![QQI - Quality and Qualifications Ireland / Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann]

Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1   Details of provider

1.1   Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Setanta College Ltd
Address:	Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre
Date of Application:	May 2018
Date of resubmission of application:	4th October 2019
Date of evaluation:	5th February 2019
Date of site visit (if applicable):	5th of February, 2019
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	5th December, 2019

1.2   Profile of provider

Setanta College Ltd is an existing provider of QQI validated programmes of study in the domain of Performance Science. The current scope of provision encompasses programmes in Strength and Conditioning leading to QQI awards at level 6 and level 7. These are offered part-time, in Blended Learning mode. Approximately one hundred learners receive a QQI validated award from Setanta College each year.

In addition, Setanta College partners with other third level institutes and universities to support their delivery of full-time Bachelor and Master programmes. Current collaborative arrangements exist with Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) and the University of South Wales (USW). Responsibility for Quality Assurance (QA) pertaining to those programmes rests with the institutions that offer the awards.

Setanta College works with a number of sporting associations to facilitate player and coach education, including World Rugby, Gaelic Players Association, Rugby Players Ireland and Women's Gaelic Player's

Association. The College also provides education and research-based support to sports and exercise technology industry partners, and is active in research via collaboration with the Tyndall Institute, which is based in University College Cork. These activities do not fall within the scope of the panel's evaluation of Setanta College's QA procedures for QQI award programmes. However, they are noted by the panel to contribute positively to areas of relevance to the panel's assessment, particularly in relation to opportunities for staff development and the maintaining currency in programme content.

Note: Setanta College indicated a strategic intent to provide programmes of study to students based outside Ireland in their reengagement submission. This has been factored into the panel's evaluation of Setanta College's QA procedures. Setanta College is additionally referred to the QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (revised in 2012).

Part 2   Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Mr Danny Brennan	Chair	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Dr Eileen Buckley-Dhoot	Panel Member	Academic Director, IBAT Dublin
Mr Myles Kelly	Panel Member	Head of Department, Sport, Media and Marketing, IT Carlow
Other Attendees		
Dr Catherine Peck	Independent Secretary	Education Consultant
Ms Andrea Boland	Observer	QQI

Part 3   Findings of the Panel

3.1   Summary Findings

The panel would like to acknowledge the track record of certification of Setanta College, which is well-regarded in the sector and highly respected within its disciplinary domain. The panel notes that Setanta College offers distinct and credible programmes of study, recognised by world sporting associations, and demonstrates a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. The panel commends Setanta College's substantial achievements as an educational provider in the domain of Performance Science.

Following a site visit to the provider in February, 2019, the panel held the view that some changes to Setanta College's current QA procedures were necessary to ensure that appropriate and fit for purpose structures of governance are in place, and that QA procedures were coherently embedded within institutional systems and culture. These changes were perceived to be essential to Setanta College's achievement of its stated vision and mission.

It was the view of the panel that the team at Setanta College had the capability to implement the necessary changes within an allocated period of six months. The panel reconvened in November, 2019 to undertake a desk review of the evidence submitted by the provider. It was the panel's view that Setanta College had undertaken a comprehensive and successful review of its QA in the intervening

period. Subsequently, the panel's recommendation to QQI is to approve the draft QA procedures of Setanta College.

3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

The recommendation of the panel to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI is to approve Setanta College's draft QA procedures.

Part 4   Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1   Legal and compliance requirements:

Criterion	Yes/No	Finding(s)
4.1.1(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?*	**Yes**	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • CRO number provided; • Insurance Schedule; • LIT – Setanta College MOU.
4.1.2(a) **Criterion:** *Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?*	**Yes**	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • 2017 CRO Annual Return.
4.1.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?*	**Yes**	The provider specifies collaborations with the following education providers: • Limerick Institute of Technology; • University of South Wales. **Note:** Responsibility for approval of QA procedures from QQI or other awarding bodies pertaining to the collaborations above rests with the partner institutions. The provider specifies the following non QQI related collaborations with International Accrediting Bodies: • National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA – Global); • Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC - USA). The provider specifies the following non QQI related collaboration with an International Sporting Body

		• World Rugby. The following evidence was provided to the panel relating to collaborations, as part of the provider's submission: • LIT – Setanta College MOU.
4.1.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?*	**Yes**	**See 4.1.3**
4.1.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?*	**Yes**	The provider currently delivers QQI validated award programmes exclusively to learners in Ireland. With regard to Setanta College's strategic (future) intent to provide programmes of study to students based outside Ireland, the panel has stipulated a *mandatory change* to current documentation of QA procedures (see 3.2.5). The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • Draft QA Manual Section 1.6.2: Management of quality and other legislative requirements
4.1.6(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrols learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.*	**Yes**	Setanta College is in good standing with the qualifications systems and education and training systems in Ireland.

4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

Criterion	Yes/No	Finding(s)
4.2.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?*	**Yes**	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • 2018 Tax Clearance Certificate; • Financial Statements for 2015, 2016 & 2017; We note that the Accountants Report (from BDO) for the year ended 31st December 2017 "is made solely to the Board of Setanta College Limited" and that BDO did not "express any opinion on the statutory financial statements". On the basis of the Financial Statements submitted to the panel it would appear that Setanta College had a sufficient financial resource base as at 31st December 2017. Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2018 were not available to the panel at the time of the visit.
4.2.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?*	**Yes**	• Setanta College has focused its provision in the field of Performance Science, where the provider has an established reputation and demonstrated expertise. • The provider employs teaching staff who are active in the field as coaches and practitioners, promoting a learning environment informed by current industry practices. • The provider has developed a number of strategic collaborations encompassing education and research activities with other third level institutions and world sporting associations. These collaborations promote Setanta

		College's ability to ensure that programme content reflects advances in the discipline. • Setanta College has indicated a strategic intent to evolve their scope of provision to transnational delivery. The provider's investment in educational technologies and experience in Blended Learning delivery modes will support this development.
4.2.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?*	**Yes**	Following the panel's site visit in February, 2019, Setanta College implemented mandatory changes identified by the panel to address concerns in relation to this criteria. Subsequent to a review of the changes made by Setanta, the panel is satisfied that the provider now has fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place.
4.2.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?*	**Yes**	Some evidence of capacity to provide required information to QQI was reflected in the provider's reengagement submission and supporting documentation. In February, 2019, Setanta College outlined plans to appoint a QA and Teaching & Learning Coordinator. The panel strongly recommended that this appointment be made promptly, as this would improve the capacity and capability of the provider to implement the *mandatory changes* required for approval of the institution's QA procedures.

4.3   Programme development and provision requirements:

Findings

Criterion	Yes/No	Finding(s)
4.3.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?*	**Yes**	• It is evident that Setanta College has experience of the design, development, delivery, management and assessment of programmes in the field of Performance Science leading to awards up to level 7. • Setanta College has gained further experience in supporting the development and delivery of programmes leading to awards up to level 9 through its current collaborative arrangements with LIT and USW.
4.3.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?*	**Yes**	• Setanta College employs teaching sixteen full-time and twenty-two part-time staff. • Teaching staff are recruited on the basis of qualifications and practical experience in relevant disciplines. All teaching staff are required to either have or be in the process of attaining a level 9 qualification. • Educational technologists provide specialist support for Setanta College's Blended Learning mode of programme delivery. The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • Organisation Chart (p.6 of the reengagement application); • Draft QA manual Section 6: Staff Recruitment, Management & Development Overview – Section 6.
4.3.3(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the*	**Yes**	Following the panel's site visit in February, 2019, the panel identified areas of improvement that Setanta College might make to its QA Manual to include a detailed section

standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?		or chapter on programme development and validation aligned to the QQI Validation criteria, including the governance requirements to approve programme commencement. Subsequent to a review of the evidence presented by Setanta College of implementation of these changes, the panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met.
4.3.4(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?*	Yes	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • Draft QA Manual Section 9.5: Onsite locations for face to face classes; • Draft QA Manual Section 9.3: Online Learning Support; • A tour of facilities by the reengagement panel during the site visit confirmed the physical premises, facilities and resources in place at the Sportslab in Thurles, Co Tipperary.
4.3.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?*	Yes	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • Draft QA Manual Section 5.2: Learner admission, progression and recognition; • Draft QA Manual Section 5.3: Learner admission, progression and recognition abroad; • Draft QA Manual Section 5.4 Protection of Enrolled Learners.
4.3.6(a) **Criterion:** *Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?*	Yes	Following the panel's site visit in February, 2019, the panel felt that discussion on the day had indicated that there were structures and process in place. However, these needed to be incorporated in the QA Manual as comprehensive assessment regulations aligned to QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013.
4.3.7(a) **Criterion:** *Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?*	Yes	The following evidence was provided to the panel as part of the provider's submission: • Draft QA Manual Section 55.4: Protection of Learners.

4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training

The panel is of the view that Setanta College's application demonstrates capacity and commitment to excellence in a number of areas of provision. This notably includes the provider's approach to Teaching and Learning. Setanta College's application provides evidence of the flexible use of pedagogical methods and the development of high quality and customized learning materials specific to a Blended Learning delivery mode. The provider utilizes a high standard of physical premises, equipment and facilities. Additionally, Setanta College ensures that the content of its programmes reflects advances in the relevant disciplines and incorporates effective national and international practices via association with world sporting organisations and access to a suitably expert advisory board.

However, in February, 2019, it was the recommendation of the panel that the application of Setanta College be refused with recommendations for *mandatory changes* to specific areas of current QA procedures. Specifically Setanta College needed to redesign its current governance structure, ensure that QA procedures consistently and comprehensively referenced current QQI policies, and that QA procedures were presented in an accessible and user-friendly format for staff and students of the College (see 3.2). These changes were viewed essential to the provider's capacity to provide sustainable education and training. As indicated in Section 3.1, the panel reconvened in November, 2019 to review evidence submitted by the provider that the changes had been made. It was the panel's view that Setanta College had undertaken a comprehensively addressed the panel's concerns.

Part 5   Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by <Provider Name>

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Setanta College quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). This section of the report follows the structure and referencing of the guidelines.

1	GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

At the time of the February site visit, QQI's QA guidelines in this dimension of quality were not adequately addressed in the provider's QA procedures. These fell into the three main areas of concern, discussed in the subsections below.

Independence of commercial and academic decision making

A number of concerns raised by the panel stemmed from a lack of clarity surrounding the separation of commercial and academic decision making at higher levels of the organisational structure. The panel acknowledged that achieving a clear delineation between roles is inherently challenging for a provider of this size. However, the panel had difficulty in identifying decision-making authority during the site visit. The overlap of roles and functions was illustrated by the panel's queries to Setanta College's Senior Management Team regarding decision making process surrounding new programmes. During the site visit, Setanta College identified that the Academic Council was the unit ultimately responsible for deciding to commit the institution's resources to commencement of a new programme subsequent to validation. To ensure that academic decision-making was clearly independent of commercial considerations, and reflects the interests of learners and the maintenance of standards, a redesign of the College's governance structure was needed.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities

A lack of clarity was evident in relation to identification of roles and positions responsible for the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures. Challenges were illustrated by reference to the organisation chart that Setanta College presented in its initial application. Reporting lines remained unclear from the chart, which combined committees or units of governance with individual roles. One example of this was the reporting line of the Registrar and Academic Director. These roles reported to a unit referred to as the Senior Management Team, which in actual practice comprised the Registrar, the Academic Director and one other. To ensure transparency, there was a need to review, clearly delineate and document reporting lines, roles and units of governance. With regard to units of governance (i.e. councils, committees, boards), details of membership, quorum and terms of reference needed to be documented and included in QA procedures.

Externality

The panel was further concerned that the current governance structure reflected insufficient independence. An advisory board was comprised of external academic advisors and industry partners, however, this group met twice yearly. Setanta's application documentation referred to an intention to add two additional non-executive directors to the Board. This was perceived to potentially have significant benefits in terms of governance, depending on the profile of the persons appointed. Setanta College's application documentation did not otherwise identify other opportunities for externality within the current governance structure. During the site visit, the provider also acknowledged the ongoing challenge of securing student representation on the academic council, due to the cohort profile (mature, part-time learners undertaking study alongside work and practice commitments).

When the panel reconvened in November, 2019, Setanta College submitted evidence reflecting it had appropriately addressed the panel's concerns in relation to this dimension of QA. At that time, the panel identified further items of specific advice for the provider in relation to Governance and Management of QA. These are listed in Section 6.2 of this report.

2   DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

At the time of the February site visit, QQI's QA guidelines in this dimension of quality were not adequately reflected in the provider's documentation of QA procedures. Concerns raised by the panel are discussed below.

The panel noted that the Draft QA Manual submitted with the provider's initial application made inadequate reference to QQI's current Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016). Setanta College's QA documentation referred in multiple instances to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Areas (ESG) (2015). The provider was referred to section 2.1 of QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, which states that provider quality assurance policies and procedures should be informed by QQI quality assurance guidelines.

Although inadequate reference was made to specific QQI guidelines, the provider's draft QA Manual was thematically structured to reflect their presentation in the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) publication. The panel noted that QA procedures should be available to staff and the public as required in usable formats. The panel felt that College's draft QA Manual would benefit from significant restructuring, with a focus on the production of a user-friendly handbook which reflected the life-cycle of a student at Setanta College, and illustrated institutional processes clearly (e.g. admission, an appeal, a plagiarism case, appeal of a result, a formal complaint).

The panel further noted that QA procedures should be fully documented and comprehensive. Some omissions in the document pertained to clarity of roles and units of governance and were discussed in section 5.1. Additionally, given the stated strategic intent of the provider to expand into transnational provision the panel felt that Setanta College's QA procedures should include a further chapter which outlined procedures relevant to transnational provision. These should be aligned with and make direct reference to the QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (revised in 2012).

When the panel reconvened in November, 2019, Setanta College submitted evidence reflecting it had appropriately addressed the panel's concerns in relation to this dimension of QA. At that time, the panel identified a further item of specific advice for the provider in relation to its policy on transnational provision. This is included in Section 6.2 of this report.

3   PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been adequately addressed.

Setanta College's programme design is informed by learner and tutor feedback, as well as input from external stakeholders including industry experts and sporting associations. The provider has invested substantially in developing in-house expertise in Blended Learning delivery mode, and designing for the virtual as well as face to face learning environment. The nature of the provider's cohort (part-time, mature practitioners in the field) is also considered in programme design. However, an *advised change* for Setanta College is that in this dimension of the QA procedures they should make direct reference to the following resources.

1. Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017

2. HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018

3. Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017

Learner admission, progression and recognition policies are documented, and largely fit for purpose. However, with specific regard to learner admission, *specific advice* included incorporation of a disability policy, and review of the English Language Requirements. The panel noted that the latter could potentially encompass not only IELTS 6.0, but equivalent measures of proficiency at CEFRL B2+, and also make reference to the currency (e.g. 2 years) of the evidence of English language proficiency provided.

With regard to Setanta College's strategic intent to expand the scope of provision to deliver transnational programmes the provider reported that gap analysis identified the need for appointment of an international/regional coordinator. This role would include responsibility for ensuring appropriate, supportive and effective learning environments are in place for face to face components of programme delivery offshore, and ensuring processes of learner admission, progression and recognition are fit for purpose for students undertaking studies outside Ireland. The panel noted that clear definition of this role and prompt appointment was an item of *specific advice* which would contribute to Setanta College's capacity to achieve this strategic objective.

When the panel reconvened in November, 2019, Setanta College submitted evidence reflecting it had addressed the panel's items of *specific advice* in relation to this dimension of QA. At that time, the panel identified a further item of specific advice for the provider in relation to how the CEFR is referenced in the QA Manual. This is included in Section 6.2 of this report.

4   STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been appropriately addressed.

Setanta College employs full-time and part-time teaching staff. All staff are required to either have or be in the process of attaining a level 9 qualification. The provider acknowledges that within the broad domain of Performance Science challenges exist in recruiting individuals who both holding NFQ 9 qualifications and also demonstrate expertise in highly specific areas of programme content.

Staff induction and development is a feature of the provider's regular activities, with yearly reviews conducted by the Academic Director for all staff. Continuous Professional Development needs arising through the annual review process may be organised in-house or may result in an individual undertaking training or enrolling in a course of study at another institution. Through collaborative research with partner organisations, Setanta College also offers staff a unique exposure to cutting edge technological and scientific developments in the field, which offers further opportunities for Continuous Professional Development.

During the panel's site visit the provider's Senior Management Team described a management training scheme, which is building capacity in leadership through professional development opportunities.

5   TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been comprehensively addressed

Setanta College demonstrates a commitment to excellence and innovation in learning and teaching. This is evidenced in the College's substantial investment in the development of learning materials and resources to support and enhance the Blended Learning delivery mode. Learners within the provider's Blended Learning programmes have access to multimodal learning materials (video, audio and text-based) through the institution's Virtual Learning Environment. The College utilizes a number of tools and information sources to monitor and review its use of Blended Learning (Draft QA Manual, p.73). Learners additionally attend face to face workshops at the Sportslab facility, which is based in the grounds of Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The cohort's mature profile has also been considered, and this is reflected in the use of pedagogical methods informed by the principles of andragogy.

6   ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

At the time of the February site visit, the panel found that QQI's QA guidelines in this dimension of quality were not adequately addressed in the provider's QA documentation.

The panel noted that the sections on assessment needed to be revised to ensure the college had a comprehensive set of assessment regulations aligned to Assessment and Standards Revised QQI 2013. This needed to include specific reference to the marking, moderation and external examiner process – which should be aligned to the Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised 2015, and make specific reference to the conduct of Examination Boards etc.

Setanta College's assessment framework incorporates systems that address the need to safeguard academic integrity. These include the use of Turnitin software for written submissions, multimodal assessment formats and a plagiarism policy included in the student handbook and reviewed during student induction. Learners receive online feedback on assessment tasks using a minimum of two feedback strategies, and samples of feedback on assessed student work were provided to the panel during the site visit.

However, at the time of the initial application, moderation processes were not clearly defined within the Draft QA Manual. Further ambiguities surrounded liaison with and procedures pertaining to external

examiners. The panel noted that issues pertaining to clarity of roles and units of governance were likely to impact this aspect of the provider's QA procedures. An item of *specific advice* was that is that in addition to clearly documented roles and responsibilities, a flow chart of this key process could usefully be included within the College's QA procedures.

When the panel reconvened in November, 2019, Setanta College submitted evidence reflecting it had satisfactorily addressed the panel's concerns in relation to this dimension of QA. At that time, the panel identified further items of *specific advice* for the provider in relation to learner representation at Exam Boards and the responsibility of the Registrar to chair both Exam Boards and Appeals Boards. These are listed in Section 6.2 of this report.

7   SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

At the time of the February site visit, the panel found that QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension had been adequately addressed, although *some items of specific advice* were indicated.

The College employs a Student Services Officer who is primarily responsible for ensuring a positive student experience. Student feedback is gathered via a learner induction survey, module review surveys and a graduate survey.

The College's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) is used by tutors to support learners via discussion boards and virtual chat, as well as providing access to learning materials. The College employs IT staff who support learners experiencing technical difficulties. During the panel's site visit Setanta College stated this support was provided within 48 hours of receiving a query. Setanta College provides learners with access to an online library to supplement course learning materials. This includes access to e-journals and e-books. Options for accessing hard-copy learning materials also exist. Learners receive library training via a webinar following induction.

While some evidence of a culture of positive support for learners was provided in the draft QA Manual and was further clarified during the site visit, the panel noted the items of *specific advice* below that it felt could usefully be addressed prior to the College's resubmission for QA approval.

1. Appendix Section 9 (Supports for learners with disabilities or specific learning requirements) was missing from the initial application documentation. This needed to be included, and integrated within the main body of the provider's QA procedures.

2. It was unclear why a reference was made to procedures for learner discipline in this section. This also referenced a missing Appendix Section 9. The panel felt that this area should be viewed as distinct from supports for learners and also integrated within the main body of the provider's QA procedures.

3. The panel felt that further efforts should be made by the provider to secure appropriate learner representation on the various committees and councils that comprise the provider's governance structure.

When the panel reconvened in November, 2019, Setanta College submitted evidence reflecting it had satisfactorily addressed the panel's advice in relation to this dimension of QA.

| 8 | INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT |

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been adequately addressed, although an item of *specific advice* was indicated.

Setanta College complies with its obligations under GDPR legislation and maintains secure (password protected) records in spreadsheet format. The College was in the process of identifying a Learner Management System (LMS) which would better enable its management of student data. The panel advised Setanta College that adoption of an appropriate LMS would enhance the security of student records and facilitate easy generation of data required for reporting purposes. An item of specific advice was to clarify the identity of the Data Protection Controller role mentioned on page 93 of the Draft QA Manual.

When the panel reconvened in November, 2019, Setanta College submitted evidence reflecting it had satisfactorily addressed the panel's advice in relation to this dimension of QA.

9	PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been comprehensively addressed.

Setanta College has provided evidence of this in Draft QA Manual Section 11: Public Information and Communication (pp. 94 – 95).

10	OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been comprehensively addressed.

Setanta College has provided evidence of this in Draft QA Manual Section 12: Other Parties Involved in Education and Training (pp. 96 – 99).

11	SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

QQI's QA guidelines under this dimension have been comprehensively addressed.

Setanta College has provided evidence of this in Draft QA Manual Section 13: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review (pp. 100 – 106). However internal inconsistencies in the title of committees should be addressed and the chapter more explicitly aligned with QQI Policy on Monitoring 2014.

Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

At the time of the February site visit, the panel held the view that Setanta College's QA procedures required further revision in relation to the dimensions of Governance and Management of Quality and a Documented Approach to Quality Assurance. This was reflected in the finding of the panel that the provider's application be refused with recommendations at that point in the reengagement process. This outcome enabled Setanta College to address the *mandatory changes* and return to the panel within a 6 month period for reassessment. The panel's initial report additionally contained a number of *advised changes* that the panel strongly recommended Setanta College address during this period, to ensure their QA procedures were robust and comprehensive.

The panel reconvened in November, 2019 to review the evidence submitted by Setanta College that they had addressed these issues. Overall, the panel were satisfied with the substantial work undertaken by Setanta College to address the panel's concerns. The panel was of the view that the provider's review of the draft QA Manual had been comprehensive, and represented a strengthened QA system.

Part 6   Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

The following mandatory changes were identified at the conclusion of the site visit on 5th February 2019 by the panel. Following decision by QQI, Setanta College had six months within which to address the mandatory changes identified. The Panel reconvened on 7th November 2019 to evaluate evidence submitted by Setanta College in support of the mandatory changes. Following an evaluation of the evidence submitted, the panel is satisfied that Setanta College has adequately addressed the issues set out in Section 6.1 below.

6.1 Mandatory Changes

3.2.1 Redesign the current governance structure to ensure that a clear separation of commercial and academic decision making can be readily evidenced, especially at the strategically-focused (higher) levels of the organisation;

3.2.2 Ensure that for all units of governance details of membership, quorum, terms of reference and reporting lines are clearly documented. Include this information, where currently omitted, in the Setanta College Quality Assurance Manual. Where appropriate, include flow charts of key processes to illuminate the responsibilities of and relationships between these units;

3.2.3 Make direct and consistent reference to current QQI policies and statutory quality assurance guidelines throughout the Setanta College Quality Assurance Manual. Remove references to policies or guidelines that have been superseded;

3.2.4. Restructure the Setanta College Quality Assurance Manual. This document is not required to mirror the structure of QQI's QA Guidelines. Rather, it should be presented as an accessible and user-friendly resource for staff and students, which is fully comprehensive and aligned with QQI policies;

3.2.5 Extend the scope of the current application to include an additional chapter in the QA manual which outlines procedures relevant to transnational provision. These should align with and make direct reference to the QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (revised in 2012).

Note that in addition to the mandatory changes listed above, subsections of this report also contain some *advised changes*, which are strongly recommended.

6.2   Specific Advice

1. Setanta College could usefully provide further detail in the QA Manual on the relationship between the Board of Directors and the Governing Board. Specifically, the responsibilities that the Board of Directors delegates to the Governing Board.

2. The College should give further consideration to its current practice of including a learner representative on Exam Boards. The panel is of the view that while Setanta College's emphasis on learner representation is in general to be commended, in the context of the Exam Board this is unnecessary and may be counterproductive.

3. The College currently lists the Registrar as the chair of the Exam Board and the Appeals Board. This is managed by having the chair step out during decision-making on academic appeals. The

panel suggests that this could be more effectively managed by having an alternative individual appointed as chair of the Appeals committee.

4. The panel acknowledges that the College's current policy on Transnational Programmes is future facing. The panel notes the intention of Setanta College to develop in this area and supports this intent in principle. However, following review of the policy, the panel notes that it does not yet reflect the full rigour of QQI's requirements in this area, and subsequently advises that greater detail will be needed in this area in conjunction with any application for validation of a programme for transnational delivery. The panel notes that if the presentation of a new programme is determined to extend Setanta College's scope of provision, the provider may need to submit additional detail within the QA Manual.

5. The panel notes that the CEFR is a competency framework, and not a test of competency. Reference to the CEFR within the QA Manual needs to be phrased more precisely to reflect this.

Part 7   Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Min: 6, Max: 7	Major, Minor, Special-Purpose, Supplemental	Performance Science

Part 8   Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of Setanta College

Name:

Danny Brennan

Date: 20 November 2019

Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Document	Related to
Application Form	
Draft QA Manual	
2017 CRO Annual Return	
2018 Tax Clearance Confirmation	
2018 Insurance Schedule	
Cashflow 2018 – 2020	
LIT – SETANTA MOU	
Signed Financial Statement 2015	
Signed Financial Statement 2016	
Signed Financial Statement 2017	

Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Dr Liam Hennessey	Director of Programmes
Thomas Callanan	Registrar
Ciaran Lynch	Acting QA Coordinator
Dr Philip Hennessey	External Chair of Academic Council

Kevin Smith	Student Services Manager
Sean Hogan	Operations Director
Dr Joe Warne	Programme Leader
Ben Mahoney	Tutor
Luke Jordan	Tutor
Will Hughes	Tutor
Paul Hackett	IT Manager

Appendix: Provider response to the Reengagement Panel Report

SETANTA COLLEGE

Response to the Findings of Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

NOVEMBER 2019

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1. Foreword

Setanta College welcomes the Report (issued on 20th of November 2019) of the Reengagement Panel. The Panel completed the visit to the College on February 5th 2019 and subsequently carried out a desk review in the QQI offices on November 7th to review evidence from the College that it had implemented the mandatory changes and recommendations asked of the College. The responses of the College to the findings and the specific advice of the Panel are provided here.

The College is grateful to the Panel and wishes to acknowledge the input of the Panel in providing a detailed report which the College views as supportive and constructive as the College seeks to ensure its successful reengagement with QQI.

2. Panel's Findings and College's Response

The following is an Executive Summary of the Panel's key findings:

''The panel would like to acknowledge the track record of certification of Setanta College, which is well-regarded in the sector and highly respected within its disciplinary domain. The panel notes that Setanta College offers distinct and credible programmes of study, recognised by world sporting associations, and demonstrates a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. The panel commends Setanta College's substantial achievements as an educational provider in the domain of Performance Science.

Following a site visit to the provider in February, 2019, the panel held the view that some changes to Setanta College's current QA procedures were necessary to ensure that appropriate and fit for purpose structures of governance are in place, and that QA procedures were coherently embedded within institutional systems and culture. These changes were perceived to be essential to Setanta College's achievement of its stated vision and mission.

It was the view of the panel that the team at Setanta College had the capability to implement the necessary changes within an allocated period of six months. The panel reconvened in November, 2019 to undertake a desk review of the evidence submitted by the provider. It was the panel's view that Setanta College had undertaken a comprehensive and successful review of its QA in the intervening period. Subsequently, the panel's recommendation to QQI is to approve the draft QA procedures of Setanta College".

College Response
The College found the engagement with the panel to be a positive experience and would like to acknowledge and express gratitude for the professional manner in which the Panel engaged with the College.

The following is the response of the College to the Panel's overall findings. The College was very grateful for the opportunity to address the initial mandatory changes required as stated following the site visit of February 5th 2019. Following the reconvened meeting of the panel on the 7th of November and the subsequent report on the 20th of November the College accepts the advised changes noted by the panel and aims to implement the specific advice as detailed in the reconvened panel report.

3. Advised changes of the panel to QQI PAEC

1. Setanta College could usefully provide further detail in the QA Manual on the relationship between the Board of Directors and the Governing Board. Specifically, the responsibilities that the Board of Directors delegates to the Governing Board.

2. The College should give further consideration to its current practice of including a learner representative on Exam Boards. The panel is of the view that while Setanta College's emphasis on learner representation is in general to be commended, in the context of the Exam Board this is unnecessary and may be counterproductive.

3. The College currently lists the Registrar as the chair of the Exam Board and the Appeals Board. This is managed by having the chair step out during decision-making on academic appeals. The panel suggests that this could be more effectively managed by having an alternative individual appointed as chair of the Appeals committee.

4. The panel acknowledges that the College's current policy on Transnational Programmes is future facing. The panel notes the intention of Setanta College to develop in this area and supports this intent in principle. However, following review of the policy, the panel notes that it does not yet reflect the full rigour of QQI's requirements in this area, and subsequently advises that greater detail will be needed in this area in conjunction with any application for validation of a programme for transnational delivery. The panel notes that if the presentation of a new programme is determined to extend Setanta College's scope of provision, the provider may need to submit additional detail within the QA Manual.

5. The panel notes that the CEFR is a competency framework, and not a test of competency. Reference to the CEFR within the QA Manual needs to be phrased more precisely to reflect this.

3.1 Advised changes

1. Setanta College could usefully provide further detail in the QA Manual on the relationship between the Board of Directors and the Governing Board. Specifically, the responsibilities that the Board of Directors delegates to the Governing Board.

Response
The College has considered and accepts the specific advice as outlined in the reconvened panel report. Such advice will be reflected in the College Quality Assurance manual following approval by the Academic Council at its next meeting.

2. The College should give further consideration to its current practice of including a learner representative on Exam Boards. The panel is of the view that while Setanta College's emphasis on learner representation is in general to be commended, in the context of the Exam Board this is unnecessary and may be counterproductive.

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Response
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On behalf of Setanta College,

Professor Liam Hennessy
President Setanta College