

IMPACT REPORT - ICS Skills

Date: 5th March 2016

O1 – QA System in the practice of the European VET institutions

Number of People Involved

Six further education providers were briefed about the project and two were selected for interview for the project, based on willingness to participate. One interview was conducted with an IVET provider and one with a CVET provider. Due to the immaturity of the Quality Assurance processes in practice (as opposed to in policy), only one provider was willing to be named. Two people were involved in each interview.

Feedback

Conclusions drawn in the National Report were reinforced in the interviews in Ireland particularly the sense that vocational education and training is somehow inferior to academic education, despite its recognition as a key instrument of social inclusion. This may be an explanation for the slow implementation of up-to-date quality assurance procedures at local level, and the lack of specifically trained staff.

IO - 2 Teachers' Requirements against OpenQAsS

Number of People Involved

37 schools, probably 37 individual teachers responded to the survey.

Feedback

Quality seems associated with teacher professionalism and effectiveness, and also with academic results, eg student certification and progression to further education.

The survey showed good use of ICT in teachers' work, and openness to its use in QA matters, despite 46% not being interested in IAQM. General skill levels are good, but use of communications, social media etc for educational purposes (eg communicating with parents or students) is low. I would suggest that this is a factor of the age of the respondents (ave 49.3).

QA tends to be a local issue for providers, as evidenced by 76% of respondents not being aware of EQAVET. 32% felt the focus of QA should be on possible external audit. This shows a negative perception of the benefit of a sound QA system being in place. TEACHERS do, however, take part in QA management activities in their institutes.

Workload is a significant reason for lack of or insufficient engagement in QA, and teachers fear lack of recognition, appreciation or reward for this work, even though they feel it has a value for both teachers and students.

Multiplier events

We hosted no Multiplier Events

Dissemination

Our circle of website visitors and our community of schools, further education colleges, corporates and professional members have responded positively to news of our participation in OpenQAsS.

Policy makers and education leaders have commended our involvement, though we await formal response from our national qualifications body, Qualifications and Quality Ireland, which has ultimate responsibility for quality matters in further and higher education in Ireland.