Quality Assurance Manual

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Provider Profile

LEAP, leadership and management consultants, is based in Galway and serve clients nationwide. The company was established in October 2000 providing business support to a broad range of organisations across Ireland helping them to grow their organisations by developing their strategic, managerial and team effectiveness. Through tailored, facilitated training and development programmes, targeted interventions and in-company mentoring, LEAP give organisations the power to achieve their full potential. As part of its training offering to clients, LEAP designs and delivers leadership development programmes for business owners and team leaders, and management development programmes for new managers.

We are recognised by QQI to offer two programmes leading to minor awards at Levels 5 and 6 on the NFQ; Managing People 6N3945 and Teamworking Skills 5N1367. We also offer non-accredited programmes (see website). We work closely with a number of Skillnet networks funded by Skillnet Ireland providing training and development support for their member organisations.

LEAP recognises the importance of the company having a strategy. Anchoring the strategy are the emotive drivers of consistent change and improvement for the company's D.N.A. (Do Not Alter) of: a Vision, Mission (core purpose) and shared values as outlined below

Vision

LEAP's the "go-to" company for owner managed organisations who want to build their business through their people. We aim to be the best providers of impactful leadership and management development support for local businesses.

Mission

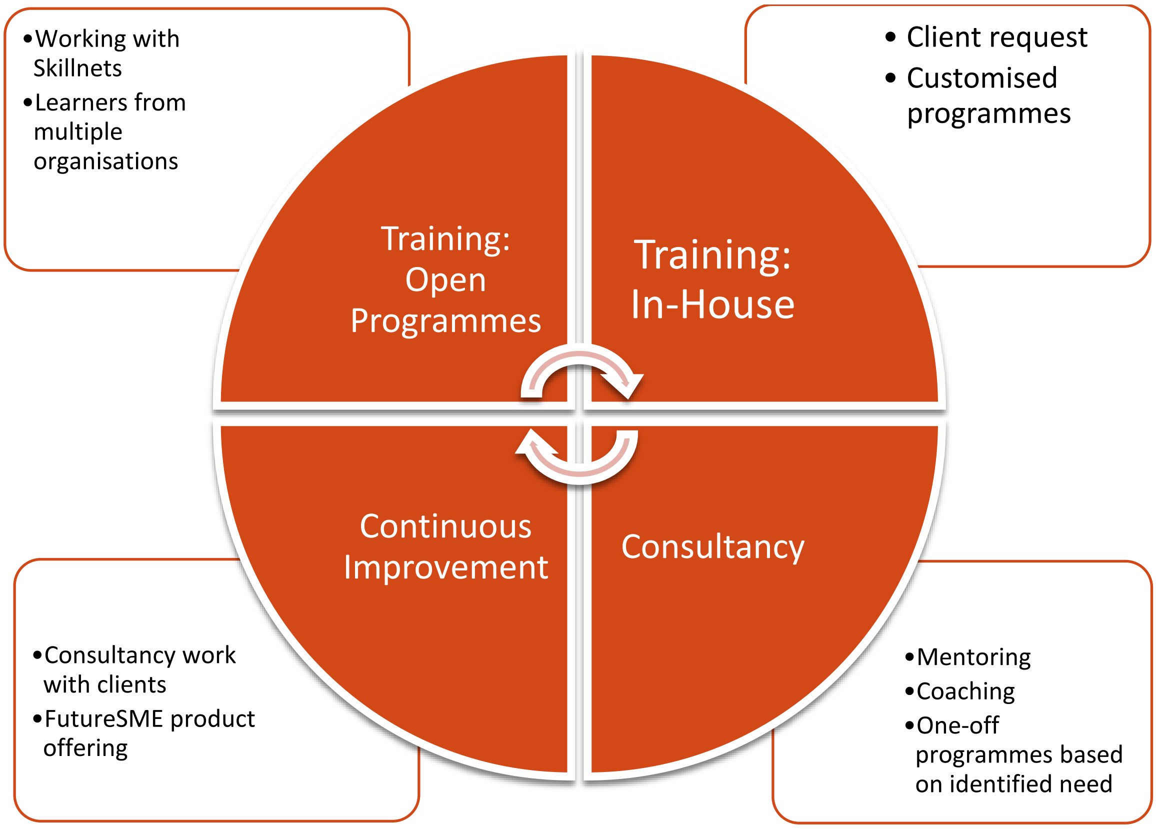
Enabling organisations and their people to realise their potential.

Values

Our values are quality centric, based around:

- COLLABORATION: working with our clients to determine the solution suited to their needs
- RIGOUR: a thorough, professional approach to each and every learning experience
- AUTHENTICITY: doing it the right way, even if it is not what was asked for
- IMPACT: focus on measurable, tangible improvements for our client organisations and learners
- CREATIVITY: capture the need, deliver what is needed to deliver a quality learning experience for all

Scope of Operations



SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

2.0 Governance Policy

The Board of Directors of LEAP are committed to ensuring the company, its staff and associates conducts all facets of its business in a professional manner at all times to a high standard, thereby providing excellent support to its clients' organisations and client learners. LEAP is also committed to full compliance regarding any legal and statutory requirements. To ensure we achieve these goals a fit for purpose Governance structure.

2.1 Governance Structure

LEAP's governance infrastructure ensures that the company is governed and managed effectively, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for the different areas of responsibility. The governance structure (Figure 1.1) is designed to ensure that there is adequate oversight of the financial and operational activities and also on programme activities and that all legal, policy and ethical requirements are complied with. Through its governance system, LEAP ensures the clear separation of financial and programme decision-making and has arrangements in place to provide informed, independent oversight of significant decisions and constructive analysis of information gained through internal and external monitoring and review.

LEAP adheres to the Eight Principles of Good Governance which include:

1. Always adhere to the rule of law.
2. Participation – we enlist both internal and external input to our service provision.
3. Consensus-Orientated – decisions are made through consensus. Partnerships are based on trusting relationships.
4. Accountability – As defined by our governance structures and terms of reference.
5. Transparency – record keeping and communications are kept on file for the statutory minimum of five (5) years.
6. Responsive – client requests are acted on in a timely fashion.
7. Effective & Efficient – standards are adhered to and metrics put in place ensuring programmes and skills are constantly improved upon.
8. Equitable & Inclusive – fair and consistent treatment of our learners

Externality in Governance

We are committed to and appreciate the value of having informed, independent oversight of significant decisions and constructive analysis of information gained through monitoring and review.

Having external oversight helps us to resolve any conflict that may arise between commercial and academic decisions and to ensure that decisions on education and training matters are made independently of commercial considerations.

We have external members on our Programme Board whom we have selected based on their suitability to the selection criteria set out in the terms of reference (TOR) of the board. [S1-5 TOR Programme Board]

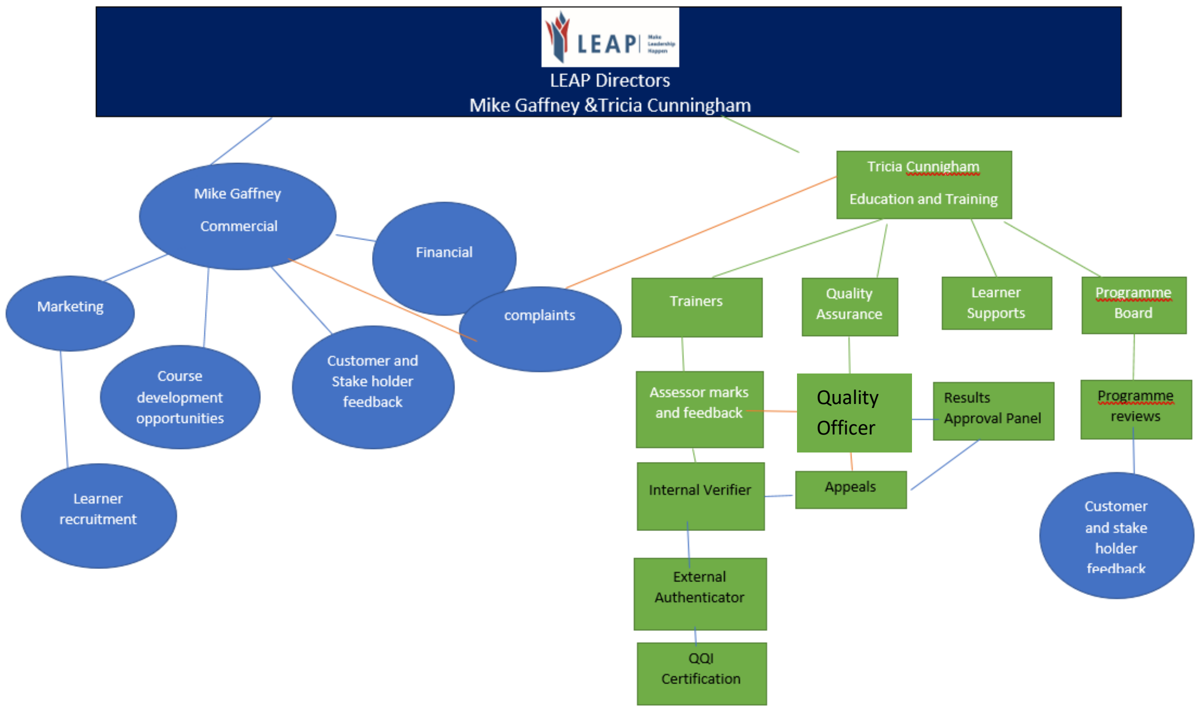
LEAP benefits from the expertise that these external members bring in terms of insights into practices in other organisations, insights into industry needs, standards and norms.

We believe that this helps us to keep pace with an everchanging training environment.

Cognisant of the need for, and value of having informed, independent oversight of significant decisions we provide for externality as follows;

- We have an external member on our Results Approval Panel represented through the External Authenticator.
- We contract the services of an external QA officer who has extensive experience of quality assuring provision in a QQI context.
- We use external subject matter experts as part of our programme design teams if needed.
- We use external authenticators and external evaluators for self-evaluation exercises.

The directors of LEAP have responsibilities linked to the two core functions of the organisations: commercial and academic.



- Ensure the company applies effective disciplines both strategically and operationally.

Delegated Responsibilities

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for the management and operation of the company to the Senior Management Team (SMT). It is responsible for the ongoing operational performance of LEAP and for ensuring the implementation of the company's strategy.

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for oversight of Programme and quality assurance matters to the Programme Board and Quality Assurance Officer who reports to the Senior Management Team through the Chair.

2.3.2 Senior Management Team – Terms of Reference

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is comprised of the senior partners:

1. Managing Director
2. Training Manager
3. Continuous Improvement Partner
4. Financial Advisor

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of LEAP and all its operations to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The responsibilities of the SMT are set out in the Terms of Reference.

These operational responsibilities incorporate:

- Implement LEAP's strategic plan.
- Monitor progress against strategic goals.
- Oversee the operational management of LEAP.
- Consider and manage the adequacy of personnel and other resource requirements.
- Manage marketing and business development.
- Manage resources to make sure that appropriate facilities and supports are available to ensure the quality of programme provision.
- Manage risk to a reasonable level.
- Embed a culture of continuous quality improvement throughout the company.
- Ensure ongoing application of the company's values.

The commercial duties of the business are carried out by the SMT with input from the Financial Advisor.

The SMT meet formally every month for strategic reviews and have operational meetings on an ongoing basis, usually weekly.

2.3.3 Programme Board – Terms of Reference

The Programme Board supports the Directors in making programme decisions and provides both challenge and approval on issues affecting the quality and Programme standards of the programmes delivered by LEAP.

Programme Board Membership and Tenure

The LEAP Board of Directors appoints members who represent the interests of those who have an interest in the programmes. Members serve for 2 years and can be reappointed. The Board consists of a maximum number of 5 members to ensure that the Board is an effective decision-making body independent of the SMT and its commercial decisions.

Members

- Chair, who oversees discussions and ensures the identified goal of the meeting is achieved - external
- Internal: Training Manager
- An employer/client
- Trainer
- Learner/graduate

Members commit to:

- Attending all scheduled meetings
- Actively engage
- Making timely decisions

Members expect:

- To be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information by the Programme Leader in a timely manner
- Open and honest discussions

Selection Criteria for External Members

Selection Criteria for Independent Education and Training Professionals as members of the Programme Board

Their role

- To provide a creative and informed contribution to the workings of the Board.
- To utilise their knowledge, skills and experience to act as a constructive critic of the objectives and plans devised by the LEAP management in relation to training and learning.

The LEAP Board appoints members to the Programme Board who are/have:

- Flexibility/readiness and availability of time to perform the role effectively and to respond to its requirements.
- Independent and impartial.

Among the Programme Board members are independent training and learning professionals who are/have:

- Relevant educational qualifications and/or professional experience in the LEAP areas of expertise.
- Knowledge of the training needs of LEAP clients.
- Familiarity with governance systems, qualifications frameworks and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in particular.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Programme Board are set out in the terms of reference and include:

- Provide informed, independent oversight of strategic direction, significant decisions and programme provision.
- Review new programme proposals and make recommendations to progress.
- Review programme descriptors and applications for validation.
- Review the risk register and risk management processes in relation to training delivery.
- Review Results Approval Panel meeting reports and corrective action.
- Oversee the implementation of the quality assurance system (QAS).

Meetings

- Meetings are held biannually. Additional meetings can be convened by the Chair or the Board of Directors if necessary.

- Decisions are agreed by majority.
- The Training Manager ensures administrative support which includes:
    - Drafting agendas and supporting papers in consultation with the Chair
    - Preparing meeting notes and information
    - Writing up minutes/action plans and distributing them to members of the Board in a timely fashion

2.3.4 Results Approval Panel (RAP)

The Results Approval Panel meeting is the final step in the quality assurance process for fair and consistent assessment of learners. The Panel meet after External Authentication and in advance of requesting certification. All results are provisional until approved by the Panel. We cannot request certification in advance of the approval of results by the Panel and sign-off by the Chair of the Results Approval Panel.

Role and Responsibilities of the Results Approval Panel

The role of the Results Approval Panel is to ensure that:

- All assessment results submitted to the Panel are comprehensively and thoroughly reviewed and are fully quality assured and signed off by Chair before they are submitted to QQI.
- Appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment, verification and authentication processes.
- Our assessment procedures are adhered to.
- Appropriate evidence and records are available.
- Any suspected irregularities are notified to the appropriate person.

Membership.

The Programme Board appoints members. The minimum number of panel members required to be present to carry out the functions of the panel is three.

Members

- Training Manager (Chair)
- Internal Verifier
- A member of the Programme Board (external)
- External Authenticator
- Associate Trainer
- Internal Assessor

Occasional Members

The Chair may invite other members for all or a particular section of the meeting as appropriate e.g., independent subject matter specialist, independent quality assurance specialist etc.

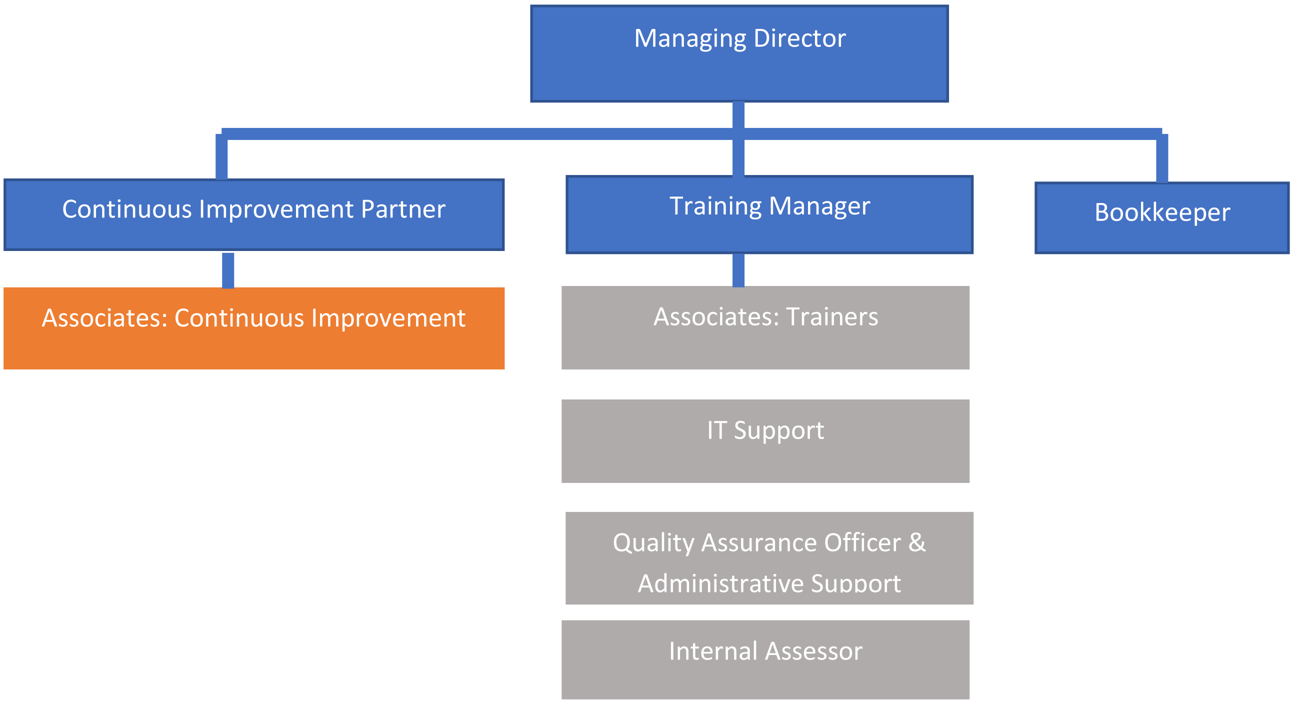
Criteria for Results Approval Panel Membership

Expertise/experience or as appropriate to the position familiarity with:

- Field of learning/National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level.
- Education and Training with specific experience in assessment.
- Understanding of the module/programme under discussion of the module/programme under discussion.
- Documented Approach to Quality Assurance.

2.4 Organisation Structure

LEAP is a private company limited by shares and currently employs 3 full-time and 7 part-time/contract associates in addition to a book-keeper, Quality Officer & Admin Support and IT support. The shareholders of the company are Tricia Cunningham and Mike Gaffney who are also the directors of the company. Tricia Cunningham is the company secretary and Mike Gaffney is the Managing Director. (Fig 1.1) below



Roles descriptions for the key Senior Management Team positions are written and approved. These identify the responsibilities of the role and skills required.

Summary of Role Descriptions

The Managing Director is responsible for the oversight and delivery of high-quality training and development programmes and its quality assurance policies and procedures.

The Training Manager is responsible for the design and development of training programmes, that meet the needs of learners and stakeholders in addition to overseeing the Associate Trainers. Working with the Quality Assurance Officer, the Training Manager will monitor and evaluate training programmes to ensure that the programmes meet learner requirements and are continually being improved and updated. The Training Manager reviews all new training programme designs and brings proposals for new programmes to the Academic Board.

The Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for developing and reviewing QA policies and procedures to ensure they meet the requirements of QQI guidelines.

The Bookkeeper is responsible for invoicing and debt collection while also providing relevant financial information to assist the Managing Director in making informed financial decisions protecting the financial stability of the organisation.

The Training Administrator manages and implement office systems, procedures and resources for the optimum delivery of all company programmes and engagements.

LEAP employs trainers to deliver our programmes in line with agreed curriculum. The responsibilities of our trainers include:

- Deliver training to learners in line with defined programme curriculum.
- Implement learner support to best achieve required learner outcomes.
- Participate in programme reviews and contribute to the continuous improvement of LEAP’s programmes.

2.5 Risk Management

LEAP recognise the management of risk as a key element in ensuring proper governance in its provision of services. Risk is considered, assessed and controlled by LEAP in:

- maintaining academic integrity.
- the avoidance of academic or other fraud associated with provision and related services.
- planning to ensure capacity to provide adequate services.

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for risk management and has assigned responsibility to the Programme Board for maintaining oversight of training related risk. Risk is a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the various governance panels of; the Board of Directors, the Programme Board, the Senior Management Team and the Results Approval Panel.

We have a framework in place that facilitates an organisational wide overview of the potential risks.

Risk Register

We record and categorise and evaluate risks, and set out, mitigation measures on a risk register in a concise and consistent manner.

The risk register can be reviewed quickly and easily and provides an effective summary of all risks in LEAP.

The risk register is updated regularly by the Managing Director with input from the Training Manager, Quality Officer and Administrator in relation to academic risk.

The risk register is reviewed by the governance panels at each meeting with any concerns being highlighted by the Training Manager or their representative.

Key areas that we monitor in relation to risk include: maintenance of academic integrity, interruption of delivery and the provision of a safe and appropriate learner environment.

2.6 Health and Safety

LEAP ensure the management of the health and safety of learners, staff and stakeholders in the provision of its training services.

We operate in accordance with the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and associated legislation. We manage and co-ordinate workplace safety and health and, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- Work activities are managed to ensure the safety, health and welfare of our employees and learners, both within all learning environments.
- Our Safety Statement is maintained and updated, and written risk assessments are being carried out and reviewed as required and brought to the attention of all employees on an annual basis.
- Identified protective and preventive measures are implemented and maintained.
- Improper conduct likely to put an employee's or learners' safety and health at risk is prevented.
- Assessments of training locations are conducted, and protective and preventative measures are implemented to ensure the safety and security of our employees and learners.

- A safe place of work and training is provided that is adequately designed and maintained.
- A safe means of access and egress is provided.
- Safe systems of work are provided.
- Risks to health from any article or substance are prevented.
- Appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision are provided.

2.7 Data Protection

LEAP is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Training Manager is responsible for data protection and for ensuring that personal data in maintained in compliance with current data protection legislation and regulation.

Our data protection policy sets out the protocols and principles by which LEAP operate to comply with its statutory requirements.

In order to provide training services, LEAP is obliged to collect personal data.

Personal data is data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the data controller.

LEAP is the data controller, that is, it controls the contents and use of personal data This data extends to learners, trainers, external personnel, authenticators, staff and client companies.

We collect personal data for the following purposes:

- To administer programme data, record academic achievements and determine the overall award outcome.
- To support learners in participating and completing the programme i.e., we may use information provided e.g., information about a disability to implement learner supports, and information we collect about experiences and services.
- To monitor and evaluate the learner experience.
- To carry out internal audits, programme reviews and self-evaluations.
- To enable effective communication.
- To administer appeals, complaints, disciplinary matters, and matters relating to academic malpractice.
- To produce reports for management to plan and improve programmes, services, and the Quality Assurance system.
- To confirm the details of academic achievements, and for statistical and historical purposes, a core record of each learner's performance is retained indefinitely.
- To respond to requests for information made under data protection legislation.
- Recruitment, selection, and employment matters (staff, expert panellists, examiners and authenticators).

- To apply for QQI accreditation.
- To comply with requirements of client companies.

2.8 Equality and Diversity

[S9-1 Equality and Diversity Policy]

LEAP values the diversity of our learners, staff and stakeholders and look to safeguard those who may face inequality or harassment in participating or in accessing our services. The SMT have responsibility for ensuring our policy is implemented and for creating and embedding an environment that supports the policy.

We work to provide a supportive and inclusive place of learning and work that is free from discrimination, where dignity is protected and respected and diversity is positively accommodated.

We are committed to non- discrimination in access and participation to further education and employment in relation to the equality grounds.

We seek to ensure that services provided are free from discrimination and harassment for staff, learners and stakeholders.
We endeavour to treat everyone with dignity and respect in order to create an environment that allows everyone to reach their potential.

We do not tolerate bullying or harassment of learners in any form. This may constitute grounds for expulsion from programmes or disciplinary action, up to an including dismissal.

Our equality and diversity policy statement is published in our Learner's and Trainer's handbooks, on our website and is addressed during induction.

2.9 Quality Policy

[S2-1 Quality Assurance Policy]

Definition

The term "quality assurance" in an educational and training context is used to describe the processes that seek to ensure that the learning environment reached an acceptable threshold of quality. UNESCO defines quality assurance (QA) as "an ongoing continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of an education system, institution or program."

LEAP is committed to providing clients and learners with high quality programmes which meets their needs and the requirements of our awarding body. To achieve this, we work to improve programmes, processes, and their supporting processes though the implementation of a responsive quality assurance system. The implementation of this system is the responsibility of LEAP employees, and training associates, who have a direct or indirect involvement with LEAP's Training and Learning programmes, with overall responsibility residing with the Board of Directors.

2.4.1 Aims of the QA System

- Identify and promote best practice.
- Enhance the learner experience.
- Help to standardise practice.
- Identifies gaps in quality.
- Supports the development of staff and associates.
- Facilitates communications within the organisation.
- Supports continuous improvement.
- Involves learners.
- Helps to ensure regulatory and legislative compliance.
- Protects the integrity of programmes leading to awards on the NFQ.

2.4.2 Scope of the QA System

The Quality Assurance (QA) system is designed as a comprehensive, integrated system which supports and assures quality provision. It is designed to meet the legal obligations of providers recognised by QQI as set out in;

- The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) ACT 2012
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) 2019

The following legislation applies:

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) 2019
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015
- Equal Status Acts 200-2015

The QA systems applies to all who work with or on behalf of LEAP in the delivery of training and learning interventions including directors, staff, management, associate trainers/assessors, contractors and of course to the learners.

State agencies that we are contracted to and our legal, financial and quality advisors, guide and update us on changes and amendments to relevant legislation around health and safety, equality, revenue, employment and data protection and regulations.

The scope of the QA system outlined in this handbook covers 8 main policy areas, and the system is designed to meet the requirement of the for following QQI guidelines;

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines published by QQI (April 2016);

- Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines – Independent/Private
- Statutory QA Guidelines for Blended Learning Programmes
- QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013

2.4.3 Management of, and Responsibility (with Terms of Reference) for the QA System

- The SMT is responsible for resourcing, supporting, maintaining and ensuring the implementation and integration of the QA system.
- The Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the system, and for making recommendations to the Training Manager with regard to its implementation and to the SMT with regard to its resourcing.
- The Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for ensuring the on-going integrity of the QA system.
- The Training Manager oversees and co-ordinates the implementation of the QA system on a day-to-day basis and maintains the QA manual and all associated documentation.
- All members of governance panels, management, staff members, trainers/assessor have a role in supporting the QA system and on an ongoing basis.

2.4.4 Embedding a Culture of Quality in LEAP

We consider the following to be key enablers for embedding a culture of quality in LEAP:

- A commitment to quality at all levels.
- The allocation of adequate time and resources to quality assurance.
- Appropriate mechanisms to facilitate the identification and implementation of quality improvements.

To ensure we:

- Include time for management and staff to undertake training or participate in quality improvement activities.
- On-going application of lean practices to a service organisation.
- Focus on processes with a 'let's fix the process' approach if something goes wrong.
- Have quality enhancement as an agenda item for staff and team meetings.
- Network with other providers and make use of quality enhancement resources developed by support agencies e.g., FESS (Further Education and Support Service)

2.4.5 Maintaining and Monitoring the QA System

We view quality assurance as an organic process and develop the QA system to meet changing circumstances and needs. We have designed the QA system to suit our specific context and the QA system is subject to regular review to ensure that it meets our needs, the needs of stakeholders; particularly learners, and contributes to continuously maintaining the quality of our programmes and supports.

To achieve this, we work to integrate the QA system into normal day-to-day activities in a systematic, streamlined way.

We invite users of the QA system for their views on its effectiveness and ease-of-use as part of our quality reviews. The QA system is reviewed by a suitably qualified independent expert in line with our 5-year self-evaluations.

2.4.6 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

What are quality assurance policies and procedures (Ref: QQI Reengagement Application Guide February 2017 V 0.1)

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

A *policy* will:

- be written for all stakeholders, internal and external, and will have the primary purpose of informing those who read it as to the position of the provider on a particular aspect of its role.
- set out broad parameters.
- be available to all stakeholders e.g. on a website.
- have the understanding and backing of senior management.
- inform learners of what they should expect from the provider.
- inform staff of what is expected of them.
- provide a protection and support to provider staff in carrying out their work.

Key considerations when reviewing policies:

- Is the policy fit for the purpose for which it was intended?
- Is the policy being implemented effectively?
- Is it consistent with current requirements?
- Does the policy meet or exceed current legislation, regulations and guidelines?
- Does the policy reflect QQI's quality assurance requirements?
- Does it meet the current needs of learners, staff and management?

A *procedure* describes a process intended to deliver all or part of a policy commitment. It is a tool to identify and standardise how LEAP carries out a particular task

A procedure will:

- be written to be available and understood by the people who will be operating the process or engaging with it.

- address the practicalities of the process – actions, forms, actors, timelines, information flows, records etc.
- be designed with the intention of delivering quality and consistency.
- be capable of being monitored i.e. records and / or indicators will be generated which should show if the procedure is being followed and, crucially, if it is effective.
- evolve over time as possible improvements are identified and implemented.

Designing Procedures

Procedures are the rules, steps and stages of process which we follow in order to apply a specific policy.

- The person who is responsible for the specific area develops the associated procedures with input from relevant stakeholders and is the owner of the procedure.
- Each procedure has an owner who is responsible for its implementation and for making suggestions for its amendment.
- The Programme Board is responsible for adopting procedures in the area of QA.
- We record our procedures using a standard procedure template and retain them in a procedures manual which is easily accessible to users of the procedures.
- We write procedures so they are clear and unambiguous so they can be easily understood by all users.
- We document steps to be taken in bulleted format making clear the order in which the steps must be taken, and the timelines involved.
- We test procedures for their usability and the extent to which they are capable of being implemented.
- We review the effectiveness of procedures on an ongoing basis and amend them outside of planned review dates if necessary.
- Each procedure has a date of adoption, a version number, the name of the owner of the procedure and the date by which the procedure must be reviewed

QQI's 2016 Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines require LEAP's quality assurance to be fully documented, informed by QQI QA guidelines, and to have formal standing within the company. We aim to produce QA documentation, which is accessible, user-friendly, suits the needs of those who use it and easy to navigate and use written in a user-friendly style. To do this we focus on

- Avoiding unnecessary levels of background and contextual information.
- Drafting documents that are informational in tone.
- The use of plain language.
- Consistent and correct use of punctuation and grammar.
- Consistent language used throughout our documentation.
- The use of the active voice.
- Explaining technical terms.
- Clear, helpful headings.
- Use of hyperlinks to signpost users.
- Proof reading of all documentation for language and clarity.

We date and version control our documents and ensure that only the most current version of documents is available to users in shared online folders which are reviewed and updated regularly by the Training Manager. Editing rights are restricted to the Training Manager, and other personnel approved by the training manager. The Training Manager maintains an archive of appropriate older documents. Learners and staff have easy access to relevant policies and procedures as deemed necessary.

2.4.7 Control

LEAP operate version control of its Quality Assurance documents. The document number will also identify the version of the document in addition to the initials of the author and the month and year revisions were made. The Quality Assurance Officer reviews all documentation to ensure compliance with the identified version control and amends accordingly to ensure compliance.

Section 3: Programmes of Education and Training

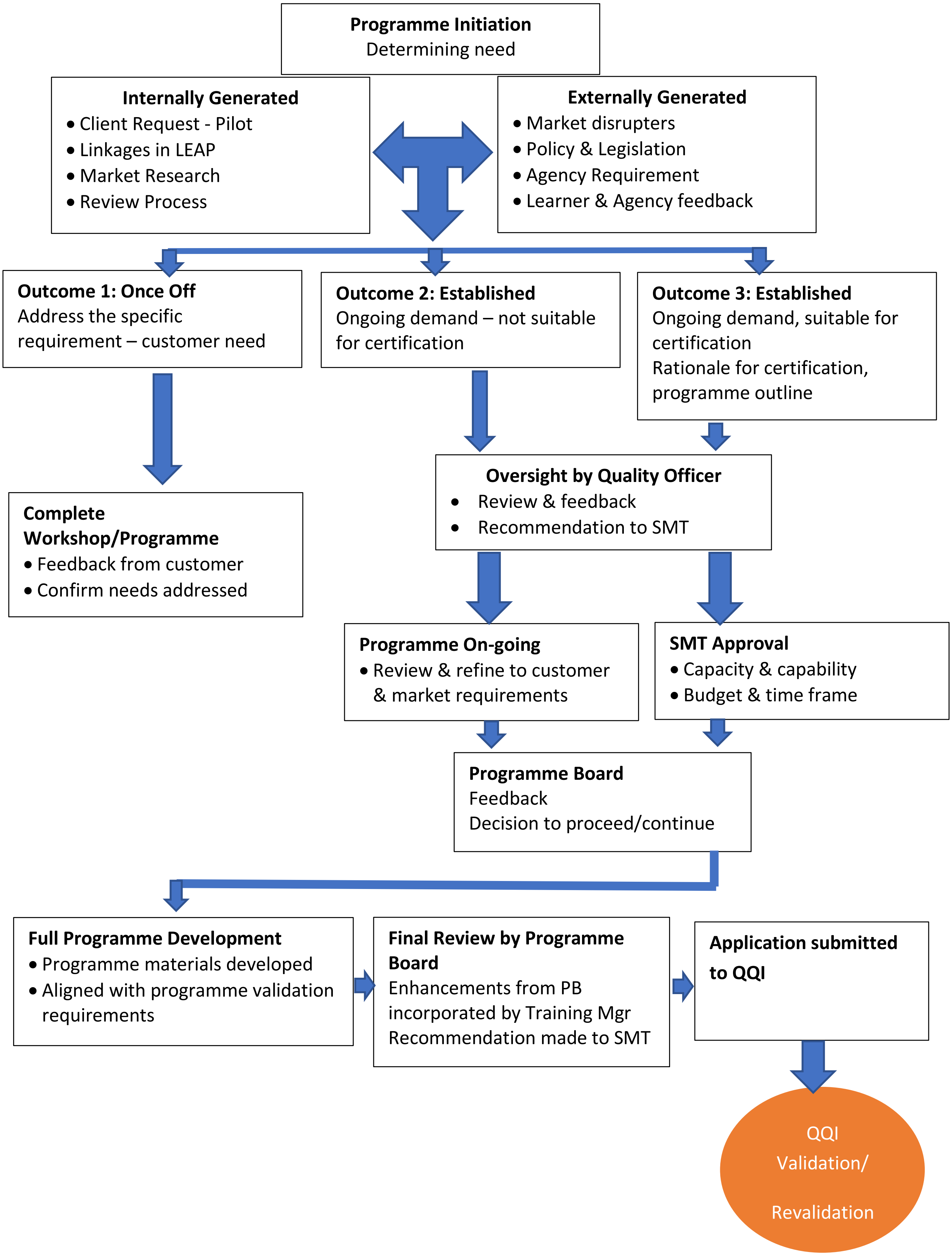
3.1 Policy

We have systems in place to ensure that the programmes we develop meet an identified and specific need, and that we have evidence available to help us make an informed decision to progress proposed programmes to development and design. The structured approach we use is outlined below:

- Needs Identification
- Programme Design and Development
- Programme Approval
- Programme Planning and Delivery
- Programme validation and re-validation

The Programme Board, Quality Assurance Officer and Senior Management Team play an important role in developing and approving LEAP's suite of programmes. Their work ensures academic integrity and the separation of academic decisions from commercial ones. The Quality Officer works to enhance the quality culture established across the organisation. The result of this culture is the provision of an excellent learner experience. The Programme Board (PB) also play a vital role in protecting the integrity of LEAP's programmes. The PB is chaired by an external person who makes independent recommendations, on behalf of the PB, to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The PB comprises of professionals in the educational sector in addition to a learner on a LEAP programme. These three bodies strengthen the quality of LEAP's programmes and their terms of references reflect this. The following flow chart explicitly demonstrates the relationship between all in the area of programme development.

3.1.1 Programme Initiation to Validation Flowchart



3.2 Needs Identification

We identify potential new programmes in the following ways:

- Communicating with our clients on an ongoing basis
- Linkages between our consultancy and training
- Competitor analysis
- Monitoring changing policy, regulation and legislation relevant to our area of expertise
- We review relevant reports and papers and consult with subject matter experts
- We discuss the need for new programmes at SMT meetings and programme review meetings
- We monitor feedback from learners participating on current programmes regarding suggestions for new programmes.

Any member of the SMT, the Programme Board, learner, graduate, trainer or client can propose a new programme. New programmes fall into 3 main categories:

1. One off bespoke programme to address a client's specific requirements, usually of short duration, and may be deployed across the entire organisation, (for example: Bringing company values to life)
2. A LEAP standardised structured programme which does not have a certification requirement / component; (For example: Solution Selling, Leadership In Action, Time to Flourish programmes)
3. A LEAP standardised structured programme, that has a proven track record in the marketplace and it is deemed that the addition of a certification element would enhance the impact of this programme for participants and their organisations. This strand of programme goes through the framework outlined below in 3.3

3.3 Programme Design and Development

We ensure that programme structure, materials, delivery and assessment methodologies are designed to meet the needs of learners, the requirements of QQI and the needs of our clients. No LEAP programme goes forward for certification unless it has been already deployed multiple times in the marketplace. This ensures we have current accurate feedback regarding the learners' and our customers' requirements and have a comprehensive understanding and experience of the content. At this point the S3-4 New Programme Proposal Form is completed.

New Programme Proposal form which includes a section on Needs Identification. This section should include sufficient data derived from the areas below to enable an informed decision to be made:

- How the proposal programme meets national and/or local skills/training educational.
- The learner profile and the anticipated number of applicants.
- Data on programmes already available to the target group.
- Stakeholder engagement e.g. employer engagement in identifying skills needs.
- Identification of the award that best meets the needs of the programme.

- Staffing requirements - subject matter expertise, pedagogy, quality assurance, learner supports.
- Development requirements.
- Quality assurance requirements.

When a new programme is proposed for certification following needs identification, **The Programme co-ordinator** completes a **Programme Outline Proposal, which after review by the Quality Assurance Officer and Training Manager, is** presented to both the SMT and the Programme Board for consideration and agreement. The SMT assesses the viability of the programme and our capacity to develop and deliver the programme. If at this stage the SMT reject the viability of the programme, no further action is taken until information is providing validating the programmes viability.

If both the SMT and the Programme Board approves the proposal, the Training Manager sets up a support team to work with the programme development co-ordinator to lead the development of the programme. The Coordinator is generally a subject matter expert and they will work with the identified support team (both internal and external as required) to progress the programme design and development. If the mode of delivery is online the programme development co-ordinator will utilise instructional design expertise which operates under programme oversight. The Training Manager is responsible for ensuring that learning and teaching practices are informed by best practice in online provision and exploring the use of alternative frameworks for learning design and online pedagogy to inform their practice.

The SMT allocates a budget and agrees a timeframe for development.

For QQI certified programmes the Programme Coordinator works with the Training Manager to develop the programme and engage with outside expertise, stakeholders, clients, etc. as appropriate and draws up a **Programme Descriptor which includes:**

- The teaching and skills expertise required for the programme, the modes of teaching and learning appropriate to the programme context and objectives is considered and decided on at the programme design stage.
- An appropriate assessment strategy is developed and incorporates assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria.
- Examination of learner supports and the design of an effective learning environment at programme design stage is based on specific programme needs, the learner profile and requirements.
- Determining the transfer and progression options open to learners and offer awards, where possible, which present learners with the opportunity to transfer or progress should they wish to do so, either immediately award or at a later date.
- If the programme being developed is intended to lead to a QQI award, the programme will be based on the published **award specification and will be** designed to meet the requirements of programme validation. We integrate the obligations set out in *QQI's Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes* as part of the design process is the programme is to lead to a QQI award.
- A timetable, facilitator guide and a Scheme of Work is developed.

3.4 Programme Approval

Programmes are presented to Programme Board for consideration before they are submitted to the awarding body for validation or prior to delivery.

- The Training Manager reviews final drafts of all programme materials including **facilitator guides and programme timetables.**
- The Training Manager signs off on the final draft of Programme Descriptors, application for validation and all programme materials.
- The **Programme Descriptor** is presented to the Programme Board by the Training Manager for consideration.
- To ensure a responsive deployment of the certified format of the new programme an unscheduled Programme Board meeting will be scheduled in a timely manner
- The Programme Board is invited to make suggestions for amendments and the Training Manager makes the required agreed amendments.
- Following approval by the Programme Board, the Training Manager prepares an **application for validation.**
- Applications for validation are reviewed and signed-off by the Training Manager prior to submission to the awarding body.
- Following approval and sign-off, the application is submitted to QQI by the Training Manager via the QBS.
- The appropriate validation fee is paid to QQI by EFT quoting the Programme Code.
- The status of the application is checked on a regular basis by the Training Manager to confirm that the application is progressing satisfactorily.

3.7 Programme validation and re-validation

Validation is a quality assurance process intended to ensure that a proposed programme can enable a learner to acquire and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify the award(s) being offered in respect of that programme. We apply to QQI for validation for new programmes intended to offer QQI awards and prepare applications based on the prevailing QQI policies.

The current (2020) QQI policies and criteria are presented in two documents:

- *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training*

- *Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes leading to Common Award System (CAS) awards .*

We secure QQI validation before deploying the programme in the marketplace and before enrolling learners on the programme leading to a QQI award. We review our capacity to uphold the conditions and standards of validation as part of our programme review process. We ensure that our programmes meet the validation criteria and comply with the conditions of validation. We contact QQI before preparing a programme for submission for validation and attend relevant briefings. We use the application templates issued by QQI which help us to present our applications and programmes consistently and systematically taking care to ensure that all the criteria are addressed, and all template sections are complete.

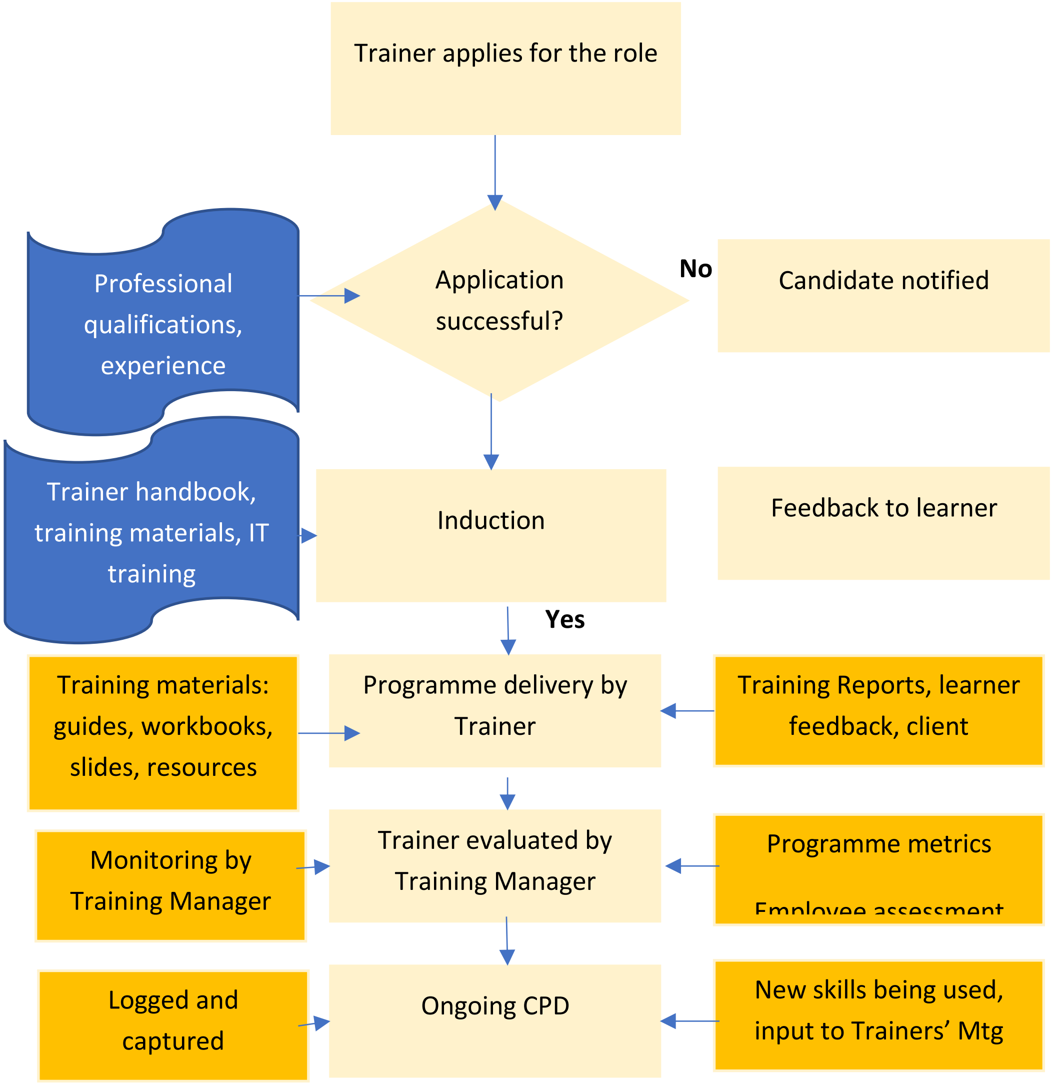
3.7.1 Revalidation

We arrange for the revalidation of continuing programmes every 5 years (or in accordance with the expiry of the duration of the validation if different) noting that validation is for a maximum of five years and then automatically lapses unless renewed through re-validation. We understand that a validated programme may be reviewed by QQI at any time and we facilitate such reviews.

(Note October 2020)

A process for revalidation of existing programmes has yet to be rolled out by QQI for FET programmes. We continue to deliver our currently validated programmes, including those validated for more than five years, under the current policy as per QQI direction

Section 4: Staff Recruitment, Management & Development



4.1 Policy

We ensure that all members of staff and contractors have the required qualifications and expertise to provide programmes to our learners to a high standard and that they are fully informed with regard to our aims, objectives and procedures. LEAP's trainers, facilitators and mentors are accomplished professionals with a broad range of qualifications and extensive hands-on business experience. This experience includes developing strategic plans in collaboration with clients, facilitating focus groups to determine opportunities for improvement and recommendations for addressing issues negatively impacting the organisation and mentoring individuals to drive an organisation forward or to support them in address a performance issue.

We provide appropriate support to help trainers and assessors to continually develop their skills ensuring that they are capable and competent to design, deliver, support and assess our training programmes.

4.2 Scope

This policy applies to all staff associated with LEAP's training and development activities including contracted trainers and assessors acting on behalf of LEAP.

4.3 Responsibility

- The SMT has overall responsibility for staffing.
- The Programme Board is responsible for maintaining oversight of programme staffing and advises the SMT accordingly.
- The Training Manager is responsible for management of trainers and assessors.

4.4 Recruitment

We have procedures in place to ensure that we attract and work with the best possible candidates for designated roles. At all times, we seek to ensure fair and equal opportunities for all.

Trainers are recruited through word of mouth, website, networking, and referrals and applicants must meet the *Statement of Required Qualifications* to be considered. Applicants for trainer positions are interviewed by the MD and the Training Manager. Trainers must submit evidence of qualifications and experience and must update their CVs and supporting documents regularly.

We review the existing **role description and** selection criteria and invite applications using social media and our own network of contacts.

Applicants are asked to submit a cover letter, CV and copies of award certificates.

We short-list applicants based on the match of applications to criteria set out in the job description/person specification and invite **shortlisted candidates** for interview.

We constitute an **interview panel** with a minimum of two interviewers to include the Training Manager and interview candidates.

We select a suitable candidate on the basis of:

Training/qualifications (trainers recruited *must have* qualifications and experience appropriate to our agreed scope of provision)

- Experience
- Suitability for the role
- Communication skills
- Ability to work as part of a team.

We contact two referees and get **verbal and/or written references.**

We contact unsuccessful candidates to advise them of the outcome and inform them that they have a right to information about the recruitment process which may be requested in writing.

We ensure that relevant contracts are agreed and signed.

All new members of staff are given a **comprehensive induction** at a face-to-face meeting or online on commencement of employment. Induction includes information about our QAS and the inductee's role in implementing it.

We keep records of the interview process and the interviews and maintain them for a period of 6 months and records are then securely destroyed.

Processes for the appointment, induction, training, professional development and appraisal of teaching and support staff are specific to blended and online learning.

4.5 Induction, Training and Continuing Professional Development

Trainers are inducted by the MD and the Training Manager based on the *Trainer Induction Checklist*. They are briefed on the QA system and their specific role in ensuring quality provision. While trainers are responsible for keeping themselves informed about developments in their field of expertise and to manage their CPD and this is highlighted in the Role Description and the Trainer Handbook, we support them in accessing programme-related training and development events. Training costs must be approved in advance. Trainers are expected to maintain membership of relevant professional bodies and to engage in professional networking and attend conferences and seminars. We maintain a record of CPD activities on a CPD Log.

4.6 Supports for Trainers

- We host an annual CPD day for all members of our programme team. Professional development, teaching and assessment skills are a standing item for these upskilling events. We communicate updates to our QAS at these events (and throughout the year if updates are significant)
- We encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education, teaching and research.
- We host regular trainer briefings and facilitate networking and sharing of learning among trainers.
- Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

- Trainer Induction, Handbook and a detailed Role Description setting out the trainers' responsibilities clearly.
- Facilitator guides and programme resource materials - programme-specific information is available to trainers via a shared online folder in advance of programme delivery. This includes programme materials (presentation slides, facilitator guide and learner workbooks) assessment plans, assessment briefs, marking guidelines.
- Support of the Training Manager who is responsible for regular communication with trainers about all aspects of our programmes and all learner issues. She maintains a high level of personal contact (face-to-face, telephone and/or email) with the trainer at all stages of programme delivery.

4.7 Quality Assuring and Managing Trainer Performance

Ensuring the quality of programme provision is underpinned by contracting well qualified trainers who are experts in their field, providing opportunities for CPD and providing good quality evidence-based feedback to trainers with regard to their performance. We communicate with, manage and monitor trainer performance to identify areas of best practice and areas needing improvement. We have a range of formal and informal methods for communicating with staff - we use Sharepoint and What's App for file and information sharing, we use email, phone conversations for ongoing communication. We hold biannual trainer meetings where trainers and assessors are encouraged to provide feedback and give their views. This data is considered as part of our ongoing monitoring and review processes. We have supports in place for newly appointed trainers. They are inducted by the Training Manager and the MD and are in regular contact with the Training Manager. Newly appointed trainers are required to contact the Training Manager after the three first sessions to give feedback on the progress of the programme and to highlight issues of concerns (if any). We have a **trainer observation system** in place which we implement on an occasional basis and always with recently recruited trainers. We provide structured feedback to trainers on their strengths and areas requiring improvement. We pay particular attention to the standards of training delivery and assessment skills and the Training Manager deals with any identified gaps or deficiencies. If there are concerns, the Training Manager meets the trainer on a one-to-one basis to outline concerns and agree an action plan to address the concerns. The Training Manager monitors the areas agreed as needing improvement and provide support to trainers who are not meeting the required standard.

We use the following data to assess trainer performance:

- Analysis of trainer observation reports.
- learner and client feedback on trainer performance.
- Trainer evaluations - we expect trainers to reflect on their own professional practice and appraise their own performance as part of their evaluation of programmes.
- Analysis of feedback from learners and clients and from the trainers themselves.
- Client feedback.
- Feedback contained in the Internal Verification, External Authentication and Results Approval reports - we ask the External Authenticator to comment on the quality of the training delivery and assessment skills in the External Authentication report.
- Rates of attendance.
- Assessment results.

- Programme reviews.

4.8 Contingency Plan for Trainer Absence

If a trainer is unavailable to deliver a training session at short notice, the Training Manager organises a replacement trainer from our trainer panel. If a there isn't suitable trainer available, the Training Manager covers for the absence herself. Availability is confirmed in advance with all trainers. Access to programme resources on shared folders enables a stand-in/replacement trainer to review and access the programme materials and learner progress quickly and easily.

Section 5: Assessment of Learners

5.1 Assessment Policy

We are committed to carrying out the assessment that:

- Meets the needs of our learners.
- Meets the needs of a changing learning environment.
- Is clearly understood by our trainers and learners.
- Is fair to learners in terms of access and process.
- Consistent across groups.
- Fit-for-purpose in offering recognised certification to our learners.
- Consistent with our mission of providing quality programmes relevant to the needs of learners and our clients.

5.2 Policy Responsibility

The responsibility for overseeing and updating the policy rests with the Training Manager.

5.2.1 Reference Documents

- *QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013*
- *FETAC Guidelines for Internal Verification*
- *QBS Quick Guide for Certification V1*
- *CDVEC Disability Support Service Principals' Manual*
- *QQI Key Dates and Information - Awards and Certification*
- *Feedback to Learners in FET Resource List (FESS)*
- *Programme Writing Handbook for Learners FESS 2019*

5.3 Overview of Assessment Process

1. Assessment

- The Training Manager in consultation with the Training team design assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria.
- Trainers review Assessment Brief, Marking Schemes and Submission Schedules with learners.

- Assessor marks and grades the assessment evidence in accordance with agreed marking schemes.
- The Internal Verifier completes internal verification on assessment activities.

2. Authentication

- The Internal Verifier verifies that all assessment procedures have been applied and monitors the outcome of the assessment process.
- The Training Manager assigns an External Authenticator based on pedological and subject matter experience.
- The External Authenticator moderates assessment results by sampling assessment evidence based on LEAP's documented sampling strategy.

3. Results Approval

- A results approval panel is established.
- The Results Approval Panel approves and sign-off assessment results.
- The Administrator makes the approved results available to learners.

4. Request for Certification

- The Administrator submits learner results to QQI via QBS.

5. Appeals Process

- We allow a maximum of 10 days for learners to lodge an appeal.
- The Programme Board advises the Training Manager on the formation of an appeals panel.
- Full details of appeals and documentation is available for learners in the Learner Handbook [S6-2 Learner Handbook]

5.4 Assessment Planning and Design

The assessment strategy is designed at the programme design stage by the programme co-ordinator, the Training Manager and whatever additional expertise is warranted, at the discretion of the Training Manager and is based on;

- LEAP's Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) strategy
- The programme profiles
- The learner profiles
- The mode of delivery
- The programme content and learning outcomes
- The assessment requirements set out in the QQI award specifications (if applicable).

The Training Manager sets out an assessment timetable, assessment briefs and marking schemes as part of the Programme Descriptor and these are submitted as part of an application for validation.

When designing and planning our assessment we consider

- The range of specific learning outcomes to be assessed by each assessment technique
- The selection of appropriate assessment techniques and instruments
- How marks are to be allocated and assessment criteria is to be applied
- The timing of assessment activities
- Any deadlines and due dates; in particular, the QQI certification cut-off dates

We schedule dates with a view to providing an even spread of assessment throughout the programme and avoiding assessment overload for our learners. The programme assessment strategy is reviewed as part of our regular review process and updated if needs be. The Training Manager talks through the assessment strategy and the assessment timetable with the trainer at pre-programme briefings. The Training Manager is responsible for ensuring that the required resources are in place and that any arrangements for reasonable accommodation are notified to the trainer and the Internal Verifier. Any arrangements for reasonable accommodation are discussed at the pre-programme briefing. The appointment of a suitably qualified External Authenticator is discussed by the Programme Board annually.

5.5 Information to Learners

We ensure that learners have the information they need to assist them in securing a successful outcome to assessment. We outline general information with regard to assessment on our website and in programme brochures. We discuss details of assessment at Induction and give each learner a copy of the Programme Assessment Plan (PAP). We also make learners aware of their responsibilities with regard to assessment. The trainer talks through the PAP with the learners and confirms that the learners are clear with regard to what is required. The trainer distributes assessment briefs to learners at appropriate stages of the programme. Our trainers emphasise our policy with regard to Programme integrity and dealing with incidents of Programme misconduct and timely submission of assessment evidence (also addressed in the [S6-2 Learner Handbook]). We let learners know that we make reasonable accommodation for assessment if they need it.

5.6 Submission of Assessment

All submissions must be sent electronically via Moodle. All information relating to assignments will be held in a learner's Moodle account: assignments and feedback from the assessor.

Late Submissions

Learners are informed, in writing (Assessment Plan) and during QQI Induction, that there is an opportunity to request an extension based on meeting specific requirements e.g., bereavement, serious illness. Applicants need to submit such requests in writing no later than 3 days prior to the submission date. If a learner is late submitting an assignment, a percentage of the marks awarded will be forfeited based on how late the submission is, i.e., 10% for up to one week, 15% for 8 days to 3 weeks and 20% for 22 days to 4 weeks.
Submissions will not be accepted by the assessor if they are over 4 weeks late.

Extenuating Circumstances

In exceptional cases (e.g., illness or a family bereavement) an assignment will not be deemed late if it is accompanied to by evidence (e.g. medical certificate) and submitted as soon as possible after the due date.

The learner completes and submits an extension request form via Moodle and the assessor determines the outcome of the request and notifies the learner. If agreed, a new submission date (usually within one week of the original submission date). If the learner does not meet the second due date, it will be deemed late and the learner will lose marks as per the schedule above.

5.7 Security and integrity of Assessment

We have systems and processes in place to ensure the security and integrity of our assessment processes, materials, instruments and records which include paper documentation, electronic records / files, databases, photographs and or digital footage.

Key Steps

- We maintain a secure electronic **learner record database (LRS)** where we record, store and access learners' assessment records. Access to these records is limited to the Training Manager and the Internal Assessor and to others only on a needs basis and with the permission of the Training Manager. The Training Manager is responsible for making changes/updating learner records.
- Learners are required to **complete and submit** an authorship verification statement confirming that all assessment work they submit is their own.
- The Training Manager deals with incidents or suspected incidents of **Programme misconduct**. Our trainers and/or internal assessor bring incidents of suspected plagiarism to the attention of the Training Manager immediately or if they have reasonable grounds to suspect plagiarism or any other form of Programme misconduct.
- All assignments are submitted electronically and is managed electronically throughout the processes of internal verification and external authentication
- We store assessments in a secure location in an electronic format throughout the assessment process until the final date for appealing a result has elapsed. We retain assessment evidence for up to 3 months following the closing date for receipt of learner appeals. All learner evidence is then **securely destroyed** in line with our data protection procedures.
- Learner assessment evidence constitutes personal data and as such is governed by our data protection policy and procedures
- All assessment data for certification purposes is thoroughly checked for accuracy and reliability throughout the internal verification, external authentication results approval processes and the Training Manager and the Internal Assessor double-checks certification data before it is submitted to QQI.
- The RAP agrees **corrective action plans** to deal with errors, omissions and/or deliberate acts by learners or staff which could impact on the validity of the assessment process.

Storage of Electronic Learner Assessment Evidence

Assessment evidence is stored on Moodle online platform (with backup capacity) which can be accessed using secure passwords by Training Manager, the Internal Verifier and the Internal Assessor only. Access is also made available to the External Authenticator. Appropriate security is in place and login details made available for the IV and EA with live/active accounts that can be accessed even after the programme has ended. Assessment evidence stored on mobile devices must comply with LEAPs data protection policy.

5.8 Consistency of Marking and Grading

We have detailed marking schemes for all assessments which are used by the Internal Assessor when marking and grading. The same Internal Assessor marks and grades all assessments which ensures consistency. Our Internal Verifier reviews and compares all marks and grades when they are submitted by the Internal Assessor and highlights any inconsistences/deviations from the norm to Training Manager. Occasionally the Training Manager undertakes a blind second marking of a sample of assessments to monitor the performance of the Internal Assessor and the standards of marking and grading. We ask the External Authenticator to comment on the standards of marking in his/her report and if there are issues raised, they are addressed by our Results Approval Panel and appropriate corrective action planned for and implemented.

The Internal Assessor must have:

- Subject matter/technical expertise; the assessor must be proficient in the subject/technical area in which they are assessing.
- Knowledge of the award standards/learning outcomes being assessed.
- Knowledge of LEAPs assessment procedures.
- Experience in marking and grading.
- Familiarity with QQI assessment policy and guidelines.

Internal Assessment Process

- The Training Manager agrees the Assessment Plan and time frames with the internal assessor.
- Internal Assessor receives email notification of submissions to Moodle and reviews based on the schedule of submissions.
- Assignments assessed and detailed feedback provided on Moodle site.
- Tracker (on Sharepoint) updated with candidate mark.
- Internal Assessor regularly reviews Moodle to check submissions and to respond to learners based on dates of submission from the assessment plan.
- Internal Assessor signs relevant documentation for QQI certification e.g. Individual Candidate Marking Sheet.

5.9 Reasonable Accommodation

5.9.1 Definition

The adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability, *and/or other learners covered by equality legislation (Ref QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013)*

We make every effort to ensure that all learners can successfully participate in assessment. To achieve this, we adapt our assessment methodologies to accommodate learners who might otherwise be excluded from assessment (insofar as requests are reasonable and the adaptations are practicable). We advise applicants to let us know if they need/think they may need additional supports when they are applying for a place (or at the earliest possible opportunity). We have a question on both our **Application Form and Learner Registration form** asking applicants if they need any additional help with assessment. Our trainers **meet learners on a one-to-one basis** if requested by the learner to discuss and assess additional support needs and agree appropriate intervention. Our trainers are guided by the Training Manager with regard to adapting assessment and providing accommodation during assessment (while still ensuring the integrity of the assessment process). We outline clearly what we mean by 'reasonable accommodation' in our Learner and Trainer Handbooks. Our trainers explain what we mean by 'reasonable accommodation' and 'compassionate consideration 'at Induction. The Trainer, for their specific programme, reviews all requests for reasonable accommodation and signs-off on a request only if it is reasonable and practicable to provide it. Examples of adaptions we can make: -

- Physical modifications to the training location e.g. seating arrangements etc.
- Learning materials provided in accessible format
- Additional time allocated to complete assessments.
- Alternative assessment formats
- Support from a scribe or a reader to complete assessments

We make our trainers aware of any adaptations to programme delivery that they need to consider. The Internal Verifier notifies the External Authenticator about any adaptations/reasonable accommodation provided by noting it on the Register - Assisted Learners (while ensuring that the data relating to the learner/s is protected)

5.10 Internal Verification

We have procedures in place to confirm that our assessment procedures have been applied consistently across our assessment activities and that our assessment results are recorded accurately. We internally verify assessment evidence for each certification period to

- Allow quality concerns to be captured and addressed prior to External Authentication
- Prepare for successful External Authentication

Key Steps

- The Training Manager is responsible for ensuring that our Internal Verifier has adequate training, expertise, resources and sufficient time to complete internal verification to a high standard.
- the Internal Verifier checks for;
    - missing or inappropriate evidence
    - missing or inappropriate assessment briefs

  - data omission, transcription / calculation errors
  - Inaccurate data entry – award codes, name spelling, results etc.
  - provisional outcomes for learners
- The Internal Verifier completes the **Internal Verification report**, signs it and makes it available to the External Authenticator and the Training Manager in advance of authentication. This report confirms the outcome of the verification process. It captures evidence that the internal verification process has taken place, acknowledges strengths and identifies any gaps and areas for improvement.
- The Internal Verifier plans for external authentication and liaises with the External Authenticator before, during and after authentication.
- The Internal Verifier attends our Results Approval Panel meetings to present the **Internal Verification report** and discuss issues highlighted in the Report

5.11 External Authentication

We appoint a suitably qualified External Authenticator, who can provide independent, authoritative confirmation that our learner evidence has been fairly and consistently assessed, that our assessment process is fair, consistent and valid and that our results meet the national standards for the awards. The Training Manager issues a **Contract and Guidelines** to the External Authenticator setting out in detail what is involved and our expectations. The Training Manager ensure that trainers/internal assessor are available if the External Authenticator needs to refer to them during the process.
The External Authenticator

- Reviews the award standards
- Reviews the QQI grading criteria
- Confirms assessment techniques and instruments we use are appropriate
- Ensure consistency with the award requirements
- Confirms the assessment criteria and marking sheets are appropriate
- Judges a sample of learner evidence and results to ensure consistency with the award standard and grading criteria

We invite our Authenticator to attend the Results Approval Panel meeting (to present a verbal report if the final report is not available) to comment on the outcomes of results moderation against national standards and help us to identify strength, gaps and areas for improvement. The Authenticator completes the External Authentication report

5.11.1 Selection and Appointment of the External Authenticator

The Programme Board signs-off on the selection and appointment of a suitably qualified External Authenticator on the advice of the Training Manager based on their match to the selection criteria in place. LEAP does not contract the services of the same External Authenticator for more than three successive certification periods.

5.11.2 External Authenticator - Selection Criteria

The Programme Board, on the advice of the Training Manager, is responsible for contracting an External Authenticator who;

- Has technical/subject matter expertise within the broad award/field of learning.
- Has the required knowledge and expertise to confirm that policies and procedures in relation to awards and assessment are being implemented.
- Has experience of carrying out assessment or work in the industry/field.
- Is available to us at as needed.
- Is independent of LEAP.

5.11.3 Frequency of External Authentication

LEAP currently contracts the services of an External Authenticator once a year on the basis that the following remain the same

- The Internal Assessor
- The trainer (the work of new trainers is always external authenticated before certification)
- The learner profiles
- Programme content

5.12 Sampling Strategy

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of learner results and learner evidence for the purposes of completing internal verification and external authentication of assessment. We devise a sampling strategy that suits our provision and is fair and consistent, enable us to identify any deviation from best practice and help us to ascertain whether our procedures are being implemented appropriately.

Our sampling strategy is based on a percentage of learner numbers, i.e., 25% of the total population of learners for each programme

5.12.1 Criteria for Sampling

The sample must:

- Be representative of both programmes/ minor awards
- Be representative of all assessment techniques
- Be sufficient in size to enable sound judgments to be made about the fairness and consistency of assessment decisions
- Covers the full range of attainment in terms of grades achieved
- Include a random selection of evidence for each grade/band
- Identify evidence which is borderline between grades e.g. learners who have not or learners who have only just achieved within the grading band
- Ensure new assessor judgments/decisions are sampled at least once during the assessment cycle

5.13 Results Approval

We formally review and approve results data and confirm that the results are fully quality assured and signed-off prior to submission to QQI for certification. We have a Results Approval Panel (RAP) with documented terms of reference as part of our governance structure. The Training Manager convenes a RAP meeting for each certification period and chairs the meetings. The External Authenticator is invited to attend the RAP meeting to present their report. The Panel reviews learner results /outcomes, input from programme staff, internal verification reports and external authenticators' report. The Training Manager signs the Final Approved Results and the Results Summary Sheets following approval of the provision results by the RAP. The Training Manager prepares a RAP report which is presented and discussed at the subsequent Programme Board meeting. LEAP records any issues identified and improvements recommended by the RAP. The Training Manager monitors them on an ongoing basis and signs-off before the next meeting of the RAP and discuss at programme review meeting. E**xamples of best practice identified** are recorded during the authentication process and the Training Manager shares them trainers.

5.14 Return of Certification Data

When the RAP has signed off on the results, the Internal Verifier;

- Double-checks all documentation is in order and all reports are signed and dated.
- Files reports and minutes.
- Issues a letter of congratulation providing them with their grade and signed by the Training Manager. We notify learners of the closing date for receipt of appeals and approximate date of issue of award certificates in this letter.
- Submits the results to QQI post sign-off.

5.15 Issue of Award Certificates

We receive award certificates from QQI approximate 2 to 3 weeks after the Final Submission Date for the certification period. the Training Manager logs receipt of the award certificates and stores them in a locked facility until they are issued. The Training Manager issues the award certificates by registered post/or in person, (except those flagged as under appeal) as soon as possible after receiving them from the QQI and maintains records of issue.

If the award certificates are issued (on request) to our clients for distribution to graduates the following procedure is followed;

- They are sent by registered post to a named person in our client organisation who must agree to keep them securely in a locked facility.
- Training Manager contacts the named person to confirm that they have arrived safely and confirm how and when they will be issued to the graduates.
- The Training Manager checks back with the client on an agreed date to confirm that that they have been issued to/received by the graduates.

5.16 Feedback to Learners on Assessment

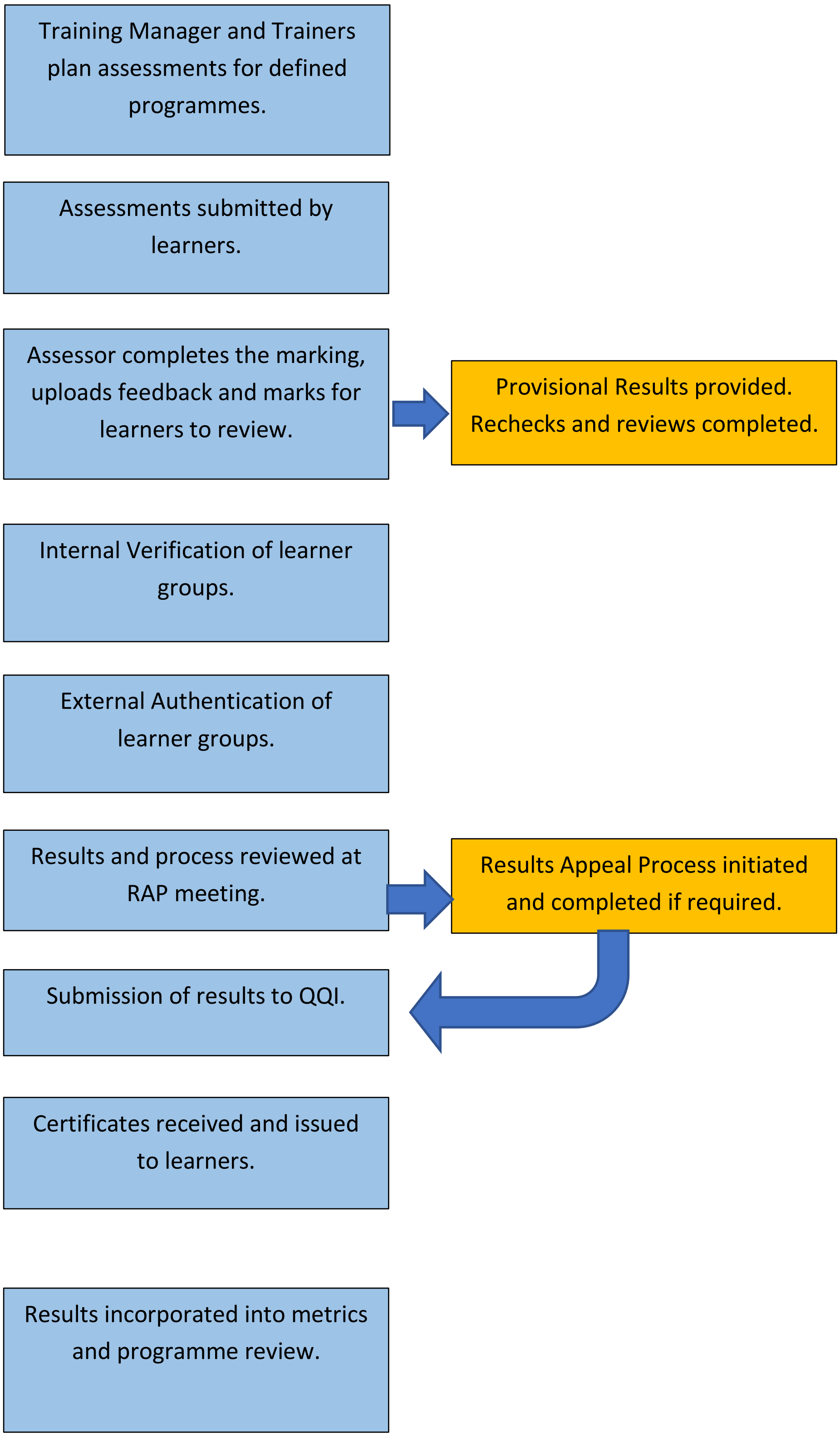
We provide our learners with appropriate, timely and constructive feedback which informs their participation on the programme and helps to ensure a successful outcome to assessment. The trainer 'checks-in' with learners regularly to confirm that they are on track and are clear with regard to what they need to do for assessment. The trainer provides feedback to learners on their progress at various stages throughout the programme. The

Internal Assessor provides feedback on draft copies of assignments if learners wish to submit them. Following feedback from the Internal Assessor, the learner then submits the assignment for marking. Assignments are submitted via Moodle where the Internal Assessor provides feedback and marks. The Internal Assessor updates the internal Tracker and the Individual Marking Sheet.

Our trainers are available at all stages throughout the programme to provide formative feedback on a one-to-one basis and/or group basis to learners. This includes areas for development, gaps in their learning or direct feedback on draft assignments completed during the programme. The Internal assessor comments on the assessment scripts when marking and grading. This feedback is available for the External Authenticator to review. We ask learners for their views of the adequacy of feedback provided at the mid programme review conducted by the trainer with the learner group.

5.17 Rechecks, Reviews and Appeals

Overview of the Process



We facilitate learners who wish to appeal an approved result which they consider to be invalid or unfair for any reason or who wish to make a complaint about any aspect of assessment.

- We have an Appeals Procedure [S5-2 Appeals procedure policy] in place, which is fair, consistent, fit-for-purpose and transparent and ensures that learners can appeal aspects of our assessment process or result which they consider to be unfair or incorrect. We inform learners about the process at Induction, in the Learner Handbook and with their statement of results.
- Appeals Guidelines, included in the learner handbook may be used by learners if they wish to make a formal or informal complaint regarding any aspect of assessment. This is highlighted at Learner Induction and in our Learner Handbook.
- A learner appeal is assigned to an independent panel (the original trainer/assessor will have no part in the review).
- We make a clear distinction between appeals and draft feedback in the Learner Handbook and in the Appeals Process [S5-5 Learner Appeals form]

Rechecks

On completion of a programme and prior to formal certification, learners are issued with their provisional results. If the learner is dissatisfied with their result, we encourage them firstly to seek feedback from the assessor. The assessor reviews the relevant assessment ensuring correct marks have been allocated and included in the total marks and the grade awarded is correct. The assessor gives feedback to the learner following the recheck. If the learner still believes they have been incorrectly assessed and that marks have not been correctly allocated, they have the right to request a review of the result.

Reviews

Learners who wish to have their result reviewed must do so in writing by completing the Results Recheck form and submit it within 5 working days, including a detailed explanation of why the review is requested.

Review request forms are available on Moodle and must be submitted to the Administrator by email. The Administrator forwards the review request form to the Training Manager who ensures that:

- Assessment briefs are clear, comprehensive and available to learners.
- The learner has provided adequate and reliable assessment evidence (clear that the plagiarism software has been applied and there is no issue evident).
- Marking sheet and feedback to learners is available and completed correctly.
- Learner submission work is in accordance with appropriate assessment techniques and instruments.
- Marks are totalled, percentage marks calculated correctly, and grades awarded in line with requirements.
- Evidence is available that assessment procedures have been applied across all required assessment activities.

The review request is referenced in the Review and Appeals log and the results of the review is communicated to the Administrator who informs the learner within five working days of the request for the review. If there is a change in grade because of the review (upgraded or downgraded), the Administrator includes this in the communication with the learner (in writing) and the External Authenticator will be notified of the outcomes.

Appeals

If a learner is dissatisfied with the outcome from a review they have the right to make an appeal.

To request an appeal, the learner must complete the Learner Appeals Form which is available on the learner platform, Moodle. There is an administrative fee of €75 to complete the appeals process which is refunded to learners should their appeal be upheld. The form will require the learner to provide a detailed explanation of why the appeal is being requested. The Learner Appeals Form must be submitted within five working days of receiving results. The Appeals Form needs to be emailed to the Administrator who forwards the form to the Training Manager.

The Training Manager contacts the Chair of the Programme Board regarding the appeal and forwards a copy of the Appeal request form.

The Training Manager updates the Review and Appeals log.

The Programme Board advises the Training Manager regarding the Appeals Panel with a minimum of two members based on their appropriate externality and expertise. The Training Manager convenes the Appeals Panel.

The learner's assessment and the assessors' comments and marking sheets are sent to the Appeals Panel. The original assessor has no part in the review. The Appeals Panel review the appeal within 5 working days from receipt of materials. Once the Appeals Panel has reviewed all the necessary documentation, the result of the appeal is recorded on the Review and Appeals Log which is reviewed at the Results Approval Panel meeting. The Administrator communicates the results to the learner by email. The Administrator also notifies the assessor and the trainer of the outcome. If an appeal results in a change of mark (upgraded or downgraded) the learner will be issued with a revised statement of results and QQI are informed via the QBS.

The decision of the Appeals Panel is final. All appeals are completed prior to the close of certification period (see QQI schedule of certification).

Summary of the Learner Experience and Supports from LEAP

CERTIFICATION ELEMENTS	LEARNER EXPERIENCE	LEAP SUPPORT PROCESSES
	Programme launched: learner participates in introduction session, including QQI	LEAP Admin creates folder & add adds programme schedule including both sessions and QQI submission details, with group title (as per GTT). QQI folder created for the group, adds to tracker. Notifies Assessor.
	Learner attends all modules (80% requirement for QQI certification)	Trainer uploads materials, tests and polls to GTT. Trainer delivers as per programme materials.
	Session 3: Learner registers for QQI: PPS number and DOB required – if not completing QQI learner still continues on prog	Trainer runs the registration test, downloads the file, checks all PPS numbers are recorded and DOB look accurate before forwarding to Admin and Moodle Admin – required for QQI and Moodle.
		Moodle Admin creates new group (title as per GTT), ensuring group is in correct certifying period. Moodle Admin issues learners with their log in details.
		LEAP Admin notifies Skillnet of learners going forward for certification. Registers all learners on QBS and once confirmed, deletes personal info. Admin notifies Moodle person to delete same.
	Learner participates in the modules & completes the Mid-programme evaluation	Trainer runs mid-programme evalution, reviews and takes action if required.
Assessor grades work and updates the learner feedback form – within 2 weeks of receipt of learner assignments. Updates the Tracker with grades.	Learner submits assignments for certification via Moodle and as per provided schedule. *Option to request an extension in extenuating circumstances.*	LEAP Admin arranges EA if identified and updates IV on number of groups and learners going forward for certification.
	Learner reviews feedback from assessor on assignments – can	

	request recheck or review if dissatisfied.	
	Learner completes the programme and evaluation form	Trainer runs the evaluation test, downloads the file and forwards to Admin. Also notifies Training Manager of relevant feedback – further action needed. Trainer completes end of programme Trainer Evaluation Questionnaire and forward to Admin for filing – reviewed by Training Manager.
	Receive Provisional Results Statement via email	LEAP Admin confirms all grades are uploaded on the Tracker and issues final results to all learners (individual) using the template email.
Appeals Panel established by Training Manager and outcome is final.	Option: if learner dissatisfied of outcome from recheck and review, they may appeal results within 5 days	Outcome of formal appeal communicated to learner by Admin.
IV completes the review and report issued to LEAP. EA completes process and report. All documents signed. RAP meeting facilitated and actions identified.		LEAP Admin saves the reports. Training Manager reviews and agrees action.
	Receive certificate from LEAP or Skillnet	

6.0 Learner Admission and Progression

6.1 Programme Planning and Delivery

We identify and put in place the necessary human, physical programme supports and resources for the optimal delivery of programmes as set out in the approved programme descriptors prior to programme delivery. The Training Manager reviews and updates programme resources, supporting materials, equipment, learner induction pack/presentation, evaluation forms. The trainers complete the checklist to ensure that the appropriate training equipment and resources are available to them and our learners, and in good working order before a programme begins. The Training Manager ensures that the training materials are available in advance of programme commencement and meets the trainer to talk through the materials contents if necessary.

6.2 Learner Access Transfer and Progression

We are committed to implementing Section 56, Part 4 of *the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*
[S6-1 Access, Transfer and Progression policy]

6.2.1 Entry procedures

Applicants apply online. The trainer reviews the application form to confirm that the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements and to check if there is a request for reasonable accommodation/if the applicant has any specific needs. It there is any doubt the application is escalated to the Training Manager. We have stated entry requirements for all programmes which are set out clearly for applicants. The Training Manager may contact the applicant to discuss the application further if there is any doubt that the programme is suitable for the applicant. If the application is not accepted for any reason the Training Manager contacts the applicant setting out the reasons why the application was not accepted. We have an **entry appeals process** in place which applicants can evoke if they are not offered a place on a programme and they consider our decision to be unfair or unjustified. LEAP reserves the right to interview applicants if there is any doubt that the programme is suitable for the applicant and vice versa.

It is the our policy to do all we can to facilitate learners gaining access to the programmes we offer, transfer to other programmes/providers and progress to programmes leading to awards at higher levels of the NFQ if they so wish. To ensure this we provide information to learners to help them make informed choices regarding their choice of programme/s and how they might progress.

- If there are specific entry requirements for a programme, we ensure these requirements are clearly stated in our programme brochures and other promotional materials.
- We recognise prior learning for entry to our programmes and we offer places on our programmes on the basis of prior learning. However, as a provider of minor awards, we do not recognise prior learning for the making of awards. We have a question on our **Learner Registration form** re prior awards.
- We include generic (non-programme specific) transfer and progression information in our **Learner Handbook.** [S6-2 Learner Handbook]
- The trainers explain transfer and progression routes within the framework of the NFQ at induction. S6-1 Access Transfer and progression Policy

6.2.2 Access

LEAP's client base is the Irish business community. Practically all of the participants on our 2 certified programmes come from this client base:

- QQI Level 5 Effective Team Player 5N1367
- QQI Level 6 Managing People 6N3945

Come from Irish indigenous companies who have limited access internally to any formal training. Prior to participants being put forward on a programme LEAP discuss with the representatives of the company (normally the managers of the participants and/or the HR manager) and go through the format content and assessment elements of the programme.

The company representatives determine its suitability for their colleagues and they select participants who have demonstrated a capacity to successfully complete the programme. Specifically for each programme:

QQI Level 5 Effective Team Player 5N1367:

- Participants are fully proficient in all technical aspects of their role
- Have demonstrated a capacity and capability to take on more responsibility
- Are strongly aligned with the recognised effective behaviours for the organisation
- Have been identified as potential team leads / people managers

QQI Level 6 Managing People 6N3945:

- Participants are fully proficient in all technical aspects of their role
- Have demonstrated a capacity and capability to take on more responsibility
- Are actively engaging with the recognised effective behaviours for the organisation
- Are established Supervisors and Managers

6.2.3 Progression Procedure

This is the procedure by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme at a higher level. LEAP offers, encourages and supports learner progression. This allows for learners to progress from, for example, a QQI programme to a higher-level programme. All learners may progress to higher levels subject to established entry criteria being satisfied. Learners apply for programmes at a higher level using the established registration process. . [S6-1 Access Transfer and progression Policy]

6.3 Facilitating Diversity

We aim to provide training which is suitable for those individuals or groups with additional or diverse needs to enable them to successfully participate in our programmes insofar as this is possible. We set out our commitment to facilitating diversity and difference in our handbooks and at Induction. We accommodate learners with identified support needs, and we ask applicants if they have any additional support needs on both our Application and Learner Registration Form. Learners are also encouraged to disclose additional support needs at any time during the programme. PDTs, when designing content and materials, bear in mind the needs of all the potential participants. We accommodate special needs to ensure that learners who may need additional support have the opportunity to access and benefits from our programmes. The Training Manager deals with requests for reasonable accommodation on a case-by-case basis. We provide pre-entry information about the content, assessment and demands of each programme to enable potential learners and our clients to make an informed choice about participation on a programme. Applicants are responsible for requesting reasonable accommodation and for providing documentation that verifies and confirms their need. We advise learners who encounter any difficulties at any stage during their programme to talk to their trainer or the Training Manager immediately.

6.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

[S6-3 RPL policy]

We recognise prior learning for entry to a programme. Applicants must detail their previous education and work experience when they are applying (question included on the application form). If an applicant does not meet the minimum entry criteria for a programme, they can apply for admission using RPL. This is stated in our programme information.

The Training Administrator reviews all completed application forms. If there is any doubt about the suitability of the applicant e.g., not meeting the entry criteria, the Training Administrator escalates the application to the Training Manager.
An RPL applicant must be able to demonstrate learning based on what they achieved through another programme of study, or through work or other learning experiences and must submit evidence with their application to verify this.

The evidence submitted by the applicant may include some or all of the following:

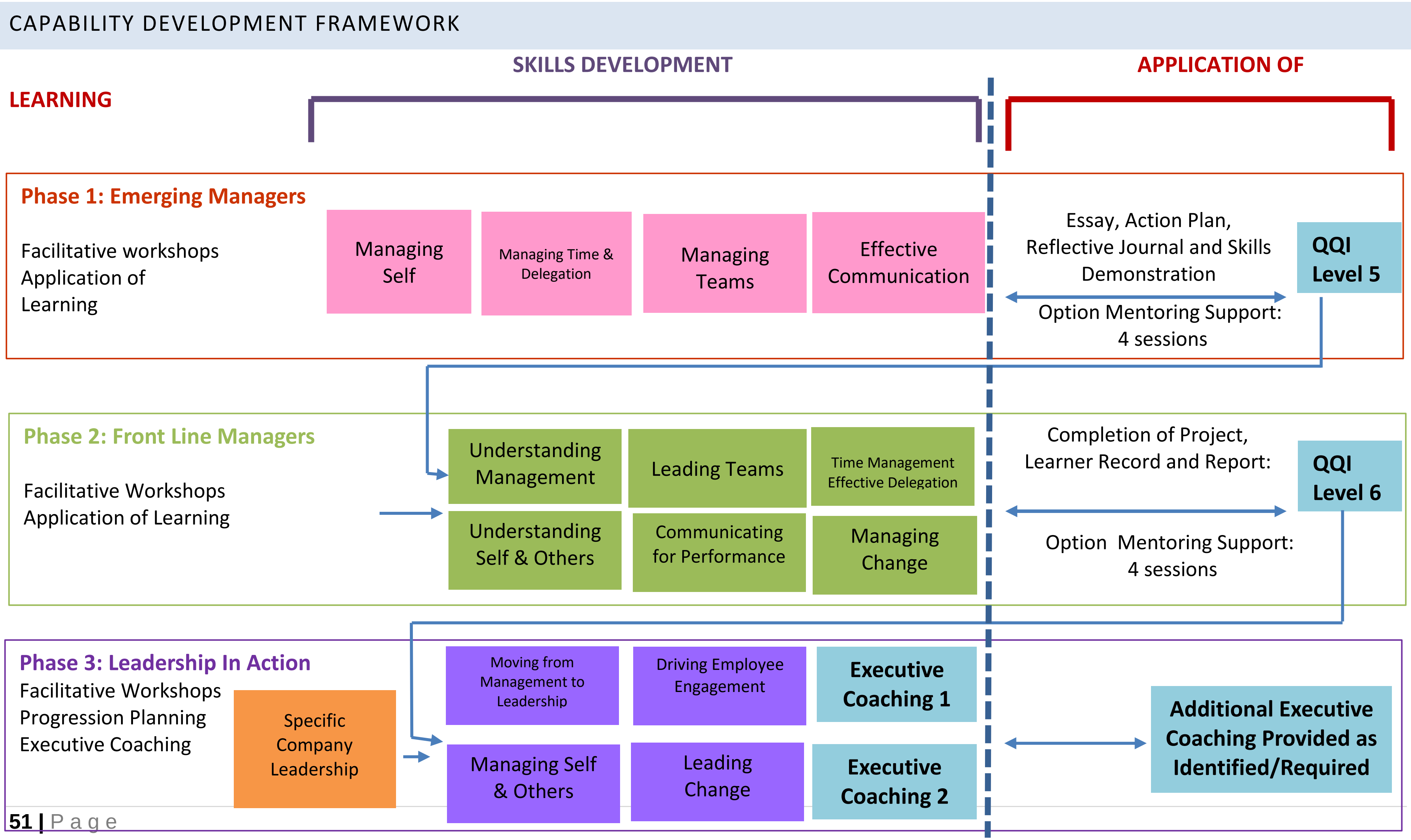
- Up-to-date CV
- Witness signed statement
- Details of training programmes attended
- Job descriptions and relevant work experiences
- Personal statement

The Training Manager reviews each RPL application and may arrange to meet the applicant to discuss the application, verify the supporting evidence submitted and decide if the applicant is suitable for the programme and vice versa. The Training Manager lets the applicant know the outcome and explains the rationale for the decision. If the decision is not to offer a place, the applicant has the right to appeal, and we will advise them about our admission appeals procedure.

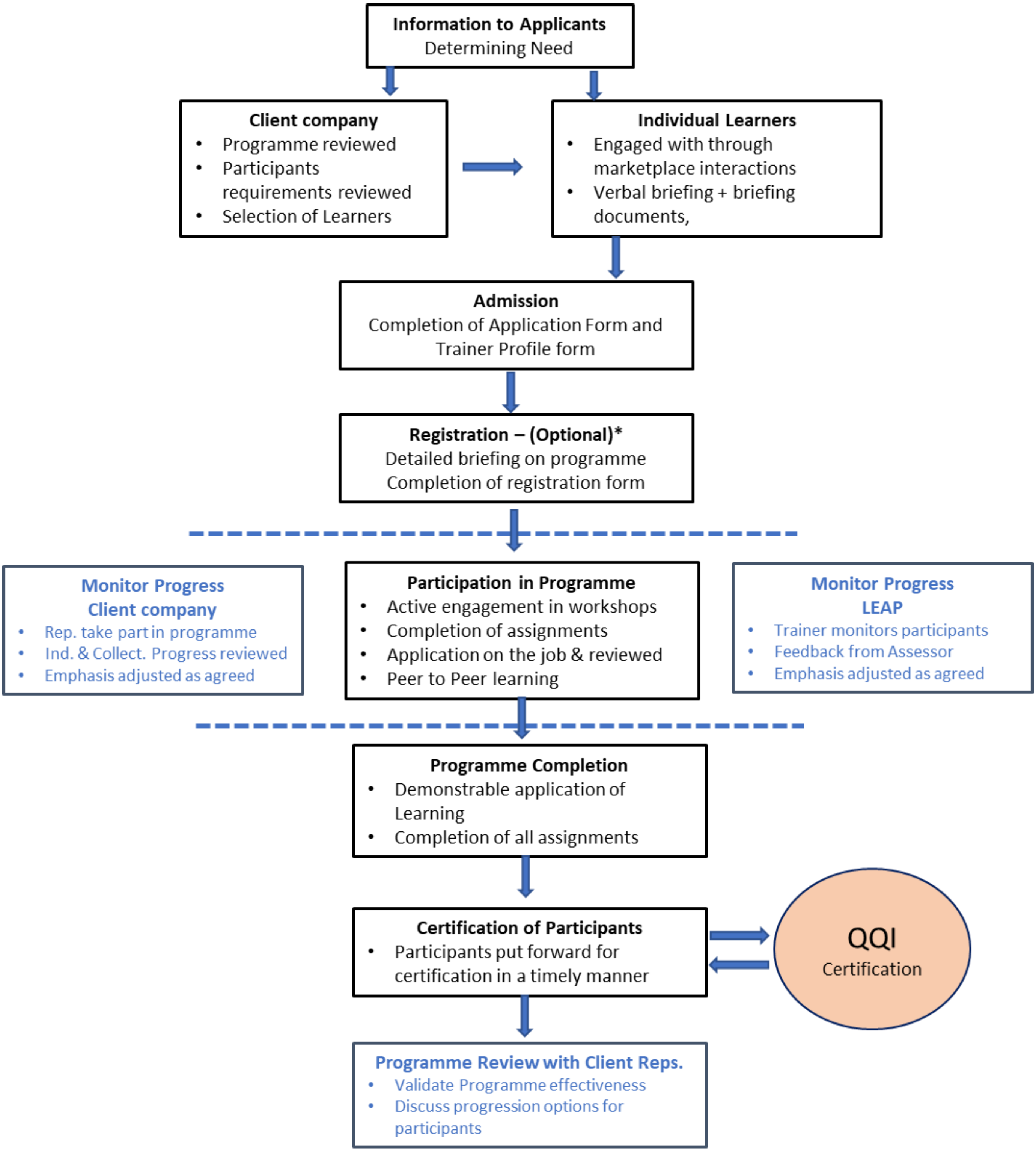
We let the trainers know which, if any, of the learners have been used the RPL route for entry and we advise them to monitor their progress carefully. We compare the assessment results of RPL applicants to those of standard applicants to ensure that our RPL entry procedure is working effectively.

6.5 Transfer and Progression

Transfer and Progression is outlined in LEAP's Capability Development Framework outlined below:



6.6 The Learner Journey



*Optional: It is not obligatory for learners to engage in the certification element to participate in the programmes

Section 7: Teaching and Learning

7.1 Policy

This policy outlines our approach to training and learning and the means by which we aim to provide an environment that enables learners to achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

The SMT is responsible for ensuring the resources are in place to ensure a quality training and learning environment.

Trainers, with the support of the Training Manager, are responsible for creating a positive, inclusive and mutually respectful learning environment.

7.2 Monitoring of Training and Learning

We monitor programmes, programme materials, learner supports, trainer performance, and the quality of the learning experience on an ongoing basis to ensure continued relevance and high standards and to capture recommendations for improvements.

Key Steps

- We have a programme review meeting following each programme. Minor changes are made on an ongoing basis from programme to programme and more significant changes are made (and recorded) following our annual **S2-6 course review and evaluation**
- We collect, collate and analyse feedback data from learners midway through their programme in addition to doing so at the final session. The trainer also completes a programme review document outlining their observations and feedback. This process facilitates the gathering of suggestions for programme improvement from both learners and trainers.
- Where a learner has provided negative feedback the Training Manager makes contact to discuss and identify recommendations which are forwarded to the SMT and actions agreed.
- We monitor trainer performance and effectiveness using learner feedback, trainer's feedback and evaluation of their own performance, feedback from external authenticators and client/stakeholder feedback.
- We discuss the programme midway through the programme and debrief at the end of programme with the sponsor where the quality of training and programme content is discussed. Focus groups are used primarily as part of our self-evaluation process.
- We meet our stakeholders to get feedback on training.
- We identify poor performance of facilities through Learner Feedback, Stakeholder Feedback and assessment results and we offer support to trainers whose performance is not meeting the required standards. Details of this support are outlined in the trainer Handbook.
- We carry out a comprehensive review of our programmes annually as part of our self-evaluation. [**S2-6 course review and evaluation]** The outcome of these reviews are detailed programme reports and action plans for programme improvements [**S8-6 Programme Improvement Plan]**
- We facilitate the sharing of good practice amongst trainers at our programme review meetings and monthly trainer meetings
- Trainers check-in regularly with the learners to ensure that the learners fully

understand the learning objectives of their programme and how they are being assessed.

7.3 Supports for Learners

7.3.1 Learning Resources

We define learning resources as the collection of materials used to conduct a programme to include, but are not limited, to a learner workbook, trainer's guide, slide presentations, texts, videos, software, and other materials.

7.3.2 Learner Supports

Learner supports focus on what we do to help learners beyond the formal delivery of programme content. We regard the provision of appropriate learner supports as a critical component of an effective learning environment.

We examine learner supports and the design of an effective learning environment at programme design stage based on specific programme needs, the learner profile and requirements. Learning Resources and Learner Supports are detailed in the Programme Descriptor. The Training Manager keeps a watching brief on the adequacy and effectiveness of learner supports and responds to gaps or shortfalls. Learner support/s is an agenda item for programme team meetings.

- **Learner Induction** – The trainer inducts the learners at the outset of programme using our Standard Induction Presentation. The most important supports/services are highlighted e.g. compassionate consideration for assessment, email and telephone support. [S6-2 Learner Handbook]
- All learners receive a **Programme Workbook and Assessment Brief** - a structured and detailed manual containing copies of reading materials, programme content, assessment criteria, reading/reference lists and specific assessment admin details.
- Our trainers provide formative and summative feedback to learners throughout the programme.
- We accommodate special needs to ensure that learners who may need additional support have the opportunity to access and benefit from our programmes.
- Our trainers are available to meet learners on a one-to-one basis. The trainer records details of these meetings and submits them to the Training Manager if the issue is significant.
- The assessor provides timely feedback on assignments submitted and is also uses Moodle as a communication tool to facilitate discussions with learners on assignment work.
- Transfer and progression opportunities is addressed at Induction and advice is given on a one-to-one basis by the Training Manager (on request)[S6-1 Access Transfer and Progression Policy
- As well as direct support with programme content, we recognise that learners often need help and guidance on administrative or personal issues e.g., delay an assignment because of sickness or cancel enrolment and postpone it to another date. We do all

we can to ensure that learners succeed while meeting the Programme standards of our programmes.

- We **provide email and telephone support** in addition to classroom activities for the duration of the programme.
- We ensure that the premises we use for training delivery are comfortable, accessible, well-serviced and maintained and fit-for-purpose.
- We have one-to-one meetings with learners (on request) to discuss specific needs and we facilitate learners within as much individual assistance as possible working within the constraints of programme delivery.
- Examples of supports that we can make available to learners (This list is not exhaustive and any learner presenting with any other support needs will be accommodated within reason to the best of our ability)
  - Physical modifications to the training location e.g. seating arrangements etc.
  - Learning materials provided in accessible format where possible.
  - Additional time allocated to complete assessments.
  - Alternative assessment formats.

7.3.3 Information for Learners

The trainer is the main and primary point of contact and information for learners throughout the programme and responds to all requests for programme and programme related information. If the trainer is not in a position to respond, they redirect the query to the Training Manager.

The following documents are provided to all learners, before or at the commencement of a programme:

- Learner Workbook
- Learner induction presentation
- A programme timetable with the related certification assessment plan
- Details of appeals and complaints procedures
- Assessment briefs and assessment criteria
- Learner handbook [S6-2 Learner Handbook]

7.3.5 Learning resources to support online learning

To support online learning a number of Interventions and mechanisms have been identified including a revised induction for online learners to:

1. ensure familiarity with technology
2. provide an experience of the platform and what learners can expect e.g., breakout sessions, resource library
3. review certification requirements
4. outline each assessment and requirements

Programme schedules incorporate an optional session mid-way through the programme for the trainer to check in with participants to ensure learners are:

1. adequately comfortable with the technology
2. learning is taking place
3. applying learning to their workplace
4. in a position to ask questions and seek further clarification
5. provided with the space to provide feedback

Trainers are also available at the end of each session providing an opportunity to discuss learning and support learners.

7.3.6 Programme Integrity

Programme integrity is monitored on an on-going basis and incorporates continuing recommendations and those approved by the Programme Board.

7.4 Learner Complaints

We have a documented learner complaint procedure in place to facilitate learners who wish to complain about any aspect of our programmes, services and/or supports. This is included in Learner Handbook. [S6-2 Learner Handbook]

7.5 Selection of Premises and Maintenance of Equipment and Facilities

We ensure that the premises and facilities we use for training are fit-for-purpose, suitable for our learners and our programmes and are maintained in such a manner to ensure the health, safety and comfort of trainers and learners. The Training Manager checks the location, design and layout of the training facilities in advance and agree to use them only if they meet our standards. When we use a client premises we discuss our requirements for programme delivery in advance and complete a **Training Venue Checklist.** We review the effectiveness of equipment, training resources and facilities to ensure their continuing adequacy and effectiveness as part of programme review process. Trainers advise learners regarding facilities, housekeeping and safe access and egress including fire assembly points at induction. We maintain an accident and incident register and we have appropriate insurance cover in place.

Section 8 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

8.1 Policy

A cycle of continuous quality improvement which is underpinned by self-evaluation, monitoring and review is critical to the success of our programmes and the enhancement of the learner experience. We regard the continuous review and self-evaluation of our training programmes, learner support and the quality assurance system in a systematic and structured way as a fundamental factor in ensuring quality. Implementing this continuous improvement approach helps us to identify good practice and areas needing improvement. We consult with staff, trainers, learners, graduates, clients, external advisors and other stakeholders as part of our monitoring and review processes.

8.2 Responsibility

- The SMT is responsible for ensuring that the resources are in place to implement the processes to a high standard.

- The Programme Board is responsible for ensuring that programmes are monitored, reviewed and evaluated.
- The Training Manager is responsible for implementing programme review and evaluation processes and acts as the Self-Evaluation Coordinator.
- The Quality Officer will have an oversight role in relation to quality assurance and quality enhancement.

8.3 Monitoring of Training and Learning

The trainers monitor the quality of the learning experience during delivery and ensure the mid-programme evaluation is completed by learners. These reports are generated, reviewed and discussed with the client organisation or sponsoring body. The responsibility of the learners in monitoring their own learning is highlighted at Induction. The Training Manager reviews each rollout following delivery with the trainer at a programme debriefing and completes an end-of-programme evaluation. At the last session of a programme we invite all learners to give their feedback on all aspects of the programmes via an online evaluation form which is subsequently reviewed by the Training Manager and trainer.

8.3.1 Trainer Feedback

We provide a range of avenues, formal and informal to facilitate trainer feedback. The requirement for trainers to provide feedback is outlined in the Trainer Role Description, at Trainer Induction and in the Trainer Handbook. At the end of the programme, the trainer completes a ***Trainer Evaluation Form.*** The Training Manager analyses the feedback and agrees improvements with the trainer/s at a programme debriefing. The agreed improvements are discussed when the rollout of the subsequent programme is being planned. Trainers remain in contact with the Training Manager throughout the duration of the programme to highlight or discuss any issues of concerns that arises. [S8-5 LEAP Tutor self evaluation]

8.3.2 Learner Feedback

We regard learner feedback as one of the primary ways for us to of identify ways to improve our programmes. The trainers require learners to complete a hardcopy or online version - Learner Evaluation Form [S8-2 Learner Self Evaluation form] at the end of each programme (and at the mid-way point in some cases). The questions are designed to collect useful qualitative and quantitative data. Learners are given adequate time to complete the questionnaires. The completion of evaluation forms by learners is voluntary, albeit strongly encouraged and learners have the option to anonymise the forms. Trainers highlight the importance of learners providing feedback at Induction and describe how we use the data to improve our training and our programmes. The feedback is analysed by the Training Manager and reported on to the Programme Board in aggregate form.

We encourage learners to approach any member of the programme team at any point to highlight areas of concern and/or give us feedback. Trainers ask learners for comment and feedback throughout the programme, and formally at the mid-programme evaluation, and report back on issues of concern to the Training Manager. The Training Manager also takes feedback provided in one-to-one learner meetings, e-mail and informal comments, complaints and appeals into account in addition to data in evaluation forms.

Programme Board

LEAP review and reflect on each programme and resources by way of a Programme Board, and have welcomed a learner voice on this board. The learner representative commits to being a member of the Board for two years. The learner has participated in a LEAP programme and has successfully completed certification (at most 6 months prior to joining the Board).

8.3.3 Feedback from Clients

We invite our clients and sponsoring organisations, to contribute their views on our programmes in meeting their objectives. The Training Manager meets with clients' key personnel when planning a training programme to outline learning outcomes, get an overview of learner profile and needs, to confirm that the clients' expectations are aligned to ours and to confirm logistical details. We invite clients to give us feedback which will help us to measure the impact of the training within the workplace and the degree to which the programme met their objectives. We invite clients to complete a Programme Evaluation Form. This can be completed by the Training Manager during the course of a structured conversation with the client if this is more convenient for the client. We use feedback from clients to highlight best practice, inform and identify improvements to our programmes.

8.4 Programme Review

We formally review our programmes annually. The purpose of these reviews is to

- Ensure high standards
- Support the enhancement of learning and training delivery
- Inform CPD for staff and trainers
- Update our TLA strategy
- Improve the quality of learning resources, facilities, equipment, and learner supports

The following are reviewed as part of the process:

- Programme content, materials
- Learning resources - IT facilities, reading materials etc.
- The effectiveness of the QA system
- CPD
- Learner Supports
- End-of-programme evaluations (for each rollout)
- Certification Reports
- Assessment Results
- Learner, Training and Stakeholder feedback
- Stakeholder feedback
- Facilitating diversity
- Application, attendance, completion, retention, and progression rates
- transfer/progress
- Review of complaints, appeals and risk registers

- Error levels/corrective actions
- Relevance of outcomes to the marketplace
- The information contained on the QQI register of providers and the database of awards and programmes
- Updates to QQI QA requirements

The Training Manager collates and analyses the data with the trainers and involves all members of the programme team and other key stakeholders in the review as appropriate; consulting with employers in respect of programme outcomes and content. She prepares a draft report, using the ***[S8-6 programme Improvement Plan]***, and submits it to the Programme Board for comment and input. She collates the feedback from the Programme Board and produces the final report which sets out a schedule of actions to be undertaken, recommendations for updates, minor changes or improvements in the programme, related supports and to the QA system. The improvement plan identifies the person(s) responsible for actions and follow-up and a timeline for implementation. The Training Manager updates all programme, assessment and QA documents on shared folders and notifies trainers of any changes.

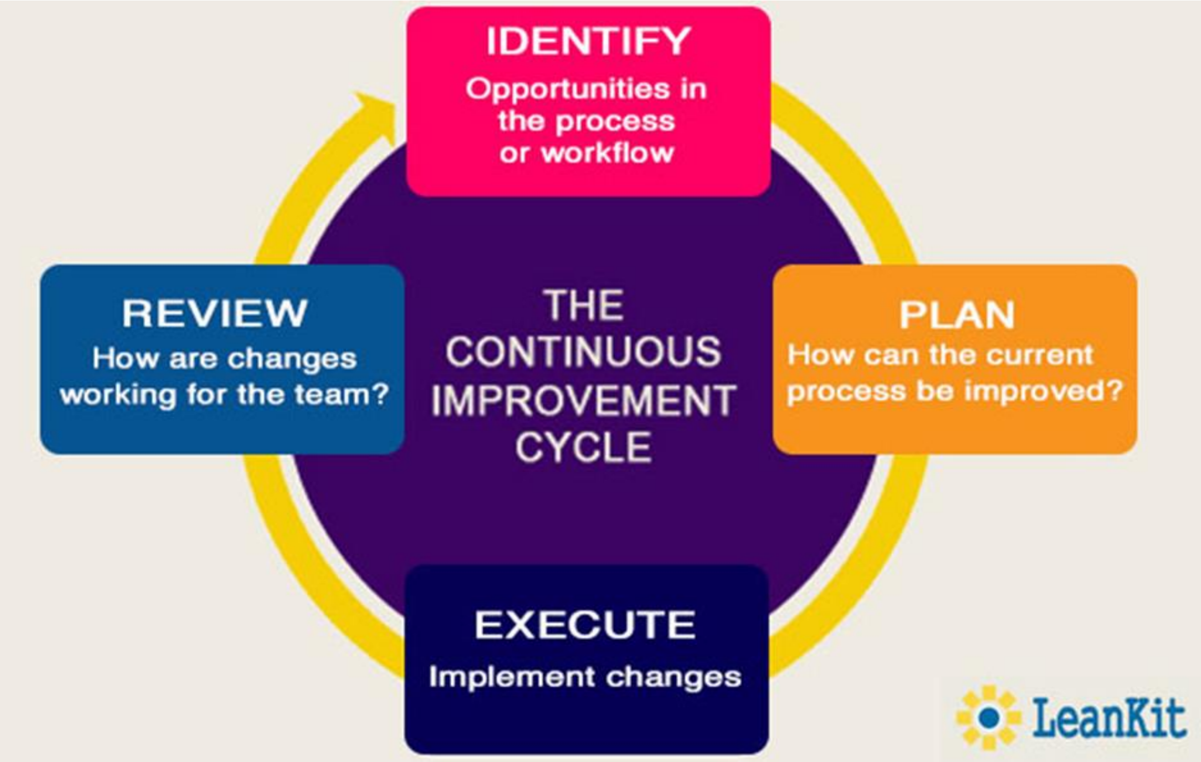
8.5 Programme Evaluation

8.5.1 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy

[S9-1 Self Evaluation and Review Policy]

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

We evaluate our programmes every five years. This is a wide-scale comprehensive review of all aspects of a programme and the quality assurance processes that underpins it and is timed to coincide with revalidation. The self-evaluation process is enhancement-based and focused on identifying improvements to programmes, policies, structures and processes, and is regarded as critical to improving the quality of programme provision. We make the findings of self-evaluation available to relevant stakeholders and publish self-evaluation reports on our website (currently being revamped with a completion date identified as January 2022).



8.5.2 Aims of Self-Evaluation

- It is an opportunity for us to systematically look at how we deliver training, the quality of our programmes and the quality assurance processes that support training provision.
- Helps to improve the learning environment, programmes and supports.
- Contribute to and support quality improvement planning and governance of quality and quality enhancement.
- To further embed a quality culture
- To identify current gaps and priorities for improvement in the context of QQI statutory QA guidelines.

8.5.3 Process of Self-Evaluation

The views of learners, alumni, trainers, employers/industry and other stakeholders and of independent evaluator/s are included in each self-evaluation. The self-evaluation process involves evaluation, reflection, reviewing and reporting on the quality and effectiveness of a programme/s using quality assurance data collated during the 5-year period being addressed by the evaluation.

- A review and critical analysis of the QA system which facilitates the achievement of the programme aims and objectives
- The views of all staff associated with the programme
- External Evaluator input
- An analysis of programme strengths and weaknesses

- Performance of learners including grade profiles and trends, progression and completion rates, retention, withdrawal rates
- Effectiveness of assessment procedures
- Recommended modifications to the existing curriculum and assessment processes
- The identification of resources required to deliver the programme
- A review of the teaching, assessment, and learning strategy
- A review of links with employers, industry, the business and wider community
- Detail of programme changes proposed and the rationale for same
- Findings from programme reviews
- Findings of awarding body monitoring reports (if any)
- Legislative/regulatory changes which need to be incorporated into the programme
- Review of external authenticators and Results Approval Panel reports
- Suitability and appropriateness of the physical facilities and anticipate changing needs in the future
- Current programme entry requirements and confirm their appropriateness for the current context
- Any issues raised about particular sites or with elements of the programme
- Recommendations for modifications to the delivery process and the operational management procedures based on feedback from stakeholders

8.5.4 Key Steps in Self-Evaluation Process

The process is driven by the Quality Assurance Officer and the Training Manager acts as the Self-Evaluation Co-ordinator and sets out the focus and objectives and agrees an outline/timeline for the self-evaluation exercise. The Quality Assurance Officer ensures the process is completed and actions implemented.

- The Training Manager completes the S6- 6 Programme Improvement Plan which sets out a schedule of actions which we undertake following evaluation, the people responsible and deadlines for implementation.
- The Programme Board reviews and comments on the final drafts of the Reports
- The Training Manager submits a copy of the S8-9 Self-Evaluation Report (SER) which documents our findings and recommendations for improvement and the [S8-6 Programme Improvement Plan] to QQI when they have been signed off by the Chair of the Programme Board.
- The Training Manager files all relevant paperwork/evidence and makes it available for ongoing internal and external monitoring if requested.
- The Training Manager disseminates the findings, recommendations and feedback from the monitoring body to the contributors to the process as appropriate.
- The Training Manager updates/ amends the QAS as needed.
- The Training Manager monitors the progress of the implementation of the S6-6 Programme Improvement Plan.
- We will **publish the SERs** on our website in accordance with guidelines set down by QQI – website being revamped.

8.5.6 External Monitoring and Evaluation

External monitoring is carried out by QQI and addresses the following areas:

- Programme quality and attainment of awards standards
- Follow-up on internal and/or external quality procedures, e.g. Re-validation
- Institutional Review
- Registered QQI provider status
- Tracking the implementation of policy

To facilitate QQI monitoring we supply the following documents/information to QQI as required:

- Copies of Self-Evaluation Reports
- Internal Verification, External Authentication and Results Approval Panel Reports
- Detail on changes which may affect our status as a recognised QQI provider
- Crisis notification (e.g. financial issues and capacity deficits, impending media disclosures relating to Programme quality)

S9 Public Information and Communication

Public information refers to the information that we communicate and publish about our programmes and activities.

9.1 Communications Policy

We are committed to providing clear, accurate, objective and up-to-date information about our programmes and activities and about us as a QQI-recognised provider and facilitating continuous two-way communications with our learners, trainers, clients, awarding body and the general public.

Under the terms of Section 67 of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* all QQI provider institutions are requested to specify:

- Details of the award
- Name of the awarding body
- Title of the award
- Whether the award is recognised within the NFQ
- Level of that recognition
- Whether the award is a Major, Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental
- Where the programme does not entitle the learner to an award that face.
- A statement of the procedures for access, transfer and progression under Section 56 which apply to the programme

9.2 Responsibility

The Training Manager approves all information before it is published electronically or in hardcopy, ensuring that it is honest, up-to-date, comprehensive, and accessible and in compliance with the 2012 Act.

9.3 Information for Applicants

We provide applicants/ potential learners with pre-entry information about the content, assessment and demands of each programme to enable them and our clients to make an informed choice about participation on a programme. This is conducted through our arranged Induction session with all learners. We provide information on our website and downloadable programme brochures in Pdf format. The Training Manager reviews and updates the website information, on a regular basis.

9.4 Programme Brochures

Our programme brochures contain information under the following headings;

- Programme and Award Title and Code
- Accrediting/awarding Body
- Level of the award on NFQ, and associated credits
- Programme content
- Programme duration
- Workload/time commitment
- Mode of delivery – online/blended/face-to-face
- Programme and any other applicable fees
- Learner profile
- Application process and entry requirements
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategy
- Access, transfer and progression options

9.5 Website

Our website is our primary vehicle for providing information about LEAP, QQI and the NFQ, our programmes and supports to potential applicants and other interested stakeholders and is currently being revamped – due for completion in January 2022. Visitors to the website can view our training calendar, access details of our programmes and supports and be guided through the steps to applying for a place on a programme.

9.6 Social Networking Sites

We also disseminate information and updates about our programmes through the services of our sales support team in Meas Media who update our LinkedIn profile.

9.7 Participation in Conferences and Sectoral Events

LEAP participates in relevant conferences and other networking and sectoral events. LEAP also provide information to potential applicants and other interested parties. The attendance at these events is recorded on our LP-6 **Networking tracker**. Each trainer is encouraged to reflect on activities with other stakeholders or networks.

9.9 Information on using our VLE

LEAP incorporates the use of Go To Training and Moodle for online support, resources and training. The initial information on LEAP's online learning programmes is outlined in all brochure material and on the website. Both include information on programme content, objectives, how the programme will be facilitated and any relevant certification information. Each learner and trainer are provided with comprehensive instructions in the **S6-2 Learner Handbook and S4-1 Trainer Handbook**

9.10 Public Information and Communication

LEAPs policy Public Information and Communication, sets out the processes for the dissemination of all public information and communication, relating to its programmes and its learner support systems. This includes the approval of programme brochures and related marketing material prior to printing. All programme brochures are developed by the Training Manager, using information from validated programme documentation, which has been approved by QQI.

We publish key findings from QA evaluation reports in an easily accessible format and location on the website as soon as practicable (and once the website is updated – January 2022) after the evaluation event and in line with awarding body requirements.

9.11 Biennial Programme Reviews

These quality evaluation reports detail the activities of our programmes in the preceding two years, this includes details relating to the delivery of the programme; quality standards, staff and learner feedback; learner recruitment and retention statistics; assessment results; External Authenticators' feedback; and quality improvements. As part of biennial programme review, we review the information contained on the QQI register of providers and the database of awards and programmes and update QQI with regard to any changes. We also update our organisation chart and inform QQI of any organisational changes that may impact on our relationship with QQI.

9.12 Information Related to QQI

As a provider recognised by QQI, we comply with QQI's requirements regarding the provision of QQI information. We are aware that if we provide enrolled learners with information which is false or misleading in any material respect, we are committing an offence. We are committed to responding and addressing any concerns that QQI may bring to our attention as a matter of urgency. The Training Manager ensures that references to QQI and the NFQ that we publish are correct and accurate and that we use only the current versions of the NFQ graphic and the QQI award brand.

The Training Manager acts as the main point of contact with QQI and is responsible for the timely distribution of communications from QQI to other members of the programme team and members of governance units.

S10 Information and Data Management

10.1 Policy

We define information management as "recorded information, in any form, created or received and maintained in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity". LEAP recognises that the efficient management of data and information is necessary to support our core functions, to comply with legal and regulatory obligations and to facilitate the effective management and operation of the company. We are committed to creating, keeping and maintaining those records which document our principal activities, including teaching, coaching and mentoring support. [S10- 2 GDPR Policy]

10.2 Responsibility

- The Managing Director is responsible for making reliable information and data available for informed decision-making and for having structures in place to generate named data/reports which are available for self-monitoring and planning purposes.
- The Managing Director acts as Data Protection Officer.
- All who create and keep records as part of their role are responsible for them.
- The Training Manager is responsible for the secure transfer of learner data to QQI.

10.2.1 Schedule of Reports Presented to Governance Units

Report Title	To:/From	Frequency	Presented by
Programme Reports/ Quality enhancement plans	To Programme Board	Every two years	Training Manager
Risk Register	To Programme Board	At each meeting	Training Manager
Self-Evaluation Reports/Programmatic Reviews	To Programme Board	Every 5 years	Quality Officer
New Programme Proposals	To Senior Management Team (SMT)		Training Manager
New Programme Proposals	To Programme Board	As they arise	Training Manager
Applications for Validation/Validation Manuals	To Programme Board	AS they arise prior to submission to awarding body	Training Manager
Results Approval Panel (RAP) reports	To Programme Board and the SMT	Following each RAP meeting	Training Manager

External monitoring reports and implementation / action plans arising	To Programme Board and the SMT	As they arise	Training Manager
Feedback from awarding bodies	To Programme Board and the SMT	As it arises	Training Manager
External Authentication reports	To Results Approval Panel (RAP)	Each certification period	External Authenticator
Internal Verification reports	To Results Approval Panel (RAP)	Each certification period	Internal Verifier
Programme Board Reports	To: SMT	Following each meeting	Training Manager

Schedule of reports for publication

Report Title	Published Where	Frequency	Approved by
Quality Reports	sharepoint	Annually	Training Manager
QQI Panel reports	sharepoint	As they arise	Training Manager
External Monitoring reports	Sharepoint QQI website	As they arise	Training Manager

10.3 Learner Records

We maintain a secure electronic learner record database (LRS) where we record, store and access learner records. Access to these records is limited to the Training Manager and the Internal Assessor and to others on a needs-basis only with the permission of the Training Manager. The Training Manager is responsible for ensuring that the database is maintained securely that data relating to learner assessment is accurate and complete and for making changes/updating learner records. We maintain learner records securely for current use and historical review and providing reports required for internal quality management generating statistical and other reports to meet various information requirements, for example, on the QQI database of programmes and awards as prescribed by the legislation [S10-1 GDPR _participant info]

Learner data include

- personal details
- contact information

- assessment results
- programmes completed/awards conferred
- classification of the award.

Reporting of Data

We maintain statistics on

- learner enrolments
- retention
- completion

They are monitored by the Training Manager and a biannual report is presented to both the SMT and the PB. This data is stored on LEAP's Sharepoint.

10.4 Quality Indicators

(the measures we use to evaluate success)

Qualitative indicators of quality include:

- Learner satisfaction
- Client satisfaction
- External Authenticator feedback
- External Evaluation feedback
- QQI Monitoring feedback

Quantitative indicators of quality include:

- Enrolment rates (numbers per programme)
- Certification rates
- Assessment Results
- Number of returning clients
- Learner attrition or drop-out rates/completion rates

10.5 KPIs

Benchmarks or key performance indicators include the following:

- minimum and maximum learner numbers per programme;
- profile of the learner population;
- learner satisfaction rates;
- learner progression/learner attrition or drop-out rates/completion rates;
- graduation/certification rates

10.5 Data protection

The information system is designed to enable compliance with data protection. Obligations under data protection legislation are complied with. This includes the establishment of data access controls, data backup systems and ensuring learner information material. LEAP have a comprehensive GDPR policy which is made available to learners and stakeholders and is reinforced at QQI induction when personal data is requested.

10.6 Records maintenance and retention

There is a policy for the establishment and maintenance of quality-related records. It specifies data retention periods. Typically, records include items such as objectives, plans and targets; performance indicators; evidence used in the evaluation of performance against objectives; self-monitoring reports; evaluation reports; minutes of QA meetings; actions taken (including changes made to the quality assurance system) and the rationale for these; and follow-up reports. S2-1 Quality Assurance Policy

Document History

Version	Issue date	Changes	Role
V9	17 Aug 2021	Updates and typing errors amended	Quality assurance administrator
V11	23 Oct 21	Updates Moodle, data, website, organisational charts. Assessment feedback, policy references, flow diagrams, document referencing. Improved consistency, accuracy and structure and written in a user-friendly and easy to read manner, key procedures in diagrammatic form.	Quality Assurance administrator
V12	03.22	Add Appendix,	
V13	21 Mar 22	Added "Summary of the Learner Experience and Supports from LEAP" Added "Learner Handbook"	

Document review

Role	Review status
Training Manager	Completed

Sign off

	Tricia Cunningham

Appendix

Section 1: *Governance Structure & Risk Management*

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•Learner Complaints

S7: Teaching & Learning

•Policy

•Monitor of T&L P39

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•Information for Learn. Incl. Blended Learning P40

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S8: Self Evaluation, Monitor and Review

S9: LEAP's Public Information and Communication

S10: Information & Data Management

S11: Additional Company Information

•Referenced as Appendices or via hyperlinks

S1.1. Board of Directors

Responsibilities

- Drive the company forward.
- Ensure the financial viability of the company.
- Ensure LEAP meet its statutory obligations.
- Ensure the company performs in a legally compliant and ethical manner.
- Ensure the company applies effective disciplines both strategically and operationally.

Delegated Responsibilities

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for the management and operation of the company to the Senior Management Team (SMT). It is responsible for the ongoing operational performance of LEAP and for ensuring the implementation of the company's strategy.

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for oversight of Programme and quality assurance matters to the Programme Board which reports to the Senior Management Team through the Chair.

S1.2. Programme Board

Role

The Programme Board supports the Directors in making programme decisions and provides both challenge and approval on issues affecting the quality and academic standards of the programmes delivered by LEAP.

Membership and Tenure

The LEAP Board of Directors appoints members who represent the interests of those who have an interest in the programmes. Members serve for 2 years and can be reappointed. The Board consists of a maximum number of 6 members to ensure that the Board is an effective decision-making body

Members

- Chair, who takes executive responsibility for decisions relating to the programmes
- Internal Programme Leader/training expert (Chair)
- An employer/client
- Trainer
- Learner/graduate

Members commit to:

- Attending all scheduled meetings
- Actively engage
- Making timely decisions

Members expect:

- To be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information by the Programme Leader in a timely manner
- Open and honest discussions

Section Criteria for External Members

Board members must;

- Understand the purpose and objectives of the training programmes
- Be able to analyse and assess programme materials and curricula resulting in recommendations for improvements
- Make recommendations while addressing any issues regarding programme content, methodologies or materials
- Act as an independent authority with knowledge of the training and business sectors
- At least one external member must be able to advise on best practice in pedagogy

Responsibilities

- Constructively challenge the identified programme vision, content and methodologies to enhance the learning experience for learners
- Ensure the required resources are identified for the successful delivery of each programme
- Agree programme tolerances for time, quality and cost
- Provide an overall strategic direction for the programmes
- Assess risks associated with the programme including those escalated from trainers
- Ensure a high level of quality has been developed and structured for successful implementation
- Ensure post-programme reviews are conducted at regular intervals and recommendations/amendments implemented
- Consider reports of programme evaluation and monitoring activity
- Review the training risk register
- Review Results Approval Panel meeting reports and corrective action
- Discuss significant issues raised by learners, trainers, staff and stakeholders in relation to the programmes
- Review the effectiveness of programme management and general support services
- Sanction changes to delivery and minor changes to programmes within the bounds set by validation
- Communicate recommendations and rationale for same to LEAP Directors

Meetings

- Meetings are held biannually. Additional meetings can be convened by the Chair if necessary.
- Decisions are agreed by majority
- The Programme Manager ensures administrative support which includes:
    - Drafting agendas and supporting papers in consultation with the Chair
    - Preparing meeting notes and information
    - Writing up minutes/action plans and distributing them to members of the Board in a timely fashion

Governance

The programme board provides the Chair with input to decisions affecting the programmes. Ultimate authority and accountability reside with the Chair.

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified only after consultation and agreement by the LEAP Directors.

Supporting Documents

- Programme Board Meeting Standing Agenda
- Programme Board Report Template

Report Schedule

Report/Document Title	To/From	Frequency	Presented by
Recommendations Report	To LEAP Directors	After each meeting	Chair
• Annual Programme Reports • RAP reports	To Programme Board	As available	Programme Leader

S1.3. Senior Management Team

Responsibilities

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is comprised of;

The senior partners: Managing Director, Training Manager, Continuous Improvement Partner and the Financial Advisor.

This team brings together programme development, deployment, compliance and commercial positions, to help ensure that LEAP has a co-ordinated implementation of its strategic initiatives in a structured and operationally efficient manner. This team is responsible for the day to day running of the company, and the implementation of the strategic plan. This team report to the Board of Directors.

Responsibilities

- Implement LEAP's strategic plan
- Monitor progress against strategic goals
- Oversee the operational management of LEAP
- Consider and manage the adequacy of personnel and other resource requirements
- Manage marketing and business development
- Manage resources to make sure that appropriate facilities and supports are available to ensure the quality of programme provision
- Manage risk to a reasonable level
- Embed a culture of continuous quality improvement throughout the company
- Ensure ongoing application of the company's values

Meetings

The SMT meet formally every month for strategic reviews and have operational meetings on an ongoing basis, usually weekly.

S1.4. Self Evaluation Panel

Role and Responsibilities of the SE Panel

- Ensure that feedback from all stakeholders is taken into consideration.
- Scrutinise all relevant documents and materials
- Approve all reports and plans for submission to QQI.
- To meet at the outset of the process to confirm the appointment of the Self Evaluation Coordinator and agree a timeline and plan for the process
- To review the SER and other relevant materials provided to the Panel
- To provide independent confirmation or otherwise of the SER
- To confirm and / or challenge the findings.
- Ensure that our agreed quality assurance procedures in relation to Self-Evaluation and Improvement of Programmes and Services are adhered to.
- Confirm that appropriate evidence and records are available.

Membership

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) requires that programmes and related services offered by a provider must be evaluated by the provider with the *input of learners and an independent person*.

The Head of Centre who assumes that role of Chair of the Panel is responsible for appointing members. In doing so, the Chair must ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided.

- The SEP is composed of a minimum of 3 people to ensure the evaluation decisions are valid. One of these must be the Self-Evaluation Coordinator
- The Panel has the authority to invite other members of staff to meetings to discuss specific matters.

Other Members may include:

- Programme/s Leader (for programme/s being evaluated)
- The QA Officer
- Independent Subject Matter Expert/s capable of providing independent peer review
- Independent quality assurance specialist capable of providing independent peer review
- A learner and/or a graduate
- A graduate

Decision Making

- Minutes of the SEP are produced outlining the issues discussed and decisions reached. These minutes are retained by the centre and made available for auditing and monitoring purposes. The contents of the minutes are confidential and must not be circulated to unauthorised personnel.
- A key outcome of each SEP meeting is that the an External Evaluation Report which is signed by the Chair
- Any documentation provided to members during Panel meetings must be returned to the Chair at the end of the meeting.
- The Panel's findings are published.

Conduct of the SEP Process

- The Head of Centre convenes SEP meetings as required.
- The SEP meets at the outset of the process to confirm the appointment of the Self-Evaluation Coordinator, agree a timeline and a plan for the process and to identify relevant stakeholders that are to be involved/consulted.
- A draft Evaluation Report and Quality Improvement Plan is presented to the SEP by the Programme Leader following the evaluation of programmes and services against relevant criteria.
- The Panel evaluates the operation of any collaboration agreement / Memorandum of Understanding where a programme involves the collaboration of a 'second' provider(s),
- The Panel reviews the documents and raises any concerns and makes suggestions for appropriate amendment or improvements
- The Panel reviews and evaluates all programme resources
- Panel decisions are recorded and the Chair arranges for relevant parties to be notified.
- The External Evaluation Report and Quality Improvement Plan is agreed assigned off by the Chair on behalf of the panel members.
- Minutes are prepared by the Programme Leader and kept on file.

S1.5. Programme Approval Panel

The role of this panel is to review and approve programmes prior to submission for validation (this occurs after programme design and in advance of requesting external validation).

Role of the Programme Approval Panel (PAP)

- To provide oversight of all activities relating to education and training programmes and ensure their separation from commercial/ financial considerations.
- To review programmes proposals to confirm that the proposed programme meets an identified need
- To confirm that the proposed programme meets all learning outcomes.
- Ensure the proposed programme meets the needs of the potential learners
- To ensure that adequate programme resources necessary for successful delivery and assessment by staff and successful participation by learners have been identified and included in programme documentation for approval.
- To ensure that the agreed quality assurance procedures in relation to Programme Design, Development, Approval and Review are adhered to
- Make recommendations for changes to existing programmes.
- To approve applications for validation and revalidation prior to submission to the relevant awarding body.

Membership of the Panel

A minimum of 3 people to ensure the programme decisions are valid to include;

- The Head of Centre (acts as the Chair of the Panel)
- Programme Leader
- An external expert

The Head of Centre and is responsible for appointing members. In doing so, the Chair must ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided.

Other personnel may be invited to attend for a particular section of the meeting as appropriate.

Conduct of the PAP

- The Head of Centre convenes meetings of the Panel as required.
- The Panel reviews draft Programme Descriptor/s, discusses any concerns and suggests appropriate amendment or improvements, if required.
- The Programme Approval Form is completed and signed off by the Chair on behalf of the panel members who approved the programme/s. This Form is confirmation of approval of the programme by the Panel and the authorisation to submit the approved programme for external validation.
- Panel decisions and minutes of the meeting are recorded by the Programme Leader and the Chair arranges for relevant parties to be notified.
- PAP minutes/reports are maintained for monitoring purposes.

S1.6. Quality Officer

The role of the Quality Officer is to ensure that transparent, fair and consistent procedures (in line with National Standards) are applied in all decisions relating to client engagement activities. The quality Officer will have an oversight role in relation to quality assurance and quality enhancement.

The Quality Officer will comprise of the Chair, Quality Administrator, Assessor, Internal verifier and Training Manager.

The Chair is responsible for the appointment members of the Quality Officer and will ensure that the panel membership is such as to ensure impartial decision making and to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Quality Officer members will be directed to carry out their duties without bias and will make their decisions based on the documented information provided to the Officer ensuring openness, transparency and accountability in all areas of quality assurance.

The role is to ensure that all activities of the Quality Officer are conducted in compliance with QQI core guidelines.

Minutes of meetings will be produced outlining the issues discussed and decisions reached, including recommendations. The meeting minutes will form part of the official record.

The Quality Administrator will prepare a report which will be signed off by the Chair prior to being provided to Senior Management team.

Meetings will be held bi -annually.

Selection of Quality Officer

The Quality Officer will be selected on the basis of expertise under the terms and conditions as set out in the QQI statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) in compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2019.

External Members: if required from time to time.

Additional Expertise: may be required from time to time.

Duties of the Quality Officer is to ensure that:

All programmes are subjected to continuous review and any improvements or recommendations to the Quality Officer are underpinned by evidence based research.

All client engagements and assessment processes are learner centred.

All quality assurance practices are underpinned by relevant legislative or mandatory guidelines to include

- LEAP Quality Assurance Manual
- Learner handbook
- Trainer handbook
- QQI Core quality assurance guidelines
- Health and safety legislation
- Equality legislation

All learners and clients are treated fairly, equally and with respect.

Learner supports for reasonable adjustments are available.

In relation to those going forward for certification, learners are made aware of complaints, appeals procedures and in the event that they are dissatisfied with the programme, and that they have access to the process. Additionally, learners are made aware of any systems in place to enable them to mitigate circumstances that may prevent them from succeeding.

LEAP provides fair and consistent marking of assignments meeting the requirements of the qualification.

S1.7. Results Approval Panel

The purpose of the Results Approval Panel is to confirm that the following have been completed in accordance with LEAP's defined process:

- Assessment of learners
- Authentication of assessment results (both internal verification and external authentication as required)

Terms of Reference

The panel will be comprised of a minimum of 3 panel members.

The Chair will be the Training Manager who will have the responsibility to appoint members to the panel and to ensure there is no conflict of interest and ensure unbiased impartial decision making.

If the panel does not agree it will be brought to the Quality Assurance Officer.

The chair will call a meeting during each submission schedule Feb, April, Oct.

The panel will have the following reports

- IV report
- EA report
- Evaluation reports
- QBS provisional results
- Meeting records

The role of the panel is to:

- On completion of the internal verification and external authentication the Results Approval Panel review the assessment results and accompanying reports.
- Sign off on approved results.
- Review and approve assessment results.
- Agree to the submission to QQI of final results and request for certification.
- Identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.
- Complete the results approval report for the Training Manager to file.

The chair is responsible for completing the RAP report. Any issues should be brought to the attention of the Quality Assurance Officer.