Quality Assurance System

PL04 - Policy on Education and Training

Rev 1.0

Policy on
Education and Training

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	1.0	New Document

Programmes of Education and Training

1.1 Policy

We are committed to developing, and providing, high quality Programmes ensuring we meet national standards by creating the conditions that enable Learners to achieve their desired goals. It is the policy of LASNTG, in overseeing the quality of its training provision on behalf of the Local Authority sector and others, to engage best practice in the development, delivery and review of all its Programmes and courseware. It aims to maximise the learning experience, to be creative and innovative in delivery methodology and to ensure the continued relevance of Programme content in line with best practice.

1.2 Need Identification

Decisions to progress proposed Programmes to the design and development stage are evidence-based. We do not move forward with the development of a Programme until we have established that a real need exists. We identify the need for new Programmes in the following ways:

- LASNTG consults, on an ongoing basis, with partner Local Authorities, Government Departments, Regulatory agencies, sectoral Training Groups (RSTG, WSTG, ESTG, FSTG), RTC Management/Technical Committees, Third Level Institutions, and public and private agencies around current and future training needs
- Local Authority Training Officers who are in daily contact with those who avail of our training and who also manage the Training Needs Analysis of its own Local Authority are key to advising LASNTG on training needs
- Reviews of related literature and reports undertaken in our sectors
- The Secretary and Programme Coordinator consult with subject matter experts and industry specialists on a regular basis
- Attendance at conferences, seminars etc.
- Programme review reports and action plans
- Monitoring the economic climate, changing employment patterns and changing policy, regulation and legislation relevant to each of the four sectors
- We invite suggestions from Learners, Trainers and the other members of the various committees, teams and groups associated with LASNTG
- We maintain a database of enquiries which we review regularly

1.3 Programme Design and Development

The Programme Coordinator is responsible for leading the design and development phases of all Programmes. The Programme Coordinator draws up a Programme proposal based on needs analysis and submits it to the sectoral Training Group who considers the proposed new Programme. If it approves the proposal, the sectoral Training Group appoints a Programme Design and Development Team (PDDT) made up of subject matter experts drawn with specific knowledge and expertise relevant to the subject matter of the new Programme. The sectoral Training Group agrees a budget, and a timeframe for roll out, which allows sufficient time for the PDDT to design the Programme and

submit it to the sectoral Training Group for consideration and approval. The Programme Coordinator works with the PDDT to develop the Programme In advance of design completion, the PDDT arranges for the delivery of a pilot Programme which is evaluated by invited subject matter experts. The findings from the evaluation of the pilot Programme are used to finalise the material content and to ensure the Programme, as designed, is fit for purpose. The Programme Coordinator presents the Programme Specification, which includes the Modular Assessment Plan (MAP), and all Programme materials to the sectoral Training Group for consideration. The sectoral Training Group may make suggestions for amendments and the PDDT makes the required amendments.

1.4 Programme Updates

LASNTG Programmes are generally delivered within the context of a specific occupation/sector where changes occur on an ongoing basis. We update our Programmes regularly to ensure that Learners are capable of performing all of the activities required by the specific occupation/sector.

The sectoral Training Groups;

- Engage with key stakeholders who monitor changes in the sector and occupation.
- Maintain oversight of the review of Programme content to ensure that the content and teaching and learning strategies and assessment instruments reflect changes and incorporate best practice.

The Programme Coordinator coordinates the updating of the Programme materials to reflect changes and disseminates information to the Trainers and other members of the Programme team. Where necessary, this may involve re-convening the PDDT to review, and update, the Programme.

1.5 Programme Approval and Submission for Validation

All Programme documentation is approved by the sectoral Training Group before it is submitted to the awarding body for validation or prior to delivery.

1.5.1 Process

- The PDDT produces a final draft of the Programme Specification, the application for validation (if applicable) and all Programme materials. They are proof-read and double-checked by the Programme Coordinator before hand-over to the sectoral Training Group.
- Following approval by the sectoral Training Group, the Programme Coordinator draws up an application for validation, arranging for input from the PDDT and others as required.
- Applications for validation are reviewed and signed-off by the Secretary on behalf of LASNTG prior to submission to the awarding body for validation.

In the case of Programmes validated by QQI;

- Following approval and sign-off, the application is submitted to QQI by the Secretary via the QBS.
- The appropriate validation fee is paid to QQI by EFT quoting the Programme Code.

- The status of the application is tracked by the Secretary to confirm that the application is progressing satisfactorily. If it is stalled at any point the Secretary raises a query with QQI via Qhelp.

1.6   **Programme Validation and Re-validation (QQI)**

We secure QQI validation before enrolling Learners on any Programme leading to a QQI award. We review our capacity to uphold the terms and conditions of validation and ensure that our Programmes meet the validation criteria as part of our Programme review. We understand that validation is for a maximum of five years and automatically lapses unless renewed through re-validation. Therefore, we arrange for the re-validation of continuing Programmes every 5 years (or in accordance with the expiry of the duration of the validation if different). We undertake a Self-Evaluation to coincide with re-validation – data from this review is used to inform and support the re-validation process. We understand that a validated Programme may be reviewed by QQI at any time and we facilitate such reviews.

1.6.1   **Validation Process (QQI)**

1. Submission
   - LASNTG submits a Programme in a standard format and consistent with QQI requirements as outlined in the published Award Specification (if applicable) Guidelines for Assessment and Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications for FET Programmes leading to QQI awards.
2. Validation
   - The Programme is validated against current validation criteria.
3. Evaluation.
   - The Programme is then assessed through a QQI appointed panel process
4. Decision
   - The QQI Programmes and Awards Executive (PAEC) Committee validates or refuses to validate the Programme.
5. Appeal
   - LASNTG may appeal the PAEC decides to refuse validation.
6. Review
   - QQI may review the Programme at any time. The decision may be to withdraw validation. LASNTG may appeal this decision.

1.7   **Programme Planning and Delivery**

The Programme Coordinator confirms Programme details with the RTC Managers ensuring all human, physical and other resources are in place (based on the Programme Specification). If new, additional or updated equipment/resources are needed, the RTC Manager, in consultation with the Programme Coordinator, arranges for necessary resources. The Programme Coordinator liaises with the RTC Manager to organise resources, support materials, equipment, trainee induction pack/presentation, evaluation forms, Programme specific briefing document, etc.

The RTC Manager issues Programme outline, seeking expressions of interest, to:

- Local Authorities
  - ➢ Training Officers
  - ➢ Heads of Section
- Schedule of private and public bodies

On confirmation of interest, and numbers confirmed by the employers, the RTC Manager

- Procures Trainer
- Schedules the Programme
- Issues Booking Form to the employers

Learners' profiles are available pre-Programme commencement and resources are available to facilitate a variety of learning/delivery styles.

1.8   Access, Transfer and Progression

1.8.1   Admissions Policy

LASNTG operates a fair and consistent approach to entry to Programmes. Fundamental to the implementation of our Admissions Policy is the principle of equality and inclusivity. Employers whose Learners have any learning support needs are asked to provide us with relevant information at the time of application. We treat any such information confidentially. Applicants should bear in mind however, while we will make every effort to accommodate special needs, that resources available are limited. We do not register Learners on a Programme until it has been validated by the appropriate awarding body. We make pre-enrolment information widely available; including details on entry requirements, recognition of prior learning for entry and specific transfer and progression options.

We have minimum entry requirements for each Programme which are:

- Comprehensive, clear and explicit
- Reflect the level and content of the awards being offered in the Programme
- Justifiable and genuinely required for successful completion of the Programme
- Reflect the access, transfer and progression statements from the award specification
- If prior learning is recognised for entry to a Programme, details are set out in the Programme brochure

1.8.2   Applications Process

Learners are selected by their Local Authority for training. The Local Authority Training Officer (or other LA official) completes and submits a Booking Form. When completing the Booking Form the employer is required to confirm that the applicants meet the minimum entry requirements, understand what is involved in terms of hours of directed and self-directed learning, the level of the Programme and if an applicant has any specific needs. The Booking Forms are reviewed by the RTC Manager to determine eligibility for admission. The RTC Manager also notes if the employer has indicated on the Booking Form that a Learner has any specific/additional needs. If they have, the employer is contacted by the RTC Manager and, if possible and feasible; arrangements for reasonable accommodation are agreed.

Places on Programmes are offered on the basis that each of the following requirements are met:

- There is a place available to be offered, i.e. the Programme is not full.
- The Learner demonstrates the capacity to successfully participate on the Programme for which he/she has been accepted. This includes the academic, practical and work experience relevant to the Programme.
- Some Programmes may have specific requirements in addition to the above. If so, these are detailed in the individual Programme brochures.
- The employer can provide the relevant work-based learning experience, if required.

Subject to meeting the above requirements, places are offered on a first come first served basis. If there is reason to think that a Programme is likely to be oversubscribed, the RTC Manager stops accepting applications and schedules a future course where possible.

If an applicant is not accepted onto the Programme for any reason, the employer is advised and is told the reason why and is advised that they have a right to appeal the decision and details of the appeals process are made available to them. The website is updated accordingly.

The RTC Manager gives a list of qualified applicants to the Trainer prior to induction. If arrangements for reasonable accommodation have been agreed these are highlighted by the RTC Manager and brought to the attention of the Trainer.

1.9   Programme Cancellation

All Programmes offered are subject to minimum enrolment numbers and LASNTGs reserve the right to cancel a Programme where there are insufficient numbers to run a viable Programme. The RTC Manager reviews application numbers on an ongoing basis. If there are not sufficient numbers by a specified cut-off date, the RTC Manager decides not to run the Programme one week prior to the scheduled commencement date of that Programme.

If a Programme is cancelled;

- The RTC Manager contacts employers by both telephone and email at the earliest possible opportunity to let them know that the Programme will not run
- The RTC Manager arranges a refund of any payments (if costs incurred by the employer) as soon the decision is taken not to run the Programme.

1.10 Registration

Registration is considered complete when:

- All information and supporting documentation requested has been submitted by the employer.
- All fees or charges due are paid in full except in a case which is deemed to be an exceptional circumstance or in accordance with the charging structure of the RTC and the funding body.

1.11 Transfer and Progression

- Transfer possibilities to the same level on the NFQ
- Progression possibilities to higher levels on the NFQ

We provide clear and comprehensive information on transfer and progression to both current and prospective Learners. Information about specific transfer and progression options are set out in our Programme specifications and are agreed with awarding bodies at the point of validation (if applicable). The Trainer discusses transfer and progression options at induction. The Trainers also describes the National Framework of Qualifications and the qualifications of the education and training system and how they interlink. The NFQ shows how learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way. The Trainer describes the different types and sizes of qualifications included in the NFQ. Transfer and progression options are researched by the Programme Design and Development Team at the Programme design stage and are reviewed and updated/amended whenever the Programme is reviewed.

1.12 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

We recognise the knowledge, skills and competence an applicant has already acquired for admission to our Programmes. During the Programme development process, the Programme Design and Development Team identifies what prior learning will be accepted for entry. We recognise prior learning for entry on a case-by-case basis while ensuring that recognition of prior learning maintains the integrity of the awards and benefits the applicant. Programme brochures include information on how RPL for entry works. We consider equivalent learning to stated entry requirements, where appropriate. We process exemption requests with QQI for previously certified learning, as credit/s towards a major award. Enquirers are talked through the Programme by the RTC Manager and if the RTC Manager is not able to provide the necessary information, the enquiry is escalated to the Programme Coordinator. An application pack is forwarded by email to the enquirer – this consists of application form and guidelines and a Programme brochure/s.

We accept applications either directly from Local Authorities, or individual employers and from employers on behalf of a group of employees.