



Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Irish Institute of Training and Development
Address:	4 Sycamore House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co Kildare
Date of application:	28 th of September, 2020
Date of resubmission of application:	20 th April 2020
Date of virtual site visit:	20 th of October, 2020
Date of reconvene meeting	17 th of December, 2020
Date of 2 nd reconvene meeting	5 th of May, 2021
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	4 th February 2021 and 24 th June 2021

1.2 Profile of provider

The Irish Institute of Training & Development (hereafter IITD) was founded in 1969 and is a non-profit professional body that represents over 2000 members concerned with human resource training and development nationally. The stated vision of IITD is to be the membership community of choice for Learning & Development professionals, to be an authoritative source of industry knowledge and expertise, to contribute to national policy, and promote best practice and standards. Further IITD aims to be the preferred provider of education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for professionals working in Learning & Development.

IITD has delivered programmes focused on developing its member base since 1974. The organisation engaged with FETAC in 2007 for quality assurance and commended delivery of programmes leading to FETAC awards in 2008. IITD offers Special Purpose Awards within the domain of Training & Development



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at NFQ Level 6. Currently offered programmes are Training and Development, Training Delivery and Evaluation and Training Needs Identification and Design. IITD states that to date, the organisation has enabled over 4,500 learners to achieve certification. QQI's reports reflect that 2,498 learners have been certified in the last ten-year period.

IITD additionally works with University College Cork (UCC) to accredit a Level 7 Diploma in Learning & Development Practice, which is delivered in Dublin and Cork each year and has been offered successfully since 2013. The programme is administered and delivered by IITD and adheres to UCC's quality assurance guidelines. A range of non-QQI Awards accredited internally by IITD are also offered, ranging between 4 days and one week in duration and focused on specific aspects of professional practice in Learning and Development.



Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Danny Brennan	Chair	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology; DNB Consulting.
Catherine Peck	Secretary	Head of Teaching and Learning, Innopharma Education
Alan Hogan	Panel Member	Quality Assurance Officer, Limerick & Clare ETB
Dave Collins	Panel Member	Chevron Training & Recruitment

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The Panel would like to commend IITD on bringing forward a well-considered and comprehensive application for reengagement. IITD commenced its journey toward reengagement with a gap analysis in 2017, which occurred concurrently to the organisation commissioning a piece of research in the domain of Learning & Development Practice. This was followed by a comprehensive review of the organisation's QA in 2018. A subsequent gap analysis in 2019 precipitated the formal application for reengagement in 2020. The Panel noted the high standard of the final documentation submitted, which was structured to reflect QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines 2016.

During the site visit, the Panel had the opportunity to engage in discussions with staff in leadership, programme administration and tutoring roles at IITD. Those discussions explored various dimensions of QA at IITD and provided the Panel with valuable insight to how QA is lived and embedded throughout the organisation. The Panel also notes that the team at IITD engaged constructively and openly with the panel throughout the discussions.

The Panel offers a further commendation to IITD on its commitment to and engagement with research and emerging trends in the field of Learning and Development. Throughout the virtual site visit, the commitment of IITD and its representatives to supporting and developing the discipline and practice of Learning and Development in Ireland was readily apparent. IITD is a member-focused organisation that is active in providing unaccredited Continuing Professional Development and supports to its members, as well as delivering programmes validated by QQI and UCC. The Panel was of the view that these activities, although outside the scope of the Panel's evaluation, will serve to valuably inform the organisation's strategic planning processes and the ongoing currency of IITD's programmes.



Nonetheless, at the conclusion of the site visit the Panel held some specific concerns in relation to aspects of IITD's QA procedures. These related, in the main, to details of the governance and management structure presented during the virtual site visit that diverged somewhat from information contained in the original submission. The Panel acknowledges that these divergences were, in part, due to ongoing development and enhancement at IITD. The Panel was initially of the view that IITD had the capacity to address these and other specific and discrete issues within a period of six weeks. The panel therefore availed of its option to defer a decision to provide IITD time to implement those proposed mandatory changes.

Following this deferral, the panel reconvened on the 17th of December, 2020 to undertake a desk review of further evidence submitted by the provider. IITD had made adjustments to the QA procedures in the interim period. However, the panel noted that those adjustments addressed the proposed mandatory changes only in part, or in a manner that was otherwise insufficient. As the panel had identified the proposed mandatory changes to ensure that IITD's QA procedures demonstrably aligned to QQI's Core and Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), the panel was not in a position to proceed with a recommendation for approval until the mandatory changes were fully addressed. The panel therefore recommended that QQI refuse to approve IITD's draft QA procedures with mandatory changes.

This outcome provided IITD with the opportunity to resubmit evidence that it has addressed the mandatory changes that remained outstanding on December 17th, 2020 within six months. Following a resubmission by IITD, the Panel reconvened to undertake a further desk review of evidence submitted by IITD on May 5th, 2021. The panel noted the substantial work undertaken by IITD during the interim period. Following this review, the panel were pleased to be in a position to proceed with a recommendation to QQI to approve IITD's Quality Assurance procedures. The panel identified specific and discrete conditions associated with this recommendation and one further item of specific advice for IITD.



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

	Tick <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve Irish institute of Training and Development's draft QA procedures	X
Refuse approval of Irish institute of Training and Development's draft QA procedures pending mandatory changes set out in Section 6.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
Refuse to approve Irish institute of Training and Development's draft QA procedures	



Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.1.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?</i>	Yes	IITD has submitted CRO records dating to 1974, and has certified 2,498 learners in the last 10 year period.
4.1.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?</i>	Yes	IITD is a well-established provider in Ireland with a track record of certification.
4.1.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?</i>	Yes	IITD has submitted documentation detailing its agreement with UCC, and a copy of its funding contract with Skillnet Ireland.
4.1.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?</i>	Yes	The panel is of the view that there is no conflict between the scope of access sought and IITD's declared relationships and partnerships.
4.1.5(a)	Criterion: <i>Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?</i>	Yes	The provider's application contains a statement of compliance and declaration. A Child & Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy has also been submitted.
4.1.6(a)	Criterion: <i>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 enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.</i>	Yes	IITD is an established provider, with a history of certification with QQI and formerly with FETAC.

Findings

The panel is of the view that the evidence submitted by IITD is wholly consistent with the provider meeting the criteria in Section 4.1 in full.

**4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.2.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?</i>	Yes	IITD has submitted abridged financial statements to year end 2018, a copy of the B1 for its annual 2019 return and a tax clearance certificate dated November 2019.
4.2.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?</i>	Yes	IITD has submitted a letter from its accountants confirming that the company is trading profitably and is solvent. IITD is a well-established provider offering programmes of education and training in areas of ongoing demand.
4.2.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?</i>	Yes	During the evaluation, the Panel identified mandatory changes for IITD pertaining to this Criterion, as outlined in Section 7 of this report. When the panel reconvened in May, 2021 the panel were satisfied that IITD had addressed these mandatory changes sufficiently.
4.2.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?</i>	Yes	IITD has a track record of validation and certification with QQI.

Findings

The Panel was initially of the view that the evidence submitted by IITD was, for the most part, consistent with the provider meeting the criteria in Section 4.2 in full. The Panel identified mandatory changes pertaining to Criterion 4.2.2(a) in Section 7 of this report. These were implemented by IITD in the interim period allocated to the provider.

**4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.3.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?</i>	Yes	IITD has substantial experience providing education and training programmes has well- established expertise within the domain of learning and development.
4.3.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?</i>	Yes	IITD employs appropriately qualified and experienced tutors who are engaged in continuous professional development.
4.3.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?</i>	Yes	The panel is satisfied that the provider's track record of certification, and its approach to the re-engagement process reflects its capacity to co-operate with and assist QQI and provide QQI with information as specified in Section 45(3) of the 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act.
4.3.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?</i>	Yes	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the site visit for this evaluation was conducted virtually, and the panel members did not undertake a site visit to IITD's premises. However, the QA for training environments and facilities (on customer sites and rented spaces as required) were discussed with the panel in the course of the evaluation. IITD has also submitted a copy of its professional indemnity insurance policy dated from September 2019, and an insurance policy inclusive of cover for buildings and office contents dated until May 2021.
4.3.5(a)	Criterion: <i>Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?</i>	Yes	IITD has arrangements in place for access, transfer and progression that are appropriate to the context of its provision.



4.3.6(a)	Criterion: <i>Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?</i>	Yes	During the virtual site visit, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to this criterion. This related specifically to appeals on assessment grades. When the panel reconvened in May, 2021 it was noted that significant work had been undertaken in relation to assessment appeals and associated processes. However, it should be noted that the panel has identified a condition of approval for IITD in relation to this issue.
4.3.7(a)	Criterion: <i>Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?</i>	Yes	IITD programmes do not extend over three months in duration and therefore this criterion is not applicable to the current programmes of education and training delivered by the provider.

Findings

The Panel is of the view that the evidence submitted by IITD is, for the most part, consistent with the provider meeting the criteria in Section 4.3 in full. The Panel identified mandatory changes pertaining to Criterion 4.3.6(a) in Section 7 of this report in December 2020, and a condition pertaining to the same Criterion in May 2021.

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

The panel is satisfied that IITD has met the majority of the Criteria in Section 4, which pertain to IITD's capacity to provide sustainable education and training. At the conclusion of the virtual site visit, the panel identified mandatory changes pertaining specifically to 4.2.2(a) and 4.3.6(a). Following the panel's second reconvened meeting in May 2021, the panel identified a condition pertaining to 4.3.6(a).



Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by IITD

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Irish institute of Training and Development's quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). Sections 1-11 of the report follows the structure and referencing of the Core QA Guidelines.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

At the time of the virtual site visit, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to this dimension of QA.

QQI's guidelines require providers to identify the groups, units, roles and positions within an organisation that are responsible for both the oversight and the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures. Within IITD, the Education Committee acts as the primary unit of academic governance. IITD confirmed that the Education Committee is delegated authority for academic decision-making by the Council. IITD's Council provides strategic planning, oversight and support to the directors. The Council delegates responsibility for day to day activities to the CEO. IITD has articulated a strategic roadmap to inform and guide its future development. This includes an emphasis on business development, membership engagement and building technology capabilities.

The panel explored how the governance structure of IITD enforced an appropriate separation of academic and corporate decision-making. IITD confirmed that membership of the Education Committee included externality in the form of industry representatives as well as learner representation. IITD's application outlined that the Committee is chaired by an independent, external chair. The panel sought to understand the profile of the chair and the degree to which they were in fact independent or external to the organisation. The panel were of the view that given that the current chair is also a Council member, this role could not accurately be described as external to the organisation.

During the site visit, questions arose regarding the interrelationship of the Council, the Board of Directors and the Education Committee. Further questions were explored regarding named roles and positions within the QA system. This discussion responded to a presentation by IITD which included an organisation chart that diverged from the graphic representation of the organisation's governance and management structures within the original submission. The panel acknowledged that these discrepancies were in part associated with ongoing enhancement and development in the organisation. However, the panel noted that consistency of information was necessary to enable the panel to evaluate the structure being presented.

The panel also explored the membership and functioning of the Results Approval Panel (RAP). The documentation submitted indicated a learner representative may be included in the RAP. The panel observed that this was unusual and advised IITD that learner representation may be more appropriate at the Programme Board and Education Committee. The panel further queried whether the training manager who had been directly involved in assessment should be included within the membership of this panel,



and whether this was perceived by IITD as a risk. As the agenda items of the RAP are linked to the direct assessment of the learners IITD representatives felt that the processes of the RAP may be informative to trainers. Noting this, the panel identified that risks could be mitigated through expansion of the RAP membership to ensure there is an appropriate balance between those involved in determining grades and those approving them.

Discussion also took place in relation to the Self-evaluation Panel within the structure. The panel queried how often the Self-evaluation Panel produced a self-evaluation report. IITD confirmed that currently this is scheduled to be an annual activity. The panel queried whether a full self-evaluation report on each programme was overly labour-intensive. IITD representatives noted that within the current context of the organisation this was not the case, due to the limited scope of QQI validated programme offerings. However, the panel were of the view that the remit of the self-evaluation panel could be reconsidered, as there was some apparent overlap between the functions of a programme board and the function of the self-evaluation panel. The panel also noted that as IITD expands its portfolio of programmes the functions of the Self-evaluation Panel could be revisited to usefully bring together outcomes from the programme boards with other inputs.

At the conclusion of discussions, the panel identified a mandatory change pertaining to this dimension of QA for IITD. This required IITD to make some adaptations to the documented QA that will support the organisation in demonstrating consistent alignment with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.

When the panel reconvened on May 5th 2021 to undertake a desk review of the revised QA procedures submitted by IITD, the panel noted that its concerns in relation to this dimension of IITD's QA had been appropriately addressed. IITD confirmed that a formal delegation of responsibility for academic decision-making had been made by the Council to the Education Committee. Further, IITD had appropriately revised the membership and remits of various committees and panels.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

At the time of the virtual site visit, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to this dimension of QA.

The documentation submitted by IITD is explicitly aligned to QQI's core guidelines. IITD has a system in place for ensuring that its QA policies are reviewed every three years, or sooner if required. Procedures are reviewed annually, or sooner if required. Within this, personnel within the organisation can highlight concerns or issues with elements of the QA system at regularly scheduled meetings. A fixed format is established for policy and procedure documentation that ensures consistency as well as tracking of versions and updates.



The panel noted that the mandatory change identified for IITD pertaining to this dimension of QA required IITD to address some discrepancies between the documented submission to QQI and the presentation made to the panel on the day (for example, position titles) as well as minor inconsistencies and typographical errors. This process must also ensure consistency across sources of information, for example, the learner handbook. When the panel reconvened on May 5th 2021 to undertake a desk review of the revised QA procedures submitted by IITD, the panel noted that the provider had made efforts to address its concerns in relation to this dimension of the QA. However, the panel has identified a condition of approval and an additional item of specific advice pertaining to this area. These relate to the consistent presentation of information about the appeals procedure across all sources and system for ensuring consistency is maintained.

3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

At the time of the virtual site visit, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to this dimension of QA.

QQI's guidelines require that providers have processes established for the systematic design and approval of new programmes, and that these processes allow new programmes to be evaluated by appropriate internal decision-making structures. These processes should also demonstrate an enforced separation of responsibilities between those who produce/develop material and those who approve it. During the site visit, the panel therefore sought to understand how new programme development was managed by IITD and what decision-making and approvals processes new programmes were subject to.

A process is in place that encompasses needs analysis and stakeholder consultation. IITD noted that a substantive piece of research had recently been completed on future needs in the domain of learning and development, and that this would be informative to new programmes. A programme board is established and mandated by council to oversee programme development. As IITD works with external consultants on programme development, the panel sought to understand this process in greater detail. Programmes are developed by the external consultant, and this process is closely managed by the Education Director. Development is inclusive of lesson plans for trainers to ensure consistency in delivery. IITD representatives outlined for the panel that when the programme board is satisfied that a programme is ready for approval this will be sent to the Education Committee. The Education Committee ratify the recommendation of the Programme Board and send this to Council, for final approval. The panel noted that within the documentation submitted a reference was made to a step in which approval is then sought from the CEO and directors to submit a programme for validation. IITD acknowledged that this step was poorly framed within the document, as in practice the programme was not returned to the CEO and directors to seek their approval but in order for them to operationalise the decision of the Council. The panel also noted that the Education Director's capacity to act in an approval role as a member of the Programme Board or Education Committee would be diminished by their involvement in or management of the development of the programme. The panel identified that this could be addressed through clarification within the



document that the Education Director or any person involved in development of a programme would not vote on its approval. The panel therefore identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to clarifying these aspects of the programme development and approval process.

With reference to this dimension of QA, the panel also noted that IITD's documented submission identified a role for the Education Committee on adjudicating applications for RPL, and that this was unusual. IITD noted that RPL applications were rare, and this process enabled IITD to engage the expertise of that group in instances where assessment of an RPL application proved complex. The panel noted that the articulation of this within the documentation could be usefully revised for clarity to ensure it reflected actual practice.

When the panel reconvened on May 5th 2021 to undertake a desk review of the revised QA procedures submitted by IITD, the panel noted that its concerns in relation to this dimension of IITD's QA procedures had been appropriately addressed. Effort had been made within the QA procedures to ensure a visible separation between those who develop material and those who approve it.

4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel was satisfied that IITD had addressed QQI's guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA.

IITD have a panel of trainers who they subcontract to for delivery of programmes. The organisation does not subcontract to other providers and works directly with the trainers. The panel explored the recruitment and induction process for new trainers. IITD outlined the prerequisite qualifications and experience necessary to become a member of the panel, and that this included the prospective trainer being able to demonstrate their ongoing professional development through membership of IITD or other means. Trainers are inducted to the administrative processes of the organisation and are invited to sit in on the delivery of a programme. In addition, trainers are observed and mentored prior to being asked to deliver independently. A Code of Conduct is established for trainers within the organisation.

The panel queried whether specifically targeted peer review or moderation was available to new trainers engaging in assessment and marking for the first time. The Quality and Internal Verifier noted that the organisation pays particular attention to this, and that performance of new trainers was carefully monitored. Following these discussions, the panel were of the view that IITD's QA processes pertaining to this dimension of QA were appropriately robust and enhancement focused.

**5 TEACHING AND LEARNING****Panel Findings:**

The panel was satisfied that IITD had addressed QQI's guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA.

QQI's guidelines require providers to enable flexible learning pathways, which acknowledge the diversity of learners and their needs. IITD's documentation pertaining to this dimension of QA appropriately encompasses learner diversity, modes of delivery and pedagogical approaches. The documentation also outlines how consistency in this aspect of programme delivery is managed and how this interacts with the management of tutors. The panel noted that QA of facilities and learning environments as well as learning resources was evident within the documentation submitted.

During discussions, the panel sought to clarify that the Scope of provision that IITD had applied for was for face-to-face provision only, and that any approval for blended learning would need to be made subsequently to QQI. The panel explored how the Certificate in Professional Practice was facilitated online and whether professional development for training staff had been provided to support this. The panel also explored what learning had been gained from the pivot to a fully online model in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. IITD representatives noted that the organisation has a formal agreement in place with Enovation to support Moodle, and that the organisation has transitioned to a more comprehensive use of the Moodle platform. The team at IITD also acknowledged that teaching online had entailed a steep learning curve within the organisation. Several measures had been introduced to support staff and learners in working with learning technologies, including the introduction of a tech check prior to delivery of the first synchronous class for each group.

Within the dimension of teaching and learning, QQI's guidelines also require procedures to be in place for dealing with complaints. IITD's complaints procedure offers pathways for both informal and formal resolution, and for informal complaints to be made verbally or in writing. Formal complaints are managed within a specified time frame and the process allows for the investigation of the complaint and provides an option for escalation to review of the outcome by the CEO if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome.

**6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS****Panel Findings:**

At the time of the virtual site visit, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to this dimension of QA.

During the site visit, the panel explored various dimensions of how assessment and feedback processes are managed and quality assured at IITD. Learners are required to meet a minimum level of attendance, and complete three distinct assessments within the programme offered by IITD. They are introduced to the assessment calendar and can access assessment briefs from the outset of the programme. Learners are then able to email assignments or submit them in person for classroom-based delivery. Moving forward IITD anticipate that all assignments will be submitted via Moodle as well as corrected within the platform, where feedback will also be issued. The panel explored how IITD ascertain that the work of learners is their own and queried whether IITD utilised any software or tools to safeguard academic integrity. No software is currently in use at IITD. However, a signed declaration is submitted by learners.

The panel also explored the verification processes with IITD. There are two separate roles within Internal Verification. The Internal Verifier is focused on administration of marks and results and the administrative process. The Quality Internal Verifier is focused on the collation of feedback from programmes and benchmarking of outcomes. A sampling strategy exists for the process of external authentication of 30%. However, IITD noted that if learner numbers were low the External Authenticator may review the entire cohort rather than a representative sample. The panel identified a mandatory change pertaining to this, which required IITD to include the sampling strategy for external authentication within the QA documentation.

QQI's guidelines require a provider's assessment framework to ensure that its processes for assessment complaints and appeals meet the same standards of fairness, consistency and fitness for purpose as assessment in general. The panel therefore sought to understand how processes such as appeals on assessment outcomes were managed within the organisation. Learners at IITD are not charged for an appeal. The panel queried whether learners were advised of the 14 days in which they can appeal at the time that results were issued. IITD confirmed that learners were advised of this via the learner handbook when commencing a programme, but not at the point of results being issued. Some discussion occurred regarding the composition of any panel or committee and the persons involved in adjudicating an appeal. Within the documented process for appeals submitted for evaluation, the appeals panel includes an independent trainer as well as the Internal Verifier and Academic Director (a role that IITD clarified was in transition to the role of Quality Internal Verifier). Subsequently, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to the appeals process. This required IITD to ensure that persons previously involved in awarding or verifying a grade are not involved in adjudicating any appeal of that decision.

When the panel reconvened on May 5th 2021 to undertake a desk review of the revised QA procedures submitted by IITD, the panel noted that IITD had undertaken work to address the panel's concerns relating to the Appeals process on assessment grades. However, the panel held concerns that the revised Appeals



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process lacked clarity and was not consistent with the definitions of rechecks, reviews and appeals provided in QQI's Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013. The panel also noted that the presentation of the Appeals process in the QA procedures remained inconsistent with how the process was presented in corresponding handbooks. The panel therefore identified a condition of approval related to this issue.



7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

At the time of the virtual site visit, the panel identified a mandatory change for IITD pertaining to this dimension of QA.

QQI's guidelines require that the range of learning resources and learner supports a provider offers be as coherent and integrated as possible. Moreover, procedures must be in place to ensure that these are fit-for-purpose and accessible, and that learners are informed about the full range of services available to them.

The panel was of the view that supports for learners at IITD were appropriate to the context of provision, and that the organisation demonstrated a commitment to facilitating diversity and providing a well-resourced and supportive learning environment. During the site visit, the panel sought to understand how information regarding Reasonable Accommodations was formally communicated to learners, and where they would have access to procedures pertaining to this, as well as to procedures related to Mitigating Circumstances and Compassionate Consideration that were referenced in the documentation. IITD representatives outlined a high level of informal support and communication for learners requiring any form of assistance. However, the panel was of the view that formal procedures were not sufficiently visible in the documentation. Within the discussion, the distinction between these processes was not always clearly defined. The panel therefore identified a mandatory change pertaining to this for IITD.

When the panel reconvened on May 5th, 2021 to undertake a desk review of the revised QA procedures submitted by IITD, the panel noted that its concerns in relation to this dimension of IITD's QA had been appropriately addressed. IITD had made appropriate distinctions between Reasonable Accommodations, Mitigating Circumstances and Compassionate Consideration.

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel was satisfied that IITD had addressed QQI's guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA.

During the virtual site visit, the panel explored how GDPR obligations are managed and met within IITD. IITD representatives confirmed that a data manager is identified within the organisation, and all learner data is hosted and managed within Moodle. Learners are required to enter personal details necessary for certification on Moodle. This information is accessed only by the data manager and used for the purposes of certification. No paper-based records are held within the organisation, as all records are entirely digital. IITD confirmed that the organisation's data management is compliant with the requirements of GDPR and that active consent is provided by learners.

**9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION*****Panel Findings:***

The panel was satisfied that IITD had addressed QQI's guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA.

IITD's documentation contains policies and procedures that closely align to QQI's guidelines. These include procedures pertaining to programme information, stakeholder communication and the publication of quality assurance and evaluation reports.

10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)***Panel Findings:***

The panel was satisfied that IITD had addressed QQI's guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA.

IITD has not applied for Collaborative Provision to be included within its Scope of Provision for reengagement. IITD's application clearly outlines its relationships with other accrediting bodies and research partners.

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW***Panel Findings:***

The panel was satisfied that IITD had addressed QQI's guidelines in relation to this dimension of QA.

As discussed in Section 5.1, IITD has established a Self-evaluation Panel which is tasked with annual reporting to inform processes of self-evaluation within the organisation. Opportunities exist for learners, staff and stakeholders to provide feedback and make input, and responsibility for aspects of this dimension of QA are indicated within the KPIs identified in the documentation.



Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

The Panel was impressed with the commitment of the IITD team to the work of the organisation, and by the plans IITD has outlined for the organisation's future development.

Following the virtual site visit, the Panel identified proposed mandatory changes for IITD that addressed specific features of the QA system. At the time of the virtual site visit the Panel was of the view that these items did not reflect full alignment to QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. The panel was of the view that IITD had the capacity to implement these changes, many of which were discrete and specific, within a relatively short period of time. The Panel therefore opted to avail of its option to defer a decision and grant IITD six weeks to make the adjustments required.

The following proposed mandatory changes were identified by the panel following the virtual site visit in October 2020:

1. IITD must make appropriate adaptations to its governance and management of quality to ensure the structure demonstrates consistent alignment to the principles of QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016). Within this, IITD must:
 - Make arrangements for a formal delegation by the Council to the Education Committee with regard to academic decision-making. This delegation must ensure that the remit of the Education Committee is made clear with regard to developing, maintaining and protecting the academic standards of IITD.
 - Ensure that additional externality in the form of persons experienced in the education and training sector at a senior level is represented in the membership of the Education Committee.
 - Include a profile of the Chair of the Education Committee and the external members within the QAM.
 - Expand the membership of the Results Approval Panel to ensure appropriate balance between those involved in determining grades and those approving them.
 - Review the inclusion of learner representatives within units of governance and remove learner representation from the Results Approval Panel.
 - Further develop the terms of reference for the Self-evaluation Panel to ensure that these are transparently distinct from those of the Programme Board, and appropriately scalable to support IITD's growth strategy.
 - Develop distinct visual representations of its governance structure (indicating the relationship between different units of governance within the organisation) and its management structure (indicating reporting relationships for personnel).
 - Review the title of the Quality Internal Verifier to more accurately reflect the role.

2. IITD must address inconsistencies within the QA documentation to ensure, for example, the following:



- Titles and roles are consistently referenced and accurately represent the proposed structure IITD wishes to have approved.
- Information presented within the QA Manual is consistent with information presented in the Learner Handbook, Website, and any other sources (e.g. the Appeals process).
- Typographical and version control errors are removed.

3. IITD must ensure that within its programme development and approval process, it is made clear that there is a separation between those who develop and those who approve material.

4. IITD must revise its processes pertaining to Appeals on Assessment grades. This must ensure that persons previously involved in awarding or verifying a grade are not involved in adjudicating an appeal of that decision.

5. IITD must revise its processes pertaining to Reasonable Accommodations and ensure these are appropriately distinguished from processes pertaining to Mitigating Circumstances and Compassionate Consideration. The formal procedures for applying for these must be made available to learners.

6. IITD must include the sampling strategy for external authentication within its QA documentation.

Following that six-week deferment, the Panel reconvened on December 17th, 2020 to review the evidence submitted by IITD that it had implemented the proposed mandatory changes and make its recommendation to QQI. The panel noted that IITD had made some adjustments to the QA procedures in the interim period. However, the panel noted that in several instances those adjustments addressed the mandatory changes only in part, or in a manner that was otherwise insufficient. As the panel had identified the proposed mandatory changes to ensure that IITD's QA procedures demonstrably aligned to QQI's Core and Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), the panel was not in a position to proceed with a recommendation for approval until the mandatory changes were fully addressed.

The panel therefore recommended that QQI refuse to approve IITD's draft QA procedures with mandatory changes. This outcome provided IITD with the opportunity to resubmit evidence that it had addressed the mandatory changes that remained outstanding on December 17th, 2020 within six months. The mandatory changes that remained to be addressed by IITD are listed in Section 7 of this report.

The panel reconvened a second time on the 5th of May, 2021 to undertake a desk review of further evidence submitted by IITD that it had addressed the panel's concerns in the interim period. Following that review, the panel were pleased to proceed with a recommendation that QQI approve IITD's application for approval of its QA procedures. The panel has included one discrete condition of approval within this report, and additional specific advice.



Part 6 Conditions of QA Approval

6.1 Conditions of QA Approval

6.1.1 IITD must review its Appeals process to:

- Ensure a person involved in any stage of a decision can not be involved in hearing an Appeal against that decision.
- Streamline or reduce the stages involved in the process.
- Present rechecks, reviews and appeals consistent with their definitions within QQI's Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013
- Remove stages that currently refer to the alteration of final grades within QBS from the document and consult directly with QQI on what is appropriate.
- Present the process consistently across all sources of QA information, for example, the tutor and learner handbooks as well as the QA Manual.

Part 7 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

7.1 Mandatory Changes

The following mandatory changes were identified when the panel reconvened in December 2020. This meeting followed a desk review by the panel members of evidence submitted by IITD that it had implemented the mandatory changes outlined in Section 7.1.

7.1.1 IITD must make appropriate adaptations to its governance and management of quality to ensure the structure demonstrates consistent alignment to the principles of QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016). Within this, IITD must:

- Make arrangements for a formal delegation by the Council to the Education Committee with regard to academic decision-making. This delegation must ensure that the remit of the Education Committee is made clear with regard to developing, maintaining and protecting the academic standards of IITD.
- Ensure that additional externality in the form of persons experienced in the education and training sector at a senior level is represented in the membership of the Education Committee.
- Include a profile of the external members of the Education Committee within the QAM.
- Include a profile for any external members of the Results Approval Panel appropriate to the role and functions of that panel.



- Clarify the number of learner representatives within various units of governance and explain why the membership of learner representatives is noted to be ‘as required’.
- Further develop the terms of reference for the Self-evaluation Panel to ensure that these are transparently distinct from those of the Programme Board, and appropriately scalable to support IITD’s growth strategy.
- Develop a distinct visual representations of the management structure (indicating reporting relationships for personnel).

7.1.2 IITD must address inconsistencies within the QA documentation to ensure, for example, the following:

- Information presented within the QA Manual is consistent with information presented in the Learner Handbook, Website, and any other sources (e.g. the Appeals process).
- Typographical and version control errors are removed.

7.1.3 IITD must ensure that within its programme development and approval process, it is made clear that there is a separation between those who develop and those who approve material.

7.1.4 IITD must revise its processes pertaining to Appeals on Assessment grades. This must ensure that persons previously involved in awarding or verifying a grade are not involved in adjudicating an appeal of that decision.

7.1.5 IITD must revise its processes pertaining to Reasonable Accommodations and ensure these are appropriately distinguished from processes pertaining to Mitigating Circumstances and Compassionate Consideration. The formal procedures for applying for these must be made available to learners.

7.1.6 IITD must review the presentation and coherence of the sampling strategy for external authentication within its QA documentation.

7.3 Specific Advice

7.3.1 IITD is advised to give significant consideration to the implications for its QA before applying for its scope of provision to include Blended Learning. The panel advises that the learning from implementation of the contingency processes in the organisation will be of value. However, this should be substantially augmented by conduct of a gap analysis against QQI’s Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018) and implementation of actions arising from that process.



7.4 Additional Specific Advice

7.4.1 The panel advises that IITD could give consideration to implementing a system of hyperlinks across the documents where QA procedures are presented. This will ensure that if a QA procedure is updated it will be consistent across all sources of information.

Part 8 Proposed Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
6	SPA	Training & Development
Face to Face Only & Part Time Only		

Part 9 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 Irish institute of Training and Development.

Name: Danny Brennan

Date: 14 April 2021.



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

Document

Related to

No additional documentation was provided to the panel during the evaluation

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

Name

Role/Position

Sinead Heneghan	CEO
Gay White	Director
Joe Finegan	Learner & IT Support
Una Fitzpatrick Cleary	Programme Administrator
Bradley Nolan	Tutor Co-ordinator
John Gorman	Tutor
Ray Bonar	Quality Internal Verifier

Appendix: Provider response to the Reengagement Panel Report



Marie Cotter
QQI
26/27 Denzille Lane
Dublin 2

9 June 2021

Dear Marie

Ref: Re-Engagement of Centre 38151J Irish Institute of Training & Development

Thank you for your assistance over the past months during our re-engagement process.

IITD is pleased to have completed the process and acknowledges the work of the panel in this regard.

We accept the findings of the panel and have no amendments or issues in for the factual accuracy report.

I have attached the updated documentation based on the conditions outlined by the panel.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sinead Heneghan', is written over a horizontal line.

Sinead Heneghan
CEO, IITD