



# Re-Engagement with QQI:

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# A Resource for Community Education Providers

March 2019



national collective of  
community based  
women's  
networks



The Voice of  
Adult Learning

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

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AONTAS believes in the right of community education learners to accredited provision. In order to support community education providers in maintaining their ability to offer quality accredited provision, AONTAS has developed this resource with the AONTAS Community Education Network and Women's Community Projects Mullingar (WCPM). It has also been informed by the AONTAS course: Collaborative Training for Community Education which was carried out in 2018 as part of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) project, Increasing Pathways, Increasing Participation.

## AONTAS, The National Adult Learning Organisation

AONTAS is the Irish National Adult Learning Organisation, an umbrella body committed to advocating and lobbying for the development of a quality service for adult learners and promoting the value and benefits of lifelong learning. AONTAS works on behalf of its membership and regards them as a key resource which provides the organisation with a grassroots understanding of adult and community education practice and learner perspective. The membership profile comprises a rich mix of statutory, voluntary and community organisations involved in the provision of adult learning, as well as individuals who are deeply involved in and committed to the concept and practice of lifelong learning.

AONTAS provides a crucial platform for member organisations to share experience and best practice, promote

their work and advocate on the value and necessity of adult and community education. The Community Education Network (CEN) was established in 2007. It is a network of over 100 independently managed community education providers who work collaboratively, sharing information and resources, engaging in professional development and working to ensure that community education is valued and resourced. For more information please visit:

[www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com)

## Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association CLG

The Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association (WCPM) was established in 1985 and is situated in the heart of the town. It is a large organisation with a proud record of achievement and specialisation in addressing gender equality issues. It supports women, and their families, who are marginalized and socially excluded, through the provision of educational and employment opportunities. WCPM provide a range of supports and networks designed specifically to address barriers to women's education and economic advancement.

WCPM was originally set up as a capacity building initiative and a centre of social support for women. It now plays a central role in the provision of education, childcare, training and employment opportunities for the people of Mullingar and the surrounding area.



The Training & Education office provides QQI level 3, 4, 5 & 6 courses in General Learning, Healthcare, Childcare and Business as well as hobby style courses and workshops.

For more information please visit:  
[www.womenscommunityprojects.ie](http://www.womenscommunityprojects.ie)

## A NOTE ON USING THIS RESOURCE:

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The information provided in this resource is correct at the time of publication. Readers are advised to refer to the QQI website ([qqi.ie](http://qqi.ie)) to keep up to date with new developments and requirements when developing their own quality assurance (QA)<sup>1</sup>.

QQI quality assurance guidelines can be accessed and downloaded at the QQI QA guidelines website:  
[www.qqi-qaguidelines.com](http://www.qqi-qaguidelines.com)

Information from Women's Community Projects Mullingar (WCPM) on their work on re-engagement has been included by way of example and to share learning from the process. There are many different ways to approach the re-engagement process – each community education provider is unique and will manage their quality assurance in a way that is most appropriate to their organisation and learners.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms quality assurance and QA are used interchangeably in this document.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Who is this Resource for?

This resource is intended for **managers, staff and board members** of community education providers who are commencing the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) re-engagement process. It has been written to complement the information provided by QQI and to signpost community education providers to the information that is most relevant to them.

## What is the Purpose of this Resource?

This resource aims to:

- Support community providers to have an understanding of what is involved in the re-engagement process
- Outline the stages of the re-engagement process
- Signpost community providers to the relevant QQI documents and guidelines
- Provide practical examples of what is involved in the re-engagement process

This resource documents, by way of a case study, the experience and learning of Women's Community Projects Mullingar (WCPM) who participated in the QQI re-engagement pilot in 2018.

## Why is this Resource an E-publication?

This resource is an e-publication and is intended to be accessed and viewed online. It contains active website links so that the reader can view or download the relevant QQI documents.

## What is Quality and Qualifications Ireland?

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is an independent state agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. It was established in 2012 and is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training. It makes awards for these sectors and validates programmes for providers.

## What is Re-engagement?

Providers of education and training whose quality assurance was agreed with either HETAC or FETAC are required to demonstrate how their governance and quality assurance systems meet the QQI quality assurance guidelines. This process is known as 're-engagement'.

Re-engagement is not a once-off event; it is a process and it will require time, resources and commitment from all levels of your organisation. It is important to fully consider what is involved before starting the process.

Re-engagement will require you to demonstrate how you plan, manage and review all educational activities in your organisation. It is also an opportunity to show how learners are kept at the heart of your quality assurance systems.

## What is Quality Assurance in Education and Training?

There are many different definitions of quality assurance (QA) in education and training and a range of different frameworks. All education providers will have a quality assurance system in place and this will vary depending on the type of courses offered. Any organisation wishing to deliver QQI accredited programmes will need to demonstrate how its QA meets the QQI quality assurance guidelines.

QQI summarises its definition of quality assurance in education and training as ‘an ongoing process of evaluating the quality of an education system, institution or programme. This involves assessing, monitoring, maintaining and improving quality’<sup>2</sup>.

QQI has outlined overarching principles to assist providers in developing quality assurance procedures and they can be found in *Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines*<sup>3</sup>. This document also includes more information on quality assurance, what quality assurance guidelines are and how they should be used.

Your quality assurance system is unique to your operating context and should be developed to meet the needs of your organisation, learners, tutors and other staff.

## Quality Assurance in Community Education

Community education is characterised by the following values and principles:

- Equality, justice, social inclusion, and empowerment.
- Creation of a voice for those who are furthest from the education system
- Community driven, needs based, and reflective of lived experiences of participants
- Recognition of the value of accredited and non-accredited learning
- Promotion of critical thinking
- Learner centredness, flexibility, support, and a developmental approach to education
- Facilitative, group focused, and open to new things
- Relationship building

A quality assurance system for community education will highlight the organisational commitment to such values and ensure its policies and procedures reflect them in a meaningful way.

<sup>2</sup> QQI. August 2017. Who We Are Booklet. Dublin: QQI. P.4.

<sup>3</sup> QQI. April 2016. Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines. QP.10-V3. Dublin: QQI. Pp. 5-7.

## QQI and Quality Assurance

QQI has published a number of QA guidelines and policies that outline their approach to quality assurance and the elements of a QA system (see pp. 11-12). The information in the remainder of this section has been adapted from *Initial Access to Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards: Application Guide*<sup>4</sup>. It looks at:

- QA policy and procedures
- Monitoring and review systems
- QA responsibilities and structures.

### QA Policy and Procedures

QQI has provided the following definitions of policy and procedures in relation to quality assurance:

A **policy** will be a statement or series of statements which set out a provider's position and commitment(s) on a particular area of education and training provision. It should show that a provider is aware of its obligations in the area and is committing to deliver on these obligations.

#### A policy will:

- Be written for all stakeholders, internal and external, and will have the primary purpose of informing
- Align with QQI guidelines on quality assurance
- Comply with QQI Policy and Criteria for Validation of Programmes

- Be available to all stakeholders e.g. on a website
- Have the understanding and backing of senior management
- Inform learners of what they should expect from the provider
- Inform staff of what is expected of them
- Provide protection and support to provider staff in carrying out their work

#### A procedure will:

- Describe a process intended to deliver all or part of a policy commitment
- Be written to be available and understood by the people who will be operating the process or engaging with it
- Address the practicalities of the process – actions, forms, actors, timelines, information flows, records etc.
- Be designed with the intention of delivering quality and consistency
- Be capable of being monitored i.e. records and/or indicators will be generated which should show if the procedure is being followed and, crucially, if it is effective
- Evolve over time as possible improvements are identified and implemented.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> QQI. August 2018a. Initial Access to Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards: Application Guide. Dublin: QQI. Pp. 12-13.

<sup>5</sup> QQI, 2018a, pp. 12-13.

## Monitoring and Review Systems

A QA system will also include methods for monitoring and review, and with this regard, QQI notes that:

An essential element of a quality assurance system is the **methodologies used to regularly monitor and review** programme quality through:

- Stakeholder feedback (learners, staff and external)
- Ongoing checking of adherence to procedure and effectiveness of same
- Ongoing checking of adherence to programmes as validated
- Formal review of programmes – review procedures are an essential part of quality assurance systems

The products of monitoring and review should be available for internal and external oversight. Reports of formal self-assessments done as part of a review procedure should be published <sup>6</sup>.

## Quality Assurance Responsibilities and Structures

It is important to have responsibility and oversight structures built into your QA, QQI notes that:

It is important that lines of responsibility for quality assurance and governance be clear. The purpose and responsibilities of all quality assurance roles and committees should be clear and appropriate. Where there are committees e.g. Academic Councils, Programme Boards, Advisory Boards etc., the following should be made explicit:

- Terms of reference
- Membership
- Frequency of meetings
- Reporting relationships<sup>7</sup>

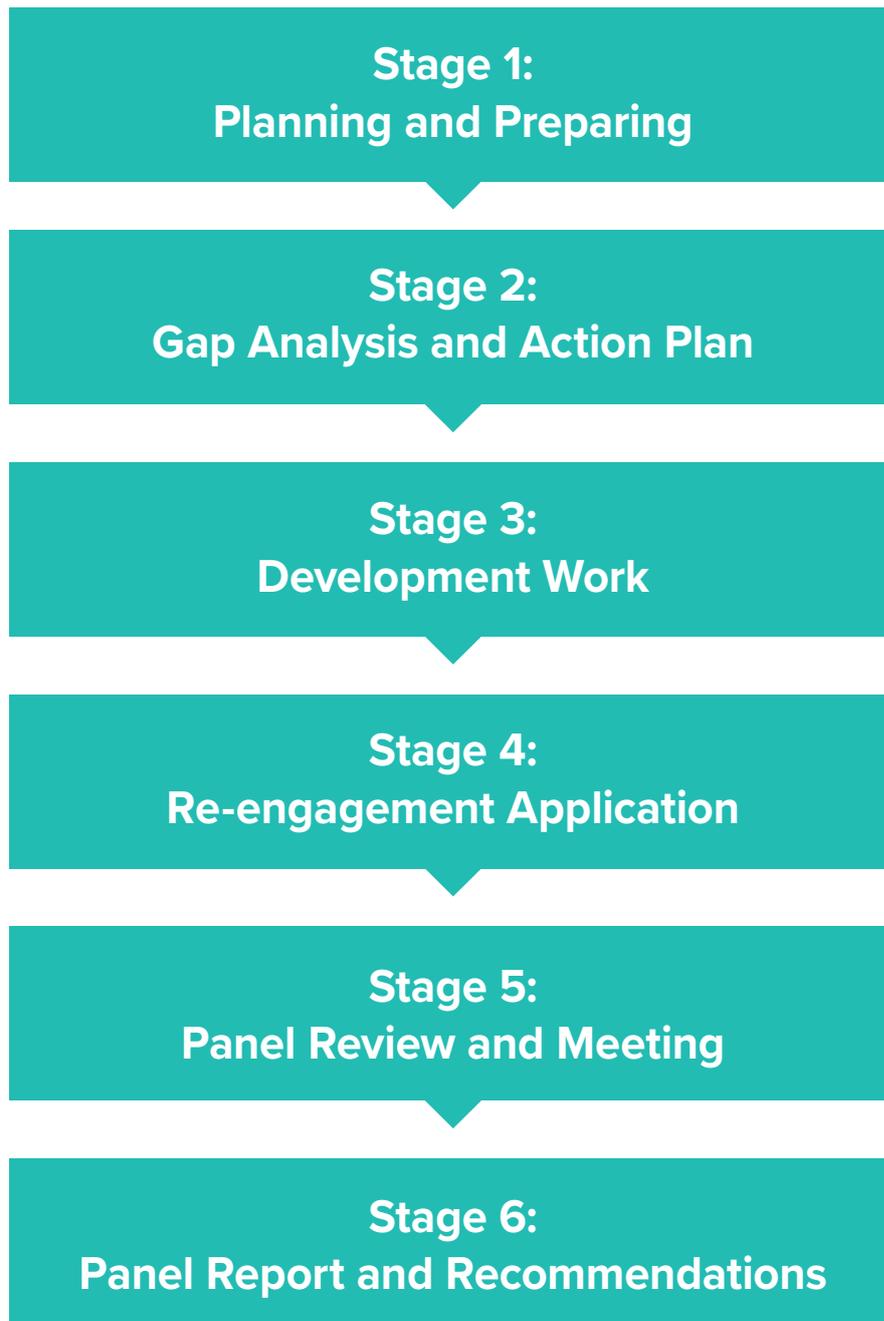
It is recommended that wherever possible, diagrammatic representations be used to show the layers of responsibility and reporting.

<sup>6</sup> QQI, 2018a, pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> QQI, 2018a, pp. 12-13.

# SECTION TWO: THE RE-ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

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*Figure 1: Stages of the QOI Re-engagement Process*

## Stage 1: Planning and Preparing

### 1.1 Re-engagement Process Overview:

Planning is an essential part of the re-engagement process. In order to plan for re-engagement it is useful to look at the process in its entirety. The below document provides an overview of the re-engagement process and what is required from organisations.

Document Title	Summary
<a href="#">Re-engagement with QQI: Process Guide<sup>8</sup></a>	A detailed overview of the QQI process and assistance on the Gap Analysis and completing the application form.

### 1.2 QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines

In the re-engagement process you will need to demonstrate that your governance and quality assurance systems meet the relevant QQI quality assurance guidelines. The guidelines that apply to your organisation will depend on what type of provider you are and what type of programmes you deliver.

You will be asked to map your governance and quality assurance systems to the relevant guidelines. *The Re-engagement Application Form* will ask you a series of questions that will support and guide this mapping. You will be expected to be familiar with the relevant guidelines and how they relate to your organisation.

You also need to demonstrate how the new QQI policy on Programme Validation has been incorporated into your quality assurance system.

See the below table for further information on the guidelines and where to download them.

Document Title	Who is it for?	Summary
<a href="#">Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for use by all Providers<sup>9</sup></a>	All providers including <b>community providers</b>	Outlines the QQI core statutory guidelines that all providers should meet.
<a href="#">Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines: For Independent Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis<sup>10</sup></a>	All community providers	Outlines the <b>additional</b> guidelines that community providers should meet.

8 QQI. July 2018b. Re-engagement with QQI: Process Guide. V.01. Dublin: QQI.

9 QQI. April 2016. Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for use by all Providers. QG1-V2. Dublin: QQI.

10 QQI. April 2016. Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis. QG2-V2. Dublin: QQI.

Document Title	Who is it for?	Summary
<u>Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training</u> <sup>11</sup>	All providers including <b>community providers</b>	Outlines core policies and criteria for programme validation for all providers.
<u>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidance for Providers of Blended Learning</u> <sup>12</sup>	All providers providing blended learning	Outlines the <b>additional</b> guidelines for providers who <b>offer blended learning</b> programmes.

### REFLECTION POINTS - Planning for Re-Engagement

- ✓ Who has overall responsibility in the organisation for re-engagement?
- ✓ Who will lead the work?
- ✓ How will you include the voice of the learner?
- ✓ How much time is needed?
- ✓ Are extra resources required?
- ✓ How will you ensure that it is a collective process?
- ✓ Who needs to be involved internally?
- ✓ How can you include an external or objective viewpoint?
- ✓ How will you develop and revalidate programmes in line with the new guidelines?

<sup>11</sup> QQI. November 2017. Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training. QP:17-V1.03. Dublin: QQI.

<sup>12</sup> QQI. March 2018c. Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines: for the Providers of Blended Learning. QG8-V1. Dublin: QQI.

## Stage 2: Gap Analysis and Action Plan

### 2.1 Mapping your Quality Assurance System

QQI recommends that you prepare and present a visual map of your quality assurance processes as part of your re-engagement application. Mapping your quality assurance system will help you see the whole picture and identify any gaps.

The draft quality map (Figure 1, p.11) illustrates the various organisational processes involved in a quality assurance system in a generic way. You may have the processes in this map in place but have a different name for the committee or panel.

### 2.2 Role of a Quality Committee

The Quality Committee (see Figure 2, p.11) has an important role in overseeing and driving organisational activities in relation to quality. The committee should have a clear role of reviewing relevant reports/data and deciding on any actions or improvements required. The requirements of the committee also drive the systems required to capture the information that is required for the various reports.

The committee should have clear Terms of Reference outlining membership, how often it meets, reports and data required and how recommendations on improvements and/or changes are communicated and actioned. Such a committee would usually meet a number of times a year and review reports that are prepared in advance. For example, some of the reports or data considered by a quality committee include learner feedback, staff feedback, numbers on programmes, certification, grading, proposals for new programmes, issues identified on validation reports and other issues pertinent to quality of provision and services.

#### REFLECTION POINTS - Quality Assurance System Map

- ✓ Does your Quality Committee have clear Terms of Reference outlining its remit? This will drive some of the quality assurance work; for example, if the Quality Committee requires data or reporting this will drive the collection and collation of this data throughout the year.
- ✓ If your centre has a small team, the same person may have many of the roles named.
- ✓ How do you ensure an external viewpoint is included in your QA system?
- ✓ This is a generic map – the names of these committees may not be the same as the ones that you have – focus on the function or role of the committee.

## 2.3 Gap Analysis and Action Plan

The gap analysis is completed **before** you apply for re-engagement.

Document Title	Summary
<a href="#"><u>QQI Gap Analysis and Action Plan Tool</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Download here</u></a>	This document, for a provider's own use, is designed to help a provider to conduct a gap analysis between their current resources, governance and QA procedures and be aware of what is expected as set out in the QQI suite of guidelines.

The gap analysis will assist you to identify the areas of governance and quality assurance that require development to meet the QQI guidelines. It is also an opportunity to review all the practice, procedure and policies in your organisation. The gap analysis will help you to identify the work that needs to be done and plan who will do it and in what time line.

The gap analysis is a significant piece of work and will require time and resources. You may need to complete the gap analysis a number of times before you are ready to complete the application form.

### REFLECTION POINTS - Gap Analysis and Action Plan

- ✓ Do your policies and procedures match your practice – do you do what your policies say you do?
- ✓ Can you evidence your practice?
- ✓ Do you have all the necessary and appropriate policies for your centre and learners?
- ✓ How do you know that your policies are implemented?
- ✓ Allow plenty of time for the gap analysis stage.

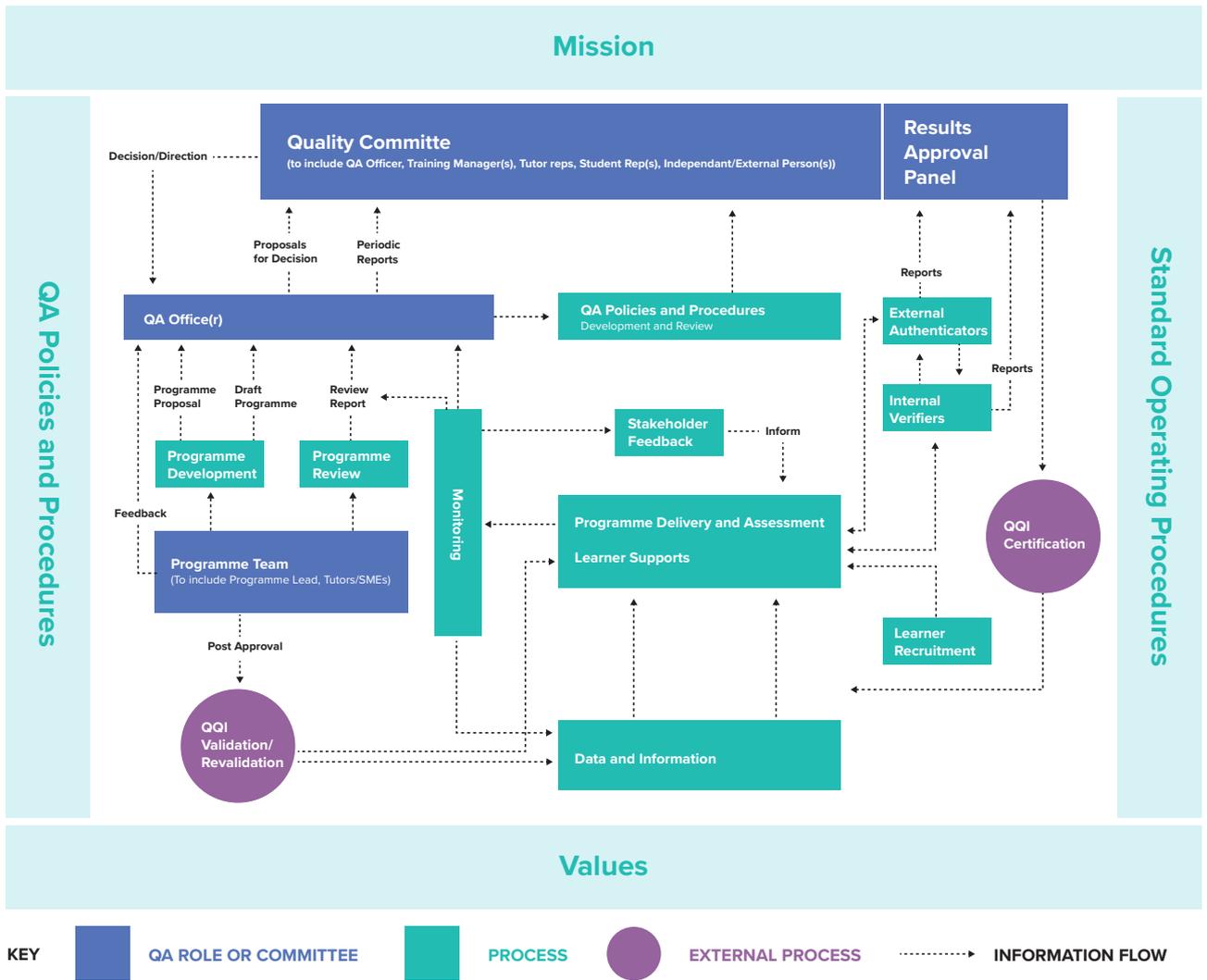


Figure 2: Draft Quality Assurance System Map<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Reprinted with permission from QQI.

## Stage 3: Development Work

The gap analysis will have identified a range of actions that need to be completed before you are ready to complete the *Re-engagement Application Form*. These will include:

- Establishing roles/committees for governance and/or monitoring
- Developing Terms of Reference, templates and forms for internal processes
- Developing new policies and/or procedures
- Updating policies and/or procedures
- Developing new systems
- Documenting practice

### REFLECTION POINTS

- ✓ What is your policy for developing new policies and procedures?
- ✓ How are new or updated policies ratified?
- ✓ How are new or updated policies communicated to learners, tutors and other staff?
- ✓ Does everyone in the centre understand their role in the QA system?
- ✓ Make sure all your documents are dated (including revision date).

## Stage 4: Re-engagement Application

When you are satisfied that your updated quality assurance system meets the requirements of the QQI guidelines you are ready to complete the *Re-engagement Application Form*. This is completed based on information about your organisation, its management and funding, and your draft quality assurance documentation.

In each section, you are asked to briefly summarise how your gap analysis has assured you that your quality assurance system and governance meets the guidelines and asks you to map your documentation to the guidelines. The application form will be considered by the panel and it needs to tell them where in your quality assurance documentation they can find the policy, procedure(s) or other documentation which addresses the question being asked in the form.

Download the *QQI Re-engagement Application Form* [here](#).

For information on completing the form see: [Re-engagement with QQI: Process Guide](#).

The final application will include:	You will need:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The Application Form</li><li>– Accompanying Documentation</li><li>– Draft Quality Assurance Procedures</li><li>– The Relevant Fee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– A number of hard copies presented in ring binders<sup>14</sup></li><li>– 1 soft copy <b>uploaded</b> to QQI as directed</li></ul>

It is important that you contact QQI to give them notice that you are ready to make your application, they will create a folder for you to upload your application to and may ask to meet with you. It is at this time that QQI will require payment of the relevant fee, before reviewing the application.

### REFLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Evidence all your policies, procedures and practice.
- ✓ Make sure your responses tell the reader where they can find the relevant policy, procedure or other documentation that answers the question.
- ✓ Your responses should map your quality assurance and governance to the QQI guidelines.
- ✓ Are your responses to the questions forward-looking? Focus on how QA will be managed in the future based on your experience and reflection.

<sup>14</sup> QQI will advise you as to how many copies are required.

## Stage 5: Panel Review and Meeting

### 5.1 Panel – Evaluation by Expert Peer Review

QQI will appoint a panel to evaluate your application and make recommendations. The panel will consist of independent expert(s) appointed based on their relevant experience and expertise. The panel may also include experienced QQI staff.

### 5.2 Site visit

The panel will visit your organisation. This site visit will entail a dialogue between the panel and senior provider staff about the documentation supplied. The aim of the discussion will be to evaluate the appropriateness of the provider's draft quality assurance procedures with reference to:

- QA Guidelines
- Provider context and capacity
- Provider validated programmes

See Appendix A (p. 26) for an example of a Panel Meeting Agenda from the pilot re-engagement process.

## Stage 6: Panel Report and Recommendations

Following review of your application and the site visit, the panel will produce a report and make one of the following recommendations:

- 1. Approval** of quality assurance procedures. This will mean that your current scope of provision is approved.
- 2. Non-approval** of quality assurance procedures but with **recommendations**.
  - You will have 6 months in which to address the recommendations and re-submit your application
  - There is no fee for resubmission
- 3. Refusal to approve** quality assurance procedures.
  - Providers who do not demonstrate their capacity to meet the QQI quality assurance criteria will be notified in writing and reasons for the refusal will be given
  - They will not be able to apply to have programmes validated and will be subject to a review of their QA system (a separate process to re-engagement). A review would focus on the effectiveness of the quality assurance of current programmes and whether they can continue.

### **Panel Report**

- You will be sent the report for a factual accuracy check and for observations
- The report and your observations will be formally considered by QQI's Programmes and Awards Executive Committee and the decision communicated to you
- The final report and your response will be published on the QQI website
- When your quality assurance is approved you are required to publish it on your website

All Panel Reports are published on the QQI website. It can be useful to review them in light of your own re-engagement work – examples of Panel Reports can be found [here](#).

# WOMEN'S COMMUNITY PROJECTS (MULLINGAR) ASSOCIATION CLG

## Learning from the Pilot Re-Engagement Process

Women's Community Projects, Mullingar (WCPM) were one of twelve providers who volunteered to participate in the QQI re-engagement pilot in 2018. The pilot process was designed to 'road test' the application process and the experience and feedback from these groups has informed the final re-engagement process.

It is important to note that the pilot process did not replace the re-engagement process and WCPM, along with the other pilot participants, will now go through the re-engagement process as outlined in Section Two of this document.

Maureen Murtagh, Training & Education Coordinator/ NCCWN Development Worker, and Valerie McHugh, NCCWN Project Coordinator with WCPM worked with AONTAS to document their experience, approach and learning from participating in the pilot process.

### Approaching Re-engagement

The section below looks at what worked well for WCPM in approaching the work and what they wished they had known when they started.

- **Getting Started:** It can be hard to get started – start with one of the areas of your quality assurance system that you are most familiar with or confident in. WCPM started with Learner Assessment as it is an area which they are passionate about and for which they have well-developed procedures.

When they reviewed it in light of the QQI guidelines they found that the policies and procedures only required a minimal update and it boosted their confidence to have one area completed.

- **Team Effort:** The re-engagement process is a complex one and cannot be achieved by one person on their own: a team, even a small one is needed. In WCPM two staff members led the work on re-engagement and they found that issues were resolved faster when they worked together; having someone else as a sounding board was invaluable.
- **Block off Time:** Try to block off some dedicated periods of time so that you can work on re-engagement without the need to do day-to-day tasks. It can be difficult to manage a Community Education Centre and be able to provide the type of focus that re-engagement work requires. There may be a need for the lead staff to have time removed from daily duties.
- **Be Honest with Yourself:** You must be honest with yourself at every stage of the re-engagement process. The process is about identifying the strengths and weaknesses in your organisation and its systems and you cannot do this unless you are honest and objective.

- **Question Everything:** When working on your QA, question everything your organisation does and refer to those answers when designing your policies and procedures. What is being done? Who is doing it? Why are they doing it? Where is it recorded?
- **Warts and All:** All organisations and processes have areas that could be improved. What is important is that you are reviewing and amending what you do based on feedback mechanisms. When you identify gaps, be open and honest with the panel about your findings and about how you plan to address the issues.
- **Don't get Stuck on One Area or Question:** It is easy to get stuck or tied up in the meaning of some of the questions in the gap analysis or the *Re-engagement Application Form*. If you are stuck on a question, leave it, move on and seek clarification from QOI.
- **Standardise Everything:** Develop templates and checklists for different meetings and processes. Choose a template and ensure it is consistent across all your quality assurance documents.
- **External Person:** If resources allow, it would be of huge benefit to the process to involve an external person at the gap analysis stage. The person needs to be familiar with your organisation and the way that you operate, but also honest and objective and hold you to account. WCPM worked with a former employee, who had been a tutor at the Centre, at the start of the process and found her input invaluable. She was very objective and really pushed them on all areas of their practice.

- **Document Everything:**

Re-engagement is an opportunity to document and streamline everything that you do. One way to think of it is that your quality assurance manual should include everything that someone who was taking over from you would need to know.

### Quality Assurance Prior to the Re-engagement Pilot

Prior to undertaking the re-engagement pilot, WCPM had developed a quality assurance system which had been approved in line with the previous FETAC QA guidelines. They also had a set of operational and governance policies and procedures, and a number of handbooks which they had developed for staff, tutors and learners.

### Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure Development

The biggest issue that emerged from the gap analysis for WCPM was that many of their quality assurance policies were quite general and did not include detailed procedures. Their practice had evolved through experience but often it was not documented. Through the re-engagement process they set about documenting all their practice in a systematic way.

For every process in their quality assurance system they have now drafted clear procedures that detail the steps to be taken, who has responsibility and where and how records are kept.

WCPM worked on a broad range of areas across the organisation. Some examples of the work that they did are outlined below.

Area	Prior to Participation in Pilot Re-engagement Process	Work Carried Out
Academic Misconduct Policy	There was a policy in place on dealing with plagiarism which was communicated to students at induction and in the Learner Handbook. However, it did not take into account other possibilities of academic misconduct.	WCPM developed a new policy on academic misconduct which includes dealing with plagiarism but also addresses wider issues such as tutor conflict of interest. As a result tutor contracts now include a declaration on conflict of interest.
Complaints Policy	Policy statement in place– but there were no detailed procedures.	Added detailed procedures to the policy including the relevant steps and persons responsible for each.
Operation of Board of Management	<p>The Board of Management (BOM) had a Memorandum and Articles of Association.</p> <p>The BOM minutes and reports were filed in line with CRO requirements.</p>	<p>Following review and based on their practice they now have in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Code of conduct for BOM members</li> <li>– Recruitment of BOM members and clear roles</li> <li>– Meeting agenda and minutes templates</li> <li>– Coordinator’s report template</li> </ul>

Area	Prior to Participation in Pilot Re-engagement Process	Work Carried Out
Learner Assessment	As part of the Learner Assessment Strategy there were role descriptions in place for the internal verifier (IV) and the external authenticator (EA). There was also an EA contract.	<p>Updated the IV role description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There are now checklists for every stage of the IV process</li> <li>– For example, the IV had always taken handwritten notes as they worked – there is now an IV checklist that includes everything that they have to do. This checklist then feeds into the final report and the information is easier to access and recall.</li> </ul>
Managing and Supporting Staff	The tutors who work in WCPM are employed on a part-time basis. They were always well-supported throughout the delivery of each programme, but there were no written procedures in place.	As part of the policy and procedures on managing and supporting staff, WCPM now have a formal evaluation process with tutors after they have delivered a module, and a system for recording it. Now all tutor supports are fully documented, therefore more systematic and streamlined evidence is in place.

Area	Prior to Participation in Pilot Re-engagement Process	Work Carried Out
QA Committees and Panels	Although WCPM had many QA committees, panels and roles in place and all activity was recorded, there were no Terms of Reference, policy on recruitment of committee members/panellists and standardised documentation.	<p>Every committee and panel now have Terms of Reference to ensure that its purpose, responsibility and operation are clear and appropriate. Terms of Reference include information on membership, minutes and roles.</p> <p>There are templates for agendas, minutes and reports of all the different meetings that take place. Examples of such committees are the Quality Committee and the Results Approval Panel.</p>
Learner Support	A wide range of holistic supports are available to learners in WCPM including: tutor support, mentoring from tutor, access to on-site counselling service, information and referral to a wide range of community supports/services (e.g. MABS, children services), adult literacy.	WCPM has a wide range of learner supports in place and only a small amount of work was required in this area: for example, details on the counselling service were added to the Learner Handbook.
Recruitment of Staff	Written procedures on staff recruitment were in place and best practice was followed when recruiting. However, not all the steps were documented in the policy.	WCPM now have a detailed recruitment policy that pulls together all their previous practice. It includes new information on how interview panels are selected to ensure that subject matter expertise is included. The policy also details all the steps in the recruitment process.

## Reflecting on the Re-engagement Process

### Benefits

Overall, participation in the re-engagement pilot process was a positive and beneficial experience for WCPM and it strengthened their work. WCPM identified a number of positive outcomes from the work that they have done to date:

- **Greater clarity about the quality assurance system:** Everyone in the organisation, and in particular, those involved in the quality assurance processes are clearer about their role and the policies, procedures and processes.
- **Improved quality assurance policies and procedures:** The updated policies and procedures are more detailed and user-friendly, and they really support the work of the centre.
- **Everything is documented:** Everything is now down on paper and staff and tutors can consult the policies and procedures when they have a query.
- **Suggestions and support:** WCPM found the dialogue and suggestions in relation to their quality assurance systems from the QQI panel meeting to be supportive and practical.
- **Increased confidence:** WCPM have greater confidence in the quality of work that they are doing and have increased self confidence in their ability to engage in the re-engagement process.

### Challenges

Re-engagement involves reviewing all the policies, procedures and practices in your organisation and is a complex process. WCPM identified a number of challenges to the work on re-engagement:

- **Time & resources:** WCPM is an organisation with limited staff and resources. Re-engagement is a complex process that involves review of all the policies, procedures, systems and practices in an organisation. If resources allowed, the process would benefit from a dedicated staff member for a period of time, and additional input from an external person.
- **Managing the day-to-day:** For WCPM it has been very challenging to balance the additional workload of re-engagement with the demands of the day-to-day operation of their Community Education Centre.
- **Detailed work:** Policies and procedures developed in line with the new QQI quality assurance guidelines require a higher level of detail than previously required. However, this level of detail provides greater clarity to staff members and learners.
- **Understanding what is required in re-engagement:** The QQI quality assurance guidelines are new and very different to the FETAC guidelines with which WCPM were familiar. Re-engagement is also a new process and, as such, knowledge of the process and its requirements has not yet developed within the community education sector. When undertaking their work on re-engagement, WCPM were not always clear if they were going in the right direction.

# QQI DOCUMENTS

The following QQI documents have been referenced in this text.

Document Name	Summary
<a href="#">Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines</a>	Outlines the QQI approach to QA and the overarching principles that inform QA (for all providers).
<a href="#">Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for use by all Providers</a>	Outlines the QQI core statutory guidelines that should inform the QA of all organisations.
<a href="#">Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines: For Independent Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis</a>	Outlines the <b>additional</b> guidelines that community providers should consider.
<a href="#">Statutory Quality Assurance Guidance for Providers of Blended Learning</a>	Outlines the <b>additional</b> guidelines for all providers who are <b>offering blended learning</b> programmes.
<a href="#">Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training</a>	Outlines the core policies and criteria for programme validation.
<a href="#">Re-engagement Process Overview</a>	A detailed overview of the QQI process and assistance on gap analysis and completing the application form.
<a href="#">Gap Analysis Tool and Action Plan</a>	QQI tool to assess where your organisation is currently with regard to meeting the QQI QA Guidelines
<a href="#">Re-engagement Application Form</a>	The QQI Re-engagement Application Form.

# APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PANEL MEETING AGENDA - PILOT<sup>15</sup>

Time	Activity
09:30	<b>Panel arrives</b>
09:35 – 09:45	<b>Private meeting of the panel</b>
09:45 – 11:00	<p><b>Session 1: Presentation of application for re-engagement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introductions and context setting</li> <li>2. Presentation by provider on               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Self-assessment process and report                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Resourcing and Capacity – findings</li> <li>› Quality Assurance – any vulnerabilities identified</li> </ul> </li> <li>– QA Procedures for approval                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Structure</li> <li>› Governance and Externality</li> <li>› Communication to Stakeholders</li> <li>› Monitoring of Effectiveness</li> <li>› Further Development Required</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Panel to seek clarification as required in interactive discussion. Focus to be on findings of gap analysis and self-assessment, particularly on how QA system will manage areas of potential vulnerability.</li> </ol>
11:00 – 11.15	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>

<sup>15</sup> Reprinted with permission from QQI.

11:15 – 12:15	<p><b>Session 2: Meeting with members of provider team</b></p> <p>QA Policies and Procedures for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Teaching and Learning</li> <li>– Programme Development and Approval Processes</li> <li>– Access, Transfer and Progression</li> <li>– Staff – Recruitment, Maintenance, Development and Supports</li> <li>– Assessment: Learner Information and Supports – before and during programmes</li> </ul>
12:15 – 13:00	<p><b>Session 3: Meeting with provider representatives/team members</b></p> <p>QA Procedures for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learner Recruitment, Learner Supports, Learner Records</li> <li>– Information Management and Public Information</li> </ul>
13.00 – 13:30	<p><b>Session 3: Meeting with provider representatives/team members</b></p> <p>QA Procedures for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learner Recruitment, Learner Supports, Learner Records</li> <li>– Information management and Public Information</li> </ul>
13.00 – 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30 – 13:45	<b>Private meeting of panel</b>
13:45 – 14:00	<b>Session 4: Meeting with selected provider representatives</b> (optional - if required to clarify any outstanding issues)
14:00 – 14:15	<b>Private Meeting of panel</b>
14.15 – 14:30	<b>Session 5: Preliminary feedback to senior management</b>
14:30	<b>Finish</b>

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