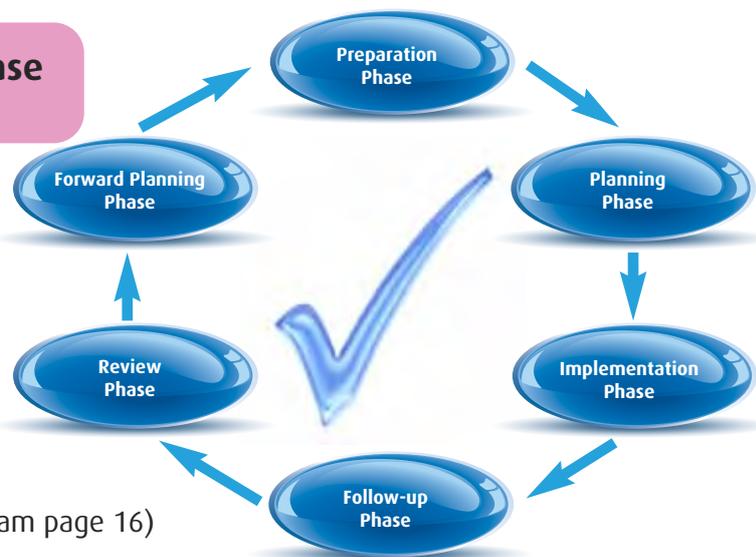


### During the Implementation Phase the Provider will:



#### Engage the External Evaluator

- Engage the External Evaluator at the agreed point in the process. This may be at the earlier Planning Phase, or towards the end of the Implementation Phase following completion of the first draft of the Self/ Programme Evaluation Report (see diagram page 16)



#### Gather the data as determined in the action plan

- Collect all relevant records, statistics, figures and minutes of meetings
- Conduct all focus groups and interviews
- Administer all questionnaires
- Use the FETAC Self Evaluation checklist
- Gather any other relevant information



#### Collate the data

- Extract and record all relevant data in accordance with the procedure determined in the Action Plan

(See Self Evaluation Sample Question Bank which may be used to gather data for Self Evaluation of Programmes and Related Services)



#### Analyse the data

- Compare the outcomes of the data collation to the criteria set out in the Planning Phase (Phase 2) in order to determine the success of the programmes being Self Evaluated.
- Record whether or not programme(s) are meeting the required criteria. In instances where the criteria are not being met, the Provider should record actual evidence and identify procedures to ensure that criteria will be met in the future

Criteria for Success = 'How things should be'

Evidence demonstrates 'How things are'



**Document the findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations**

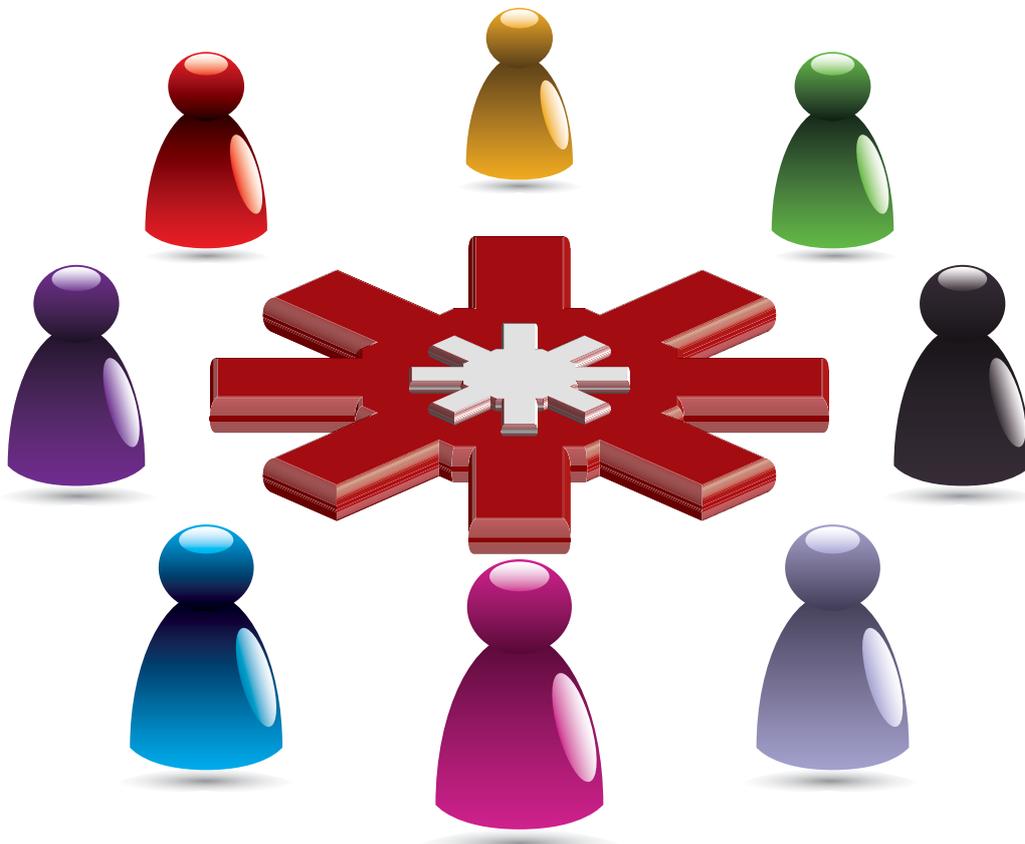
- Document the findings by completing the first draft of the Programme Evaluation Report
- The External Evaluator then reviews the draft Programme Evaluation Report
- Finalise the agreed Programme Evaluation Report and ensure it is signed by all appropriate personnel
- Draw up the Programme Improvement Plan (see FETAC template) based on agreed recommendations in the Programme Evaluation Report. The Plan must state:
  - The actions agreed
  - The person responsible for ensuring that each action is implemented
  - The deadline for implementation



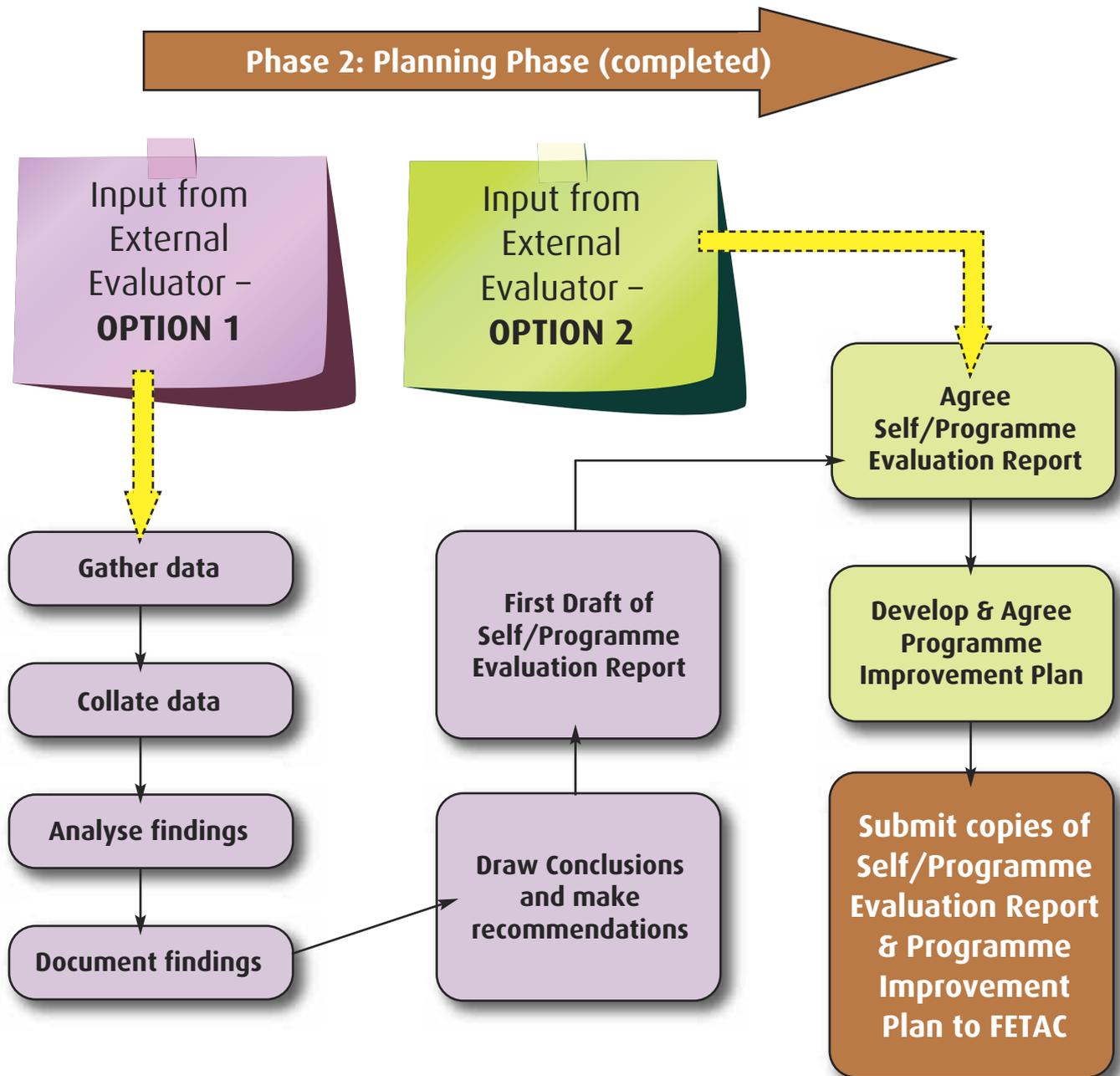
**Submit a copy of the Programme Evaluation Report and the Programme Improvement Plan to FETAC**

These will feed into the FETAC monitoring process.

(See Exemplar Samples in Section 4; Provider Self Evaluation Documentation / Reports)



## Flow Chart for Phase 3 Implementation Phase



**Note:** There are two possible points in the implementation phase highlighted for the introduction of the External Evaluator to the Self Evaluation process.

**Option 1:** If External Evaluator enters the process at option 1 they may enter at Phase 2 (Planning Phase) or at another stage where the Provider deems this appropriate, and may remain involved throughout the Implementation Phase (Phase 3) process.

**Option 2:** If External Evaluator enters the process at option 2 they will enter at the point where the 1st draft of the Programme Evaluation Report has been completed.

**During the Follow-up Phase the Provider will:**



**File Records and documentation**

Ensure that all relevant Self Evaluation paperwork/evidence is filed and available for the FETAC Monitor if requested.



**Disseminate Feedback on findings and recommendations**

Disseminate the findings and recommendations of the Self Evaluation exercise to all contributors to the process including staff, Learners and other stakeholders. It is imperative that this is done effectively in order to maintain the importance and profile of the Self Evaluation process both internally and externally. This may be done in a variety of ways including:

- Staff briefing/meeting
- Learner briefing/meeting
- Stakeholder meeting
- Student Council meeting
- Written report circulated
- Report on Provider website



**Update the Quality Assurance System**

Amend the Quality Assurance system if necessary. As a result of the findings and recommendations from the self evaluation exercise and the learning derived from conducting the Self Evaluation process itself, it may be necessary for the Provider to amend their Quality Assurance system. As the ultimate focus of all Quality Assurance systems is continuous improvement, it is likely that Providers will amend their QA on an ongoing basis.

Such changes must be documented by the Provider and must be available for the FETAC Monitor. It may be necessary to notify FETAC of major changes.

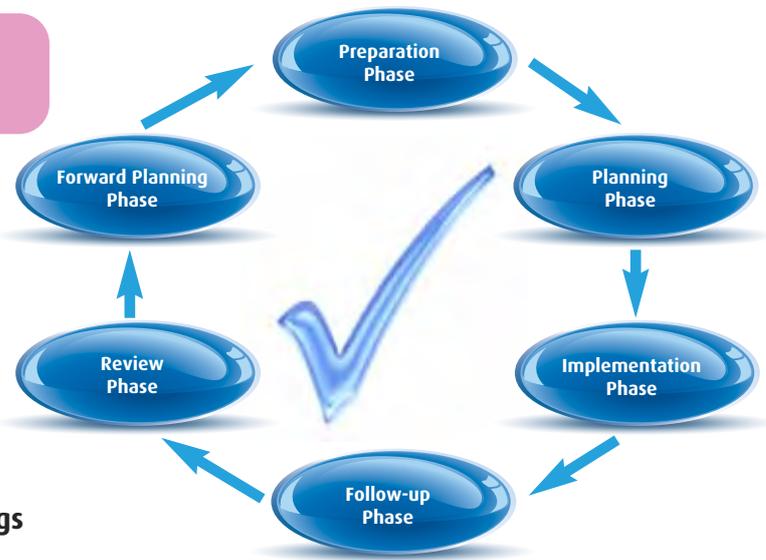


**Implement the Programme Improvement Plan**

The Provider must implement the findings of the Programme Improvement Plan which agree;

- The actions to be taken
- The person responsible for ensuring that each action is implemented
- The deadline for implementation

It is important that Providers ensure that the Programme Improvement Plan is implemented and is used to inform the next cycle of Self Evaluation. It is good practice to keep all relevant stakeholders informed of the progress and outcomes related to the actions in the plan.



### During the Review Phase the Provider will:



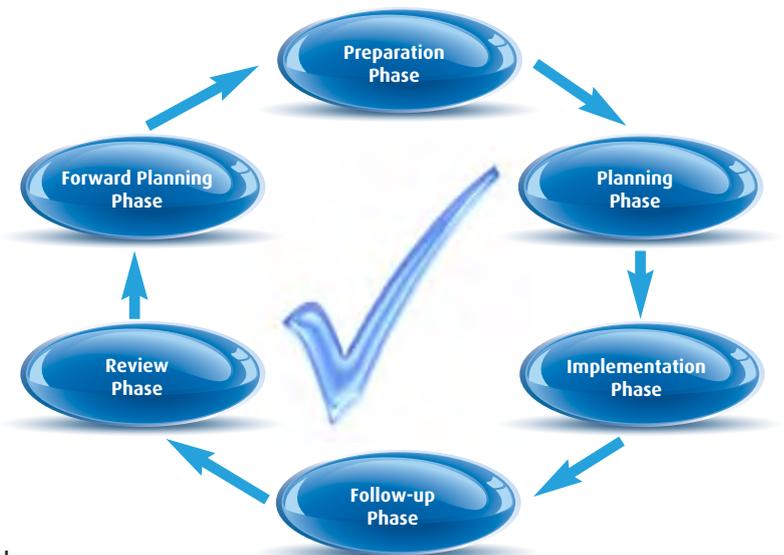
Review the Self Evaluation process, in order to learn how to improve the way that the Provider undertakes Self Evaluation.



Plan any necessary improvements/amendments to be incorporated into the next cycle. It may be useful for the team involved in the initial preparation and planning stages to come together to review the whole process.

The following questions will help to guide this process:

- Was the focus/range of the Self Evaluation appropriate?
- Were the objectives achieved?
- Was the methodology appropriate?
- Were the strategies used to involve Learners, Staff and Stakeholders effective?
- Were findings used effectively?
- Was the role of the External Evaluator used effectively?
- What should be done differently the next time?
- When will the process start again?



*It has already been recognized that the Self Evaluation Process is an ongoing cycle, encompassing procedures for continuous improvement.*

**During the Forward Planning Phase the Provider will:**



- Apply lessons learnt from this Self Evaluation cycle
- Amend methodologies as a result of outcome/s of the Review Stage
- Restructure the planning cycle if necessary
- Plan to start the process again
- Undertake any necessary research identified through the Review Phase
- Commence preparation/planning



**Reference/Resource list**

- Area Development Management (2001), Strategic Review: A Practical Guide for Partnerships and Community Groups, ADM, Dublin 2
- CEDEFOP, (2003) A European Common Quality Assurance Framework available at, [www.enqavet.eu](http://www.enqavet.eu)
- Clarke, J. (1996), A Guide to Self Evaluation, in Managing Better: A Series on Organisational and Management Issues for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Combat Poverty Agency, Combat Poverty Agency, Dublin
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## Introduction

This handbook is aimed at External Evaluators who have been engaged by a Provider as part of their Self Evaluation process of one or more of their programme(s) and related services.

It provides one perspective of the role and activities of the External Evaluator. In addition, it attempts to provide some practical tips on how an External Evaluator might approach their task. The document draws from the practical experiences gained following a number of external evaluations.

All External Evaluators should have an in depth knowledge of the FETAC document *“Policy and Guidelines for Provider Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training.”* This is referred to as the FETAC QA guidelines document. Evaluators must be familiar with Section 9 of this document and the associated templates.

Providers may choose to involve the External Evaluator at different stages of the Self Evaluation process. The External Evaluator can work as part of the Provider’s Self Evaluation team and in so doing actively contribute to the process as it is being carried out. Alternatively, the External Evaluator may be drafted into the process at the latter stages i.e. post completion of the checklist, Programme Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan. The former approach may involve several visits of an External Evaluator while the latter will, under normal circumstances, involve just one. The involvement of the External Evaluator from an earlier stage of the process may suit situations where a Provider requires the expertise of the evaluator throughout the process.



## Background

In 2007 a Task Group comprising members of the Further Education Support Service (FESS), the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and Provider representatives met to explore a phased approach to supporting FETAC Provider Quality Assurance, Section B9, Self Evaluation of Programmes and Related Services.

**In October 2007, as part of the development of support, the FESS in partnership with the IVEA and Department of Education and Science (DES) held a National Conference on Quality Assurance in Further Education entitled “Improving Programmes and Services through Self-Evaluation”. This was followed by a National Programme of FESS Continuing Professional Development Seminars on Self Evaluation.**

The final stage in the phased approach to supporting Providers involved the development of a range of resources (including this resource). All of the resources can be downloaded from the FESS website [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie).

## Context

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 sets out the parameters for conducting a Self Evaluation as follows:

*The procedures ... shall include—*

- (a) The evaluation at regular intervals, and as directed from time to time by the Council, of the programme of education and training concerned, including evaluation by persons who are competent to make national and international comparisons in that respect,*
- (b) evaluation by Learners of that programme, and*
- (c) evaluation of services related to that programme and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the Council thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures.*

Each programme offered by a Provider and the services which relate to it, must be evaluated by the Provider with the involvement of Learners and an External Evaluator.

Under the terms and conditions of registration with FETAC, Providers are required to undertake a Self Evaluation of a programme within one year of registration. Further Self Evaluations must be implemented at a frequency appropriate to the duration and nature of the Provider’s programmes following the first evaluation, as set out in the Provider’s policy on Self Evaluation.

## Role of the External Evaluator

According to the FETAC QA guidelines document, *“the role of the External Evaluator is to offer objective comparisons with similar programmes available elsewhere. This role of this person should be that of a ‘critical friend’, i.e. someone who can bring support, recognition and positive suggestions for improvement.”*

Self Evaluation of programmes and services is a crucial part of a Provider’s Quality Assurance system and its purpose is ultimately to identify areas for improvement. In this way the quality of service to Learners on the ground can be improved by the Provider over time.

When carrying out an evaluation the Provider should involve, as an 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.

According to FETAC guidelines an evaluator should have:

- education, training or industry expertise in the broad subject area of the programme being evaluated
- experience in national and/or international certification systems
- experience in one or more of the following:
  - ◆ Programme Design
  - ◆ Programme Delivery
  - ◆ Programme Evaluation
  - ◆ Cross Moderation of Standards
  - ◆ External Verification of Standards
  - ◆ Auditing of Quality Systems
  - ◆ Centre Accreditation

The External Evaluator is someone who contributes an independent expertise to a Provider’s Self Evaluation process. It is through the work of the External Evaluator that Providers can be assured that their own Self Evaluation process is authentic. In other words, the External Evaluator can act as an independent auditor of the evaluation process. As such the evaluator should both verify and evaluate the findings of the Provider. Where appropriate the evaluator may draw on their own expertise and experience to advise Providers of practices being employed elsewhere in the sector. In so doing evaluators may make recommendations to the Provider on their Self Evaluation methodology as well as aspects of the specific programme under evaluation. The evaluator may also make judgements on the wider Quality Assurance system and in particular its effectiveness in supporting the programme in reaching its original aims and objectives.

The following questions may be helpful to the External Evaluator in determining his/her role:

- Is the programme meeting its stated objectives and do the related services support this?
- Is there adequate evidence to demonstrate this?
- Is the evidence consistent with the Provider's quality assurance agreement?

#### Activities

The External Evaluator, through a process of engagement with the Provider, verifies that a Provider has conducted a meaningful Self Evaluation of one or more of its programmes and its related services, in a manner that is consistent with section B9 of their own Quality Assurance agreement. In other words the External Evaluator 'signs-off' that the deliverables of the Self Evaluation (i.e. Programme Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan) have been completed following a satisfactory process and are ready to be sent to FETAC. The role of the External Evaluator will vary from one Provider context to another. It is expected that the External Evaluator should share their expertise in QA and programme design and delivery etc. The External Evaluator should also offer advice and guidance on the findings of the programme review, and analyse and contribute to the development and improvement of the programme and Quality Assurance system of the Provider as appropriate.

The External Evaluator should carry out their activities with attention to the following:

**Confidentiality:** all material received and produced in the conduct of the evaluation should be treated as confidential.

**Anonymity:** the focus of the evaluation should be on the programme(s) and related services, and as such it will not be necessary to identify individuals.

**Objectivity:** Evaluators should declare any potential conflict of interest they have with any Provider if they feel that their objectivity may be in any way compromised. During the course of the evaluation, comments / statements should be based on evidence and subjective comments should be avoided. Findings should be made based on actual evidence to back them up.

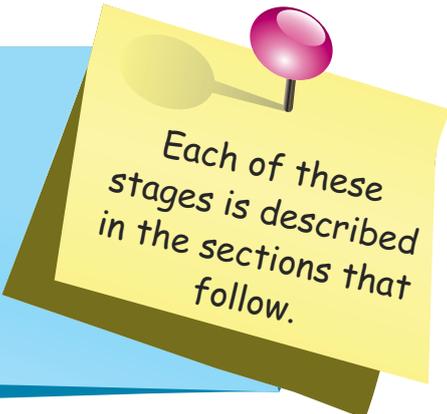
**Deadlines:** the feedback on an evaluation should be provided within an agreed timeframe.

**Positive Approach and Improvement:** sometimes it is easier to find fault than good practice. Evaluators make a conscious effort to find and record good practice as well as things which could be done better. The aim of the evaluation should be to bring about ongoing improvement. Recommendations should be made available to management which could, if implemented, make a positive difference to the programme(s) or services.

**Proportionality:** evaluations for larger contexts may require more time than those for smaller centres. Similarly, multi-location Providers may involve greater effort on the part of the Self Evaluation team including the External Evaluator.

The External Evaluator may be guided and informed by the following stages in the evaluation process:

- Step 1 Engagement/Planning the Review
- Step 2 Research and Document Gathering
- Step 3 Analysis
- Step 4 Dissemination of Findings
- Step 5 Sign Off

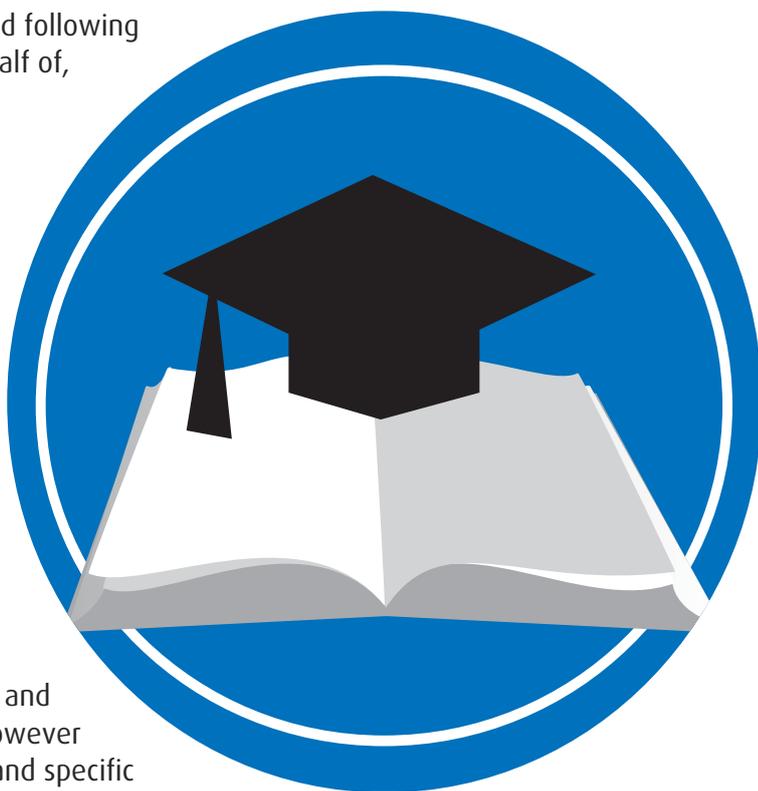


Each of these stages is described in the sections that follow.

## Step 1 Engagement

External Evaluators will be typically engaged following an approach either directly from, or on behalf of, the Provider. As part of this engagement process, both the Provider and External Evaluator should agree the terms and conditions of the engagement. Depending on the context, it may be appropriate to draft a contract of employment.

Both the Evaluator and Provider should be clear on the nature of the Self Evaluation being carried out. To a great extent this will determine what is expected from the External Evaluator, and in turn how the External Evaluator approaches the work. In many cases the focus of the Self Evaluation will be on the broad area of the QA system and its effectiveness in relation to the programme and service being evaluated. In certain cases however the concentration may be more technical, and specific details of the programme may be examined.



As part of the initial contacts between the Provider and the External Evaluator, it might also be useful to discuss, and where necessary agree upon, the following aspects of the external evaluation:

- A primary (and backup) contact point for the evaluator to use when requesting information from the Provider
- Preferred method of communication
- A process for the external evaluation (such as that outlined in this document) i.e. milestones and associated timeframe
- It would also make sense to set a target date for sign-off

At the end of the engagement process the External Evaluator will either accept, or be unable to accept, to undertake the task of acting as External Evaluator for the Provider.

## Step 2 Research & Document Gathering

In preparation for site-visits External Evaluators should familiarise themselves with both the Provider and nature and content of the programme(s) being evaluated. A visit to the Provider's web site, if one exists, is recommended. Where possible, programme brochures should be obtained, and studied. For more technical evaluations, the module descriptors / award specifications (and where available the validated programme) should be acquired.

In addition to the Provider and programme specific details mentioned above, the External Evaluator should be familiar with the following documents:

- The Provider's Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC
- The completed Self Evaluation checklist
- The Programme Evaluation Report
- The Programme Improvement Plan
- Any evidence of previous Self Evaluations – particularly for the same programme(s) and related services.

A summary and/or analysis of the findings of the Learner feedback survey, including the original questionnaire, would also be useful.

The External Evaluator should acknowledge any documentation received from the Provider.

## Step 3 Analysis

### Analysis - Overview

Before delving into the detailed findings of the Self Evaluation the evaluator should seek to develop an overview of the Self Evaluation process to date.

The following table, which outlines a list of questions along with the rationale for asking them, may serve to provide such clarification:

Question	Rationale
How did the Provider approach the self-evaluation?	The answer to this will give the Evaluator a greater insight into how the evaluation was carried out.
What are the Provider's policy and procedures on Self Evaluation? Was there a particular evaluation plan?	The evaluator will be in a position to determine whether the current evaluation fits in with the overall plan as outlined in the Provider's QA procedures.
Is this the first evaluation of this programme?	For first time evaluations Evaluators need to focus on the fundamental issue of whether the programme is meeting its stated objectives. For subsequent evaluations of programmes Evaluators may use the Programme Improvement Plan (and any other documentation) from the previous evaluation(s) as a reference.

### Analysis – Self Evaluation Checklist

In preparation for an on-site visit the External Evaluator should analyse the Provider's completed Self Evaluation checklist. The FETAC Self Evaluation checklist template (available at [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)) may be used in this regard. The purpose of the analysis is twofold:

In the first instance it is necessary to check that the checklist used by the Provider covers all of the areas referenced in the FETAC checklist template. Any differences might be noted and brought to the attention of the Provider during the on-site visit. It is recognised that for cases where the Provider does not use the FETAC checklist template, this task may become quite cumbersome and even onerous. In any case a mapping is required between the FETAC template and the checklist used by the Provider.

Secondly it is necessary to analyse whether or not the evidence produced during the Self Evaluation and noted in the checklist is consistent with that documented for the corresponding area of the Provider's Quality Assurance agreement. (In order to do this the checklist must be mapped back to the Provider's QA agreement.) Any inconsistencies should be noted and brought to the attention of the Provider. In analysing the evidence

listed, the evaluator should also, where appropriate, comment on its quality i.e. the question of there being too much, too little, and/or the overall effectiveness of the evidence in meeting its purpose could be addressed.

Note that while deviations and inconsistencies mentioned above may be brought to the Provider's attention, it may be that the Provider can provide appropriate justification.

Finally, an evaluator might select a number of examples of evidence that he/she will ask the Provider to produce during the site visit.

### Analysis – Programme Evaluation Report

In analysing the Programme Evaluation Report (PER) the evaluator might find the following questions useful:

Is there a clear summary of the programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the evaluation methodology clearly set out in the report?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the evaluation methodology appropriate for the programme(s) and related services?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations set out for each of the areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are conclusions made in respect of achievement of programme objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence that staff and Learners participated in the review?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the grades consistent with the evidence as presented in the checklist?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the detailed findings (i.e. strengths and areas for improvement) justified by the evidence stated/data?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would the recommendations listed lead to an improved programme? Are the recommendations realistic?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an implementation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there control measures built into the implementation plan i.e. milestones, feedback etc.? Has responsibility been assigned and timelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Step 4 Dissemination of Findings - Sample Agenda

The following is a suggested agenda for the meeting between the External Evaluator and the Provider. This agenda is particularly relevant to situations where the External Evaluator becomes involved towards the end of the evaluation process (i.e. after the Self Evaluation checklist, Self Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan have been drawn up.)

Meeting Agenda (sample)

**Meeting:** *Self Evaluation Review Meeting – External Evaluator*

**Programme(s)**

**Date/Time:**

**Provider/Centre**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Introduction  | External Evaluator outlines nature and scope of the meeting   |
| 2 Overview of Provider's Approach to Self Evaluation  | Provider gives account of the methodology used to get to this point   |
| 3 Walkthrough <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Checklist</li> <li>■ Self/Programme Evaluation Report</li> <li>■ Programme Improvement Plan</li> </ul> | The Evaluator leads the walkthrough – the Provider is invited to respond to certain issues and questions and produce evidence where requested |
| 4 Conclusion and Next Steps   | Both Evaluator and Provider agree on any outstanding issues to be addressed   |

## Step 5 Sign-off

The External Evaluator will sign-off on the Provider's Self Evaluation when there are no outstanding issues to resolve. This may be done either at the end of the site visit meeting or at a later stage. Depending on the nature of these issues a further meeting between the Provider and the External Evaluator may need to be agreed.

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

LEARNERS	<p><b>1.1</b> Are Learners able to give feedback on their individual and collective experiences?</p>	
	<p><b>1.2</b> Are there any barriers to communication?</p>	
	<p><b>1.3</b> Is information relevant to programmes and services consistently available to the Staff involved in their delivery?</p>	
STAFF	<p><b>1.4</b> Are Staff able to contribute feedback and suggestions for the improvement of the programme(s) and associated services?</p>	
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	<p><b>1.5</b> Are communications media for supplying information to and receiving feedback from the local community, employers and other external agencies effective?</p>	

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*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

EQUALITY PLAN	<p><b>2.1</b> Is there an Equality Plan in place?</p>	
	<p><b>2.2</b> Are Staff trained to implement it?</p>	
ACCESS	<p><b>2.3</b> Is it known if any person has experienced discrimination in access to the programme or services?</p>	
	<p><b>2.4</b> Is there a mechanism in place for this to be known by the Provider?</p>	

This template is available to download at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie)

# FETAC Quality Assurance: B3 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

STAFF RECRUITMENT	3.1 Are the Staff involved in programme delivery well matched to their role and clear about their job specifications?	3.2 Are Staff confident and content in their roles?	3.3 Have new Staff had access to an effective induction process?	3.4 What percentage of Staff have availed of staff development over the past two years?	3.5 Are Staff development issues regularly reviewed by management?	3.6 Is Staff development keeping pace with the demands on Staff?

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## FETAC Quality Assurance: B4 ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

### ACCESS (AND PARTICIPATION)

**4.1** Do Learners feel that they have adequate information about the programme(s) and its associated services to enable them to successfully participate in it?

### ACCESS

**4.2** Are the following available to prospective Learners on entry to the programme(s)?

- Clear administration arrangements
- Statements of entry requirements and selection criteria
- Appeals mechanism?

### TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

**4.3** Have Learners gained exemption from all or parts of a programme/ assessment for an award on the basis of recognition of prior learning?

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## FETAC Quality Assurance: B4 ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION (Continued)

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

**4.4** How well are the needs of Learners with diverse needs being addressed?

Have programme adaptations been identified?

Have additional supports been requested?

Is access to services available to all Learner groups?

ACCESS

**4.5** (How) are Learners supported in terms of information on progression pathways and opportunities?

PROGRESSION

This template is available to download at

# FETAC Quality Assurance: B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW

Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements

**5.1** Does the need which led to the development of this programme still exist?  
Is there sufficient information available on which to base decisions regarding demand, content, Learner needs, etc?

PROGRAMME  
DEVELOPMENT

**5.2** Is there a document which sets out the programme structure, delivery and assessment methodologies? Have such programme documents been checked and approved by management as being in accordance with Mission, demand, assessment policy and resource availability? Are these documents available to Learners and other interested parties?

DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW

**5.3** Are the objectives of the programme being reached? Are the objectives clearly enough defined? Are all the requirements for the award(s) being met?

This template  
is available  
to download  
at

# FETAC Quality Assurance: B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW *(Continued)*

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

DELIVERY	
<p><b>5.4</b> Are delivery styles used on the programme(s) appropriate to the needs of Learners?</p>	
<p><b>5.5</b> Are timetables adhered to?</p>	
<p><b>5.6</b> Are up to date records of Learner participation and progress readily available to Staff and Learners?</p> <p>Are attainment levels comparable across all Learner groups?</p> <p>What is the programme completion rate for this programme i.e. what percentage of those who began the programme have <b>attained</b> the target award? (Average over the past four years)</p> <p>Are the reasons for early drop out known and understood?</p>	

This template is available to download at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie)

# FETAC Quality Assurance: B5 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW *(Continued)*

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

**5.7** Are all necessary resources allocated to and maintained on the programme(s)?  
Is there sufficient access for staff and Learners to reference materials and I.T. resources as appropriate?

**5.8** Are facilities safe and well maintained?  
Are the requirements of Health & Safety legislation being complied with?

**5.9** Are Learners kept informed of their own progress?  
Are Learners encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning?

**5.10** Is the programme being reviewed on a regular basis and are staff facilitated to contribute to the review?  
Is the information acquired used effectively?

DELIVERY

REVIEW

This template is available to download at

## FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

**6.1** Is the assessment for each programme planned and documented in an assessment plan?

**6.2** Are assessment strategies appropriate to Learner needs and programme design?

**6.3** Are Learners satisfied with the level of information and feedback they have received on their assessments?

**6.4** Are Learners and other stakeholders aware of assessment deadlines? Are assessment deadlines applied in the interest of fair and consistent assessment of Learners?

**6.5** Are records of assessment maintained securely?

ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

This template is available to download at

## FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS *(Continued)*

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

**6.6** How successful has the reasonable accommodations procedure been in facilitating participation in assessment by those who otherwise, due to personal circumstances, may have been unable to do so?  
Is there data available on this?

**6.7** Has the assessment carried out by external parties been fair, consistent and contributing to Learner achievement?

**6.8** Has the procedure for Corrective Action been used?  
Has it been effective in addressing non-conformances in assessment practices

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## FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS *(Continued)*

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

INTERNAL VERIFICATION		EXTERNAL AUTHENTICATION
<p><b>6.9</b> Has responsibility been assigned for the internal verification (IV) process?</p> <p>Does the IV report show that the Provider has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Checked that the assessment procedures have been applied across the range of assessment activities from planning to finalising results?</li> <li>■ Does the IV report confirm the <b>accuracy</b> of assessment results?</li> </ul> <p>Is the basis on which the sample was selected for Internal Verification clear?</p>		
	<p><b>6.10</b> Are transparent procedures used for selecting and assigning an external authenticator?</p> <p>Does the external authenticator have appropriate expertise in the field of learning?</p>	
		<p><b>6.11</b> Is the sampling strategy used by the authenticator clear and sufficient?</p> <p>Has a sufficient sample been viewed by the authenticator?</p>
		<p><b>6.12</b> Has the authenticator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ confirmed the fair and consistent assessment of Learners consistent with the Provider's procedures and with FETAC's policy on quality assuring assessment</li> <li>■ reviewed internal verification report(s) and authenticated the findings/outcomes</li> <li>■ moderated assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification</li> <li>■ clearly recommended results for approval</li> <li>■ produced an external authentication report and signed off on their findings?</li> </ul>

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## FETAC Quality Assurance: B6 FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS *(Continued)*

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

RESULTS APPROVAL	<p><b>6.13</b> Has a Results Approval Panel been established to approve these results? What is the membership of this panel? Is there evidence that the panel met formally and signed off on results?</p>	
RESULTS	<p><b>6.14</b> How were final results submitted to FETAC? Was the declaration completed appropriately?</p>	
RESULTS	<p><b>6.15</b> Were formal results made available to Learners?</p>	
APPEALS	<p><b>6.16</b> What procedures are in place for Learner appeals? Are these appropriate? Have these procedures been made available to Learners? Were any appeals lodged/or in progress?</p>	

This template is available to download at

## FETAC Quality Assurance: B7 PROTECTION FOR LEARNERS

*Sample Questions - Please select those most relevant to your Provider requirements*

LEARNERS
<b>B7.1</b> Are Learners aware of their position in the event of a programme ending prematurely?

*Additional comments (if any) for Programme Evaluation Report*

This template is available to download at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie)

## Step 1 Introduction

When implementing the Self Evaluation process it is necessary to obtain feedback from key stakeholders. In order to assist Providers in obtaining, collating and documenting this feedback the FESS has sourced questionnaires that have been used by Providers for the purpose of Self Evaluation. These samples should be used as reference materials as it is necessary to relate all questions specifically to your Provider context. It is our intention to add additional questionnaires for reference as they become available. Please see [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie) for updates.

At present you will find the following sample questionnaires included;

Title and nature of questionnaire;		Used in;
Sample Questionnaire 1	Sample Learner Feedback Questionnaire	Large PLC / FE College
Sample Questionnaire 2	Sample Learner Feedback Questionnaire	Youthreach Centre #1
Sample Questionnaire 3	Sample Learner Feedback Questionnaire	Adult Learning Centre
Sample Questionnaire 4	Sample Learner Questionnaire; Feedback on Tutor	Adult Education Centre
Sample Questionnaire 5	Sample Learner Questionnaire; Feedback on Centre / Learning Environment	Youthreach Centre #2



#### 10. COMMUNICATIONS

Please rate the following as means of communication with students in <<Provider Name>>. (Tick (✓) the box under the heading 'Did Not Use' if you cannot rate the means of communication in question.)

	Did Not Use	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
(a) Notice Boards	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(b) Common Drive	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(c) College Brochure	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(d) Student Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(e) Study Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(f) Class/Subject Tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(g) Class Rep	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(h) Web Site	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(i) School Visit	<input type="checkbox"/>					

#### 11. EQUALITY

Do you feel you have been treated equally as a student at <<Provider Name>>? Yes No

If No, please specify details \_\_\_\_\_

#### 12. GENERAL INFORMATION and ACCESS, TRANSFER & PROGRESSION

Please rate the clarity of information you received in relation to the following:

	N/A	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
(a) Course Entry Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(b) Links to other Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(c) Career Options	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(d) Course Content	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(e) Award Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(f) Assessment Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(g) Assessment Appeals Process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(h) Assessment Repeat Options	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(i) Communication with tutors	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(j) College Rules and Regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(k) Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(l) Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(m) Special Needs Entitlements	<input type="checkbox"/>					

#### 13. PROGRAMME

Please rate the following aspects of your course of study at <<Provider Name>>

	N/A	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
(a) Course Content	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(b) Teaching Methods	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(c) Standard of Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(d) Work Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(e) Suitability for preparation for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(f) Suitability for preparation for more education/training	<input type="checkbox"/>					

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### 14. ASSESSMENT

Please rate the following aspects of assessment in relation to your course of study at <<Provider Name>>

	N/A	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
(a) Assessment Schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(b) Assessment Feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(c) Receipt system for projects/assignments etc	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(d) Accommodation for learners with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(e) Late Submissions Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>					

### 15. MISCELLANEOUS – Services, Facilities, Activities

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of <<Provider Name>>

	N/A	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
(a) Admission Process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(b) Induction Day	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(c) Provision of Student ID Card	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(d) Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(e) Career Information	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(f) Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(g) Societies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(h) Library	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(i) Canteen	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(j) Access to Computers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(k) Printing Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(l) Internet Access	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(m) Photocopying Service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(n) Role of the Class Tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(o) Role of the Class Rep	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(p) Cleanliness of Classrooms and Labs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
(q) Cleanliness of general areas (toilets, corridors, canteen, libraries)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

16. Overall, were you satisfied with the course content? Yes   
No

If No, please specify Why? \_\_\_\_\_

17. If applicable, what were the main reasons for your non-attendance? Not Applicable

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Would you recommend <<Provider Name>> to others? Yes   
No

19. What was your favourite thing about <<Provider Name>>? \_\_\_\_\_

20. List one improvement you think we could make \_\_\_\_\_

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### Sample Questionnaire 2: Youthreach Centre Number #1 City of Galway VEC

## Learner's Course Evaluation

Course Title \_\_\_\_\_

Below are a series of statements.  
Please respond by **circling** the number  
you feel most reflects your opinion

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The course fulfilled the objectives set out in the brochure	5	4	3	2	1
The course satisfied my own needs and expectations	5	4	3	2	1
The content was presented at a level which could readily be understood	5	4	3	2	1
There was opportunity for group work	5	4	3	2	1
There was opportunity for individual participation	5	4	3	2	1
The material presented had practical relevance	5	4	3	2	1
The course content built on prior learning and experience	5	4	3	2	1
I feel I contributed to class discussion	5	4	3	2	1
I was motivated to learn	5	4	3	2	1
Course handouts and texts helped reinforce learning	5	4	3	2	1
There was a variety of teaching methods	5	4	3	2	1
The teaching methods used helped me learn more effectively	5	4	3	2	1
Assessment facilitated critical reflection	5	4	3	2	1
The teacher achieved a good rapport with the class	5	4	3	2	1
There was opportunity for feedback and evaluation	5	4	3	2	1

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Additional Comments

**Which aspects of the course worked well?**

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**How could the course be improved?**

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**Would you recommend this course to others? If not please outline your reasons**

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**Any other comments**

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**Signature: (optional)**

Thank you for taking time to complete this form.  
This form is an integral part of the evaluation and review process

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**Sample Questionnaire 3:  
Adult Learning Centre, City of Galway VEC**

**Learner Survey**

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

			Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Disagree strongly (1)	Not applicable (0)
Learning Outcomes	1	I understood from the start what I would learn on this course.	<input type="radio"/>					
Assessment	2	I understood from the start how my learning would be assessed on this course.	<input type="radio"/>					
Assessment Methods	3	The way my learning is assessed on this course is fair.	<input type="radio"/>					
Workload Advice	4	I understood from the start how much work I would have to do to succeed on this course.	<input type="radio"/>					
Facilities	5	The facilities and equipment used on this course are adequate	<input type="radio"/>					
Feedback	6	I have received constructive feedback on assessment which informs me of my participation on the course	<input type="radio"/>					
Resources	7	The learning resources (e.g. handouts, online materials) on this course are relevant and up to date	<input type="radio"/>					
Access, Transfer & Progression	8	The transfer and progressions options which are open to me on receipt of the award, (where they exist) have been clear.	<input type="radio"/>					
Programme Delivery	9	Timetables/Schedules are adhered to whenever possible	<input type="radio"/>					
Security - Assessment	10	I am happy with the security and integrity of assessment processes and materials	<input type="radio"/>					
			Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	
Overall	11	Overall, How would you rate the quality of the course	<input type="radio"/>					

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### Sample Questionnaire 4: Learner Feedback on Tutor, Adult Education Centre, City of Galway VEC

Tutor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Questionnaires Disseminated \_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE
1. I like this subject			
2. I am getting all the help I need with spelling, reading and writing			
3. I am given enough information for this subject such as handouts, notes etc.			
4. I have enough resources such as pens, paper, books etc.			
5. The tutor is clear when he/she explains something			
6. I participate in class at all times			
7. I feel I can ask questions when needed			
8. I feel my tutor listens to me			
9. I feel this subject will benefit me			
10. I get encouragement from my tutor			
11. My tutor is well prepared for each class			
12. I regularly have a chance to discuss my progress with my tutor			
13. I feel I need a specific learning plan for me			
14. My tutor makes this subject interesting			
15. My attendance is good			
16. I always arrive on time			
17. My behaviour effects the rest of the class			
18. I am able to complete the tasks the tutor sets			

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## Self Evaluation Learner Feedback SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE 5

### Sample Questionnaire 5: Learner Feedback on Centre/Learning Environment Youthreach Centre #2 City of Galway VEC

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE
1. I felt welcomed into the centre			
2. There is a nice atmosphere in the centre			
3. The centre is kept clean and tidy			
4. The centre is well organised			
5. I am proud to say I attend the centre			
6. I have been informed of the policies and rules in the centre			
7. I understand what the rules mean			
8. I feel everybody is treated the same			
9. If I break the rules the consequences are fair			
10. Everybody is treated equal regardless of race, gender, culture, religion etc.			
11. I know I can tell a staff member if I am being bullied ether verbally or physically			
12. I know that bullying will be dealt with by staff			
13. The subjects I am studying will help me get a job			
14. I feel I am achieving my educational goals			
15. The centre provides a variety of courses			
16. I was given an official introduction to the centre			
17. I feel I have a say in what happens in the centre			
18. I am aware of the qualifications I can receive in Youthreach			
19. I feel there are adequate childcare facilities available for me			
20. I have access to guidance if I need it			
21. I have access to social and health education such as drug awareness, fitness, nutrition etc.			
22. I have access to supported work experience			
23. I will be supported when I finish my course to make the right decisions about my future			

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## Samples

## Introduction

A number of sample extracts from Providers' completed Self Evaluation reports / documentation have been selected for this resource to illustrate a range of Self Evaluations undertaken and the type of material generated in the reports.

Please note that these are examples only and have been provided with the permission of the Providers:

Cavan Institute -

**Sample 1: Self Evaluation Checklist - Access Transfer and Progression**

Soilse -

**Sample 2: Programme Evaluation Report**

Co Westmeath VEC Adult Education Service -

**Sample 3: Programme Improvement Plan**

## Cavan Institute - Sample 1: Evaluation Checklist - Access, Transfer and Progression

In this example the review group in Cavan Institute identified the evidence which was available to show that Access, Transfer and Progression was operating and a rating was given. Cavan Institute also identified strengths and weaknesses and made recommendations as a result of the discussion on the section. These were then carried forward to the Programme Evaluation Report. The Self Evaluation of Cavan Institute was used successfully to meet the requirements of the Whole School Evaluation process.

Access, Transfer and Progression	Evidence	
Do Learners feel that they have adequate information about the programmes and its associated services to enable them to successfully participate in it?	Student Induction, Student Handbook, Web Site, Information Provision, Student Meeting Enrolment, Brochure, Assessment Schedule, Open Day, Class Tutors, Career Guidance	3
Are the following available to prospective Learners on entry to the programme(s)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clear administration arrangements</li> <li>■ Statements of entry requirements and selection criteria</li> <li>■ Appeals mechanism?</li> </ul>	Admission Procedure, Registration Day, Brochure, Selection Criteria, Appeals Procedure	1
Have Learners gained exemption from all or parts of a programme / assessment for an award on the basis of recognition of prior learning?	Module Exemption Form, RPL FETAC, ECDL	3
Have current Learner supports / programme adaptations been successful in addressing the needs of Learners? Have additional supports been requested?	Curriculum, Assistive Technologies, Facilitate Diversity, Library, Work Placement	3
<b>Access, Transfer and Progression: – Average Grade</b>		<b>2.5</b>

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Cavan Institute - Sample 1:  
Evaluation Checklist - Access, Transfer and Progression (Continued)

**Strengths**

- Information provision to Learners on Access, Transfer and Progression
- Module Exemptions for Learners
- Curriculum and Module Reviews
- Work Placement
- Higher Education Links Scheme
- Internal Progression
- Guidance Service
- Student Consultation Process
- Student Entry requirements and Appeals process

**Areas for Improvement**

- Information to Learners on admission, entry requirements and appeals
- Learner support on completion of programmes

**Recommendations**

Specific information to Learners and prospective Learners on

- Admission arrangements
- Course requirements
- Selection Criteria
- Appeals Mechanism



## Soilse - Sample 2: Programme Evaluation Report

This sample contains extracts from sections of the Programme Evaluation Report completed by Soilse, the Health Service Executive's (Northern Sector) Addiction Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Vocational Guidance Service. Employing an Adult Education methodology, Soilse seeks to address the personal, social, educational and vocational needs of participants, people at various stages of recovery from drug addiction who typically have experienced significant marginalisation, disadvantage and disempowerment.

The Provider adhered closely to the recommended report structure. It very clearly presents a summary of the programme delivered, the methodology of the evaluation and its findings which lead to clear recommendations for the future.

### Soilse Programme Summary

Aims and objectives of the Soilse programme:

#### Aims

- To provide holistic needs based addiction rehabilitation service.
- To break the spiral of dependency and social isolation, boredom and peer pressure that accentuate the drug spiral.
- To help former drug users achieve independence and self-direction through personal development programmes.

#### Objectives

- To introduce people to recovery from addiction.
- To broaden personal horizons.
- To create new peer networks and lifestyles.
- To provide vocational guidance
- To open avenues to ongoing learning, training, and education.

***As a FETAC registered centre Soilse participant-learners have an opportunity to achieve a major FETAC level 3 award or minor FETAC awards in a range of level 3 and level 4 modules:***

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#### Soilse - Sample 2: Programme Evaluation Report (Continued)

#### Evaluation Methodology

The information sought through our programme Self Evaluation concerned:

- The relevance of the original aims and objectives of Soilse's Addiction Rehabilitation programme to current participants-learners.
- The value of the FETAC assessment and accreditation process to learners participating in Soilse's Rehabilitation Programme
- The quality of the FETAC assessment and accreditation process pursued in Soilse
- The extent to which procedures documented in Soilse's FETAC QA manual are practicable.

The criteria used to measure success in these three areas were:

- those outlined in the evaluation checklists and report templates provided by FETAC
- programme retention rates
- award achievement rates
- participant-learner progression routes

The programme Self Evaluation was conducted using a broad based approach and an inclusive, Adult Education methodology. Using the Self Evaluation checklist provided by FETAC and Soilse's own programme evaluation templates, the views of participants-learners (past and present) were included through group evaluations, individual reviews and review questionnaires. Those of Soilse staff were included through dedicated meetings, staff reviews and review questionnaires. Those of Soilse stakeholders were included through programme development meetings (VEC, HSE, BTEI). External Evaluator involvement commenced following the initial programme Self Evaluation conducted by Soilse's QA team. A meeting was then held with the External Evaluator to discuss the compilation of a draft report based on the findings of the programme Self Evaluation and to agree time frames for the external evaluation process. A review of the draft report and the findings of the Self Evaluation were then conducted by the External Evaluator and Soilse's FETAC Coordinator. Reasons for the grades assigned in each area of the programme Self Evaluation were discussed and, as requested by the External Evaluator, sample evidence in the form of documents, resources, locations and descriptions were provided. Some grades were adjusted in the course of this process and recommendations for development were made and documented.



#### Soilse - Sample 2: Programme Evaluation Report *(Continued)*

#### Strengths

- Assessment and identification of participant-learner needs
- Identification of gaps/weaknesses in service provision
- Programme development and related planning
- Learner and staff communication systems and feedback mechanisms
- Adult education methodology and learning techniques
- Integrated programme evaluation systems
- Participant-learner care planning, education planning, and vocational guidance
- Soilse Code of Practice

#### Areas for Improvement

- Skills base of sessional facilitators
- Back up planning
- Participant-learner induction documents
- Document management systems
- Childminding support for programme applicants and participants with children
- Soilse website
- Equality training
- Health and Safety measures

Soilse - Sample 2:  
Programme Evaluation Report (Continued)

### Recommendations

The main recommendations arising from the evaluation process are:

- To devise and resource a recruitment and training plan to address sessional facilitator skill deficits in the areas of FETAC assessment and adult education.
- To further develop contingency/ back-up arrangements to minimise programme interruption due to Staff absence. This will involve recruiting a facilitator panel in advance of vacancies arising, securing agreement on locum cover arrangements with funding providers, securing a funding line to support short notice interventions, revising and revamping our speaker panel, and making greater use of educational technology and multimedia resources than at present.
- To compile a Learner Handbook detailing all aspects of the Soilse programme
- To compile a statement for inclusion in Soilse's administration systems handbook detailing how and where reports, evaluations, meeting agendas and minutes etc. are documented and stored.
- To provide a half-time follow on programme to sustain participant learner progress.
- To continue advocating with stakeholders about adequate funding for childminding support for participant-learners.
- To conclude revision of Soilse website and forward to HSE for inclusion as link.
- To ensure all Staff receive equality training and updating.
- Conduct a Health and Safety audit following our upcoming move to new premises.

## Co. Westmeath VEC - Sample 3: Programme Improvement Plan

*This Improvement Plan very simply sets out the improvements to be made by the provider. Responsibility and timelines are assigned to the actions to be undertaken.*

### Self Improvement Plan 2008

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale	Carried over from 2007
<b>1 Learner Input</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue current good practice of Learner surveys being reported and implemented through Assess Learner Needs Working Group.</li> </ul>	Assess Learner Needs Working Group	3 years	Carried over from 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue current good practice of Learner surveys being reported and implemented through the FETAC Quality Assurance Procedure.</li> </ul>	Internal Evaluator	1 year	Carried over from 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the introduction of Comment Boxes in Centres.</li> </ul>	AEO, Centre Directors	1 year	New recommendation

Co. Westmeath VEC - Sample 3: Programme Improvement Plan (Continued)

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale	Carried over from 2007
<p><b>2 Equality Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation and training in relation to Equality Plan.</li> </ul>	CEO, AEO, CEF	1 Year	Related to 2007 recommendation
<p><b>3 Health and Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all centres revise their Health &amp; Safety Policies at a minimum every 3 years.</li> <li>Address any outstanding Health &amp; Safety Issues.</li> </ul>	Centre Directors  Centre Directors	3 years  1 year	Carried over from 2007  Related to 2007 recommendation
<p><b>4 Staff Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustain current good practice of staff development, especially in areas of training and management support.</li> </ul>	AEO, Staff Development Working Group, Centre Directors	Continuous	Carried over from 2007

#### Co. Westmeath VEC - Sample 3: Programme Improvement Plan (Continued)

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale	Carried over from 2007
<b>5 Policy Development</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop overall Youthreach Centre Policy Document</li> </ul>	AEO, Centre Director	2 years	New recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion and roll out of Staff Induction Policy</li> </ul>	Staff Induction working Group	1 year	Related to 2007 recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion and roll out of Entry &amp; Appeals Policy</li> </ul>	AEO, Centre Managers	1 year	Related to 2007 recommendation
<b>6 Communications &amp; Promotion</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop formal links with community, employers and other agencies.</li> </ul>	Promotion and Marketing Working Group, Centre Directors at Local Level	Continuous	Carried over from 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective promotion of the service and activities, e.g. VEC website and other promotional tools</li> </ul>			Related to 2007 recommendation
<b>7 Programme Development</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine possibility of further/enhanced Art &amp; Craft Programmes being offered to Learners, particularly Practical Based Programmes</li> </ul>	AEO, Assess Learner Needs Working Group, Centre Directors	2 years	New recommendation

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