

Annual Monitoring Report 2009





FETAC

Annual Monitoring Report 2009

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Executive Summary

FETAC's legislative responsibility as set out in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 is to monitor the effectiveness of provider's programmes in order to ensure the integrity of the further education and training awarding system.

FETAC commenced monitoring providers in June 2008. The first annual monitoring report was published in 2009 and reported on monitoring activities and findings for the period June 2008-December 2009.

This is FETAC's second annual monitoring report. It covers a full years monitoring activity January - December 2009. It reports on the findings of 145 providers monitored in that period. 104 providers were monitored on the basis of a site visit and an additional 41 were desk monitored ie their procedures in relation to assessment were reviewed and evaluated. The focus in 2009 was on private providers, the community and voluntary and a range of sectoral and public bodies. The monitoring findings are outlined in section 7.

The monitors reported a very positive response from providers to their recommendations and feedback. They also reported that in general, providers were committed to making improvements by implementing the recommendations and enhancing their systems.

In the majority of cases it was found that providers are conforming to the requirements as outlined in FETAC's Providers Quality Assurance Policy and Guidelines and in their own Quality Assurance agreement.

Monitors noted good practice amongst providers in a range of areas including programme development, delivery and review particularly. A notable area for improvement amongst providers was in the implementation of consistent assessment procedures.

In a small number of cases (5) providers did not conform and in these cases FETAC immediately withheld access to certification until such time as they put in place appropriate corrective action. In three of the five cases the recommendations were fully implemented and access to certification was restored. In two cases the providers have still not fully rectified the issues and follow-up is ongoing.

All provider monitoring reports are published on the FETAC website. www.fetac.ie

FETAC will continue to monitor providers operating in the sector in order to ensure the integrity of FETAC awards.

Annual Monitoring Report 2009

1. Purpose

The purpose of this annual report is to document activities, issues and findings arising from the implementation of monitoring of registered providers by FETAC during 2009.

2. Context

The functions of FETAC include making awards, determining standards, agreeing provider's quality assurance, validating provider's programmes and monitoring and evaluating the quality of programmes. The monitoring and evaluation function is undertaken through the external monitoring of providers quality assurance.

To date (end of 2009), over 842 providers have agreed their quality assurance policies and procedures and are currently registered with FETAC offering programmes leading to awards in a wide range of disciplines.

Providers who register with FETAC (through the agreement of their quality policies and procedures) take full and primary responsibility for the quality of their own programmes and allied services offered to learners. The monitoring process assures FETAC and stakeholders of the credibility and integrity of these programmes and ultimately FETAC awards.

Through monitoring, FETAC evaluates the effectiveness of providers' implementation of quality assurance. This includes monitoring of their policies and procedures for developing and delivering programmes, assessment and authentication of results, protection for learners, recognition of prior learning, their programme approval agreements where appropriate and their validated programmes to ensure consistency of outcomes and the attainment of national standards.

Monitoring of providers commenced in 2008 with the recruitment and training of three monitors. By the end of 2008 a total of 49 providers were monitored and the monitoring process was refined as a result of feedback.

The first annual monitoring report for 2008 was presented to Council and published in 2009. The first series of provider monitoring reports was published on the FETAC website in 2009 and reports are now published on a continuous basis.

In the 2008 annual monitoring report a recommendation was made to expand desk monitoring by reviewing provider's procedures in addition to monitoring providers through site visits. This was incorporated into the 2009 monitoring plans. FETAC, following the introduction of new assessment arrangements in July 2008, initiated the desk monitoring of providers' procedures relating to assessment and authentication.

Recommendations for improvements at systems level within FETAC were also identified in the 2008 Report. These were implemented with the development of a Microsoft Access database to record monitoring findings and the drafting of an internal procedure to quality assure the monitoring process.

3. Policy

In 2006, following consultation with stakeholders, FETAC published its Monitoring Policy. The Policy aims to ensure the credibility of FETAC awards through the monitoring of providers and their validated programmes, thereby ensuring the integrity of the awarding process.

The monitoring process aims to assure FETAC, its stakeholders and learners of the overall quality of provision in the sector and to ensure effective implementation by providers of their Quality Assurance Agreements.

FETAC recognises providers' quality assurance as the main engine of quality improvement and monitors its effectiveness in maintaining and improving the quality of programmes.

4. Process

The monitoring process facilitates a systematic review of the effectiveness of a provider's quality system. Monitoring involves the gathering of information on providers' programmes, services and the quality assurance system and evaluates their effectiveness. Monitoring evaluates the effectiveness of the registered 'provider' and its centres as included in the provider's agreement with FETAC.

The process includes the following stages:

- (i) Planning of monitoring annually and identification of providers
- (ii) Desk monitoring and analysis of provider documentation
- (iii) Site visits to centres, as required
- (iv) Preparing reports on findings and outcomes
- (v) Follow up on the addressing of recommendations and
- (vi) Publication of the Monitoring Report.

A Project Manager plans and oversees the monitoring of providers in accordance with an agreed annual plan. The Project Manager has a team of three monitors who are assigned a range of providers for monitoring. The role of the monitor is to undertake desk monitoring, plan and undertake site visits, prepare reports and follow up with providers in terms of recommendations and areas for improvement.

If providers are found not to comply with their QA Agreement a number of steps are taken to ensure compliance is achieved. These steps include (a) withholding certification, (b) suspension and (c) de-registration.

There are two forms of monitoring - (a) desk monitoring and (b) desk monitoring with a site visit to one or more centres of the provider.

FETAC utilizes the desk monitoring process to monitor specific themes relating to providers' procedures such as their assessment documentation and records. This type of desk monitoring includes a review of the provider's procedures and an analysis of evidence of implementation. A desk monitoring report is prepared by the monitor detailing the findings from this activity.

Where monitoring is completed at this point the desk monitoring report is sent to the provider. These reports refer to areas of good practice, areas for improvements and follow up actions. Where there are significant areas for improvement identified or non compliance is found following desk monitoring a site visit is organised.

Site visits are arranged and the agendas are agreed with the providers in advance. Following the site visit a monitoring report identifying good practice and areas for improvement is prepared and a draft sent to the provider for feedback regarding accuracy. The monitoring process is concluded when the provider has responded on the findings of the report. Providers are required to implement the recommendations in the monitoring report.

Completed monitoring reports incorporating feedback from the provider are published on the FETAC website.

FETAC logs the findings and conclusions of all monitoring activities for all providers by recording the specific findings into a data base. This facilitates follow up activities with providers and compiling annual and other reports. This systematic approach to capturing and recording findings will improve over time, specifically when the new FETAC Business System (FBS) is fully operational.

The monitor is also responsible for follow up with the provider to ensure that recommendations and areas for improvement, identified in the report, are addressed in the time specified.

Each monitoring report concludes with a determination by FETAC of the overall outcome in relation to the effectiveness of the provider's quality systems and procedures. There are four possible outcomes. These are:

- (i) Providers quality system is found to be effective
- (ii) Providers quality system is found to be effective with minor areas for improvement
- (iii) Providers quality system is found to be moderately effective with significant areas for improvement
- (iv) Providers system is found to be not effective and essential remedial actions are required.

In the cases of outcomes (i) and (ii) minimal follow up is required.

Providers with moderately effective quality systems (outcome (iii)) are advised of the significance of the issues identified and given clear actions to be undertaken within a 4-6 week period. If these are not addressed the provider will have their access to certification withheld until such time as they are addressed.

In the case of outcome (iv) the provider will be immediately advised of the outcome and their access to certification will be immediately withheld pending the implementation of the recommendations. A second monitoring visit will be scheduled within 4-6 weeks to ascertain whether the provider has implemented the appropriate corrective actions and has addressed all issues.

Access to certification will be reinstated only when all the recommendations are implemented. If following the second visit further actions are still outstanding and there is continuing non-compliance, suspension and deregistration of the provider will be considered by the Council's Policies Committee.

To assist providers and to ensure a consistent quality approach across the sector FETAC devised and published Tools and Guidelines for Monitoring. These include Monitoring Report Templates, Guidelines on Monitoring, a sample meeting agenda, a Monitors Code of Practice and a Site Visit Checklist, all of which are available on the FETAC website. www.fetac.ie

5. Provider Registration

A provider is registered with FETAC when it agrees its policies and procedures in 10 core areas of quality. See Appendix 1.

At the beginning of 2009 FETAC had a total of 715 registered providers. During the year a further 127 providers agreed their quality assurance with FETAC and were registered, bringing the total number of registered providers to 842. A full breakdown of all registered providers by type is set out in Appendix 2.

There are approximately 280 private organisations, 200 from the community/voluntary sector, 60 operating within the disability sector, 50 special schools, 70 comprehensive and secondary schools and 95 in the VEC sector. FÁS is registered as one provider with one Quality Assurance Agreement covering: (a) multiple centres and (b) a range of second providers. The balance comprises a number of hospitals, higher education institutions, work based learning organisations and public bodies.

- exercise their role with utmost integrity and professionalism when undertaking monitoring of a provider
- comply with FETAC's policies and procedures specifically in relation to Monitoring of providers
- inform FETAC of any potential conflict of interest which may compromise their role
- communicate appropriately with the provider and inform them of planned site visits and information required
- compile monitoring reports on time and based on an independent evaluation of the process and procedures
- provide constructive feedback to the FETAC, providers and stakeholders as directed by FETAC.

6. Monitoring 2009

FETAC's approach to monitoring providers is systematic, extensive, planned, prioritised based on risk factors and cost effective. High risk areas are identified annually and targets are set.

6.1. Plans and targets for 2009

The monitoring plan for 2009 identified the priorities in terms of provider types, award areas and programme types. A summary of the monitoring plan 2008 - 2009 is published on the FETAC website. See Appendix 3 for providers monitored by type in 2009.

Targets for 2009 were as follows:

(i) Number

The overall target was to monitor 25% (178) of the total number of providers registered at the beginning of 2009 (715).

(ii) Type

Providers identified for 2009 represent the range of provider types by including:

- Providers registered during 2005/6
- New private providers
- Providers offering awards in specific sectors such as language, health and safety, security, healthcare, building energy regulation. These awards are generally achieved by learners as a result of a short programme
- A representative sample of all providers offering small, medium and large volumes of certification to learners
- Providers identified by FETAC or referred to FETAC during the year. These included providers with recurring assessment and certification issues, and/or substantiated issues raised by learners or stakeholders.

6.2. Activity

(i) Number

In 2009, a total of 145 providers were monitored by FETAC, 41 by desk monitoring and 104 by site visits. This amounts to 20% of the total number of registered providers (715) at the beginning of 2009, 5% less than the 25% target.

(ii) Type

The providers monitored represented a selection of the diverse range of provider types, programmes and awards offered across the sector:

Of the 145 providers monitored, 76 (52%) were private providers. These providers offer a broad spectrum of major and minor awards in childcare, security, building energy regulation, occupational first aid, train the trainer, language and healthcare. Private providers include providers registered as colleges, individual trainers and training organisations or companies.

The table below illustrates the number of providers monitored by type in 2009

Private Provider - Company	57
Community/Voluntary Sector Organisation	40
Private Provider - College	13
Skillnet	8
Sectoral Representative Body	7
Training for People with Disabilities	6
Private Provider - Individual	6
Special School (Dept of Education and Science)	3
Youth Service	1
Public Service Agency	1
Hospital CNE	1
Higher Education Institute	1
BIM Training	1
Total	145

Providers monitored included Teagasc, Bord Íascaigh Mhara, the National College of Ireland (NCI), a Centre for Nurse Education, the Citizens Information Board, and smaller community based providers such as NALA and An Cosan. Workplace providers monitored included SIPTU College, ICTU, and a number of ICTU centres for the unemployed. A number of Skillnet networks were also monitored. The full list is produced in Appendix 4.

It is important to note that during 2009, monitoring activities excluded FÁS and the VECs. The intention is to focus monitoring activities on the VEC sector and FÁS from autumn 2010 and into 2011. Most VECs registered in 2006. There are 95 registered providers across the 33 VECs. Some VECs registered as single providers, others registered in their constituent parts ie as individual colleges or services.

FÁS registered in 2008 and is the largest single provider registered with FETAC. It has multiple centres, a range of second providers and an extensive range of programmes.

The **awards** offered by the providers monitored were spread over a wide range of major and minor awards at level 1 to level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Many providers offer multiple programmes and awards. A sample of programmes and awards offered by providers monitored include:

- Agriculture
- Building Energy Regulation
- Business Awards
- Childcare
- General Learning
- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Health and Safety
- Horticulture
- Information Technology
- Language
- Maintenance Skills Technology
- Occupational First Aid
- Retail Sales
- Security Guarding
- Security Operations
- Supervisory Management
- Train the Trainer

(iii) Providers identified by FETAC

In 2009 FETAC monitored 3 providers who were selected as a result of specific issues arising based on stakeholder and learner feedback.

6.3 Expenditure

Expenditure for monitoring in 2009 was €246,000. This expenditure includes salaries and running costs.

7. Findings

This section presents the findings identified by the monitors during 2009. It is sub-divided into three sections.

As stated earlier a total of 145 providers were monitored by FETAC in 2009. 104 or 72% were monitored by a site visit to one or more of the provider's centres and 41 or 28% were desk monitored only.

Section 7.1 presents the findings of monitoring by site visit and reports on the effectiveness of the quality system of the providers monitored. Section 7.2 reports on the findings of the desk monitoring of providers' assessment documentation and records. Section 7.3 reports on how FETAC responded to specific issues raised by stakeholders.

7.1. Effectiveness of Providers' Quality systems

These findings are the results of the monitoring of providers quality systems by initially evaluating their procedures (desk monitoring), followed by a site visit, to ascertain the extent of the effectiveness in practice. The monitor evaluates the effectiveness of the provider's quality system in relation to the ten core areas (see Appendix 2) and identifies good practice and areas for improvement. The detailed findings in each core area of the quality system are set out in 7.1.1. below.

As stated in section 4 above, each monitoring activity concludes with a determination of a final outcome on the effectiveness of the provider's quality system.

A summary of these outcomes is set out in the table below for the 104 providers monitored by means of desk monitoring of their procedures, followed by site visits to ascertain the extent of compliance.

Summary of Monitoring Outcomes		
Outcome	Number	%
1. The provider's Quality system is effective	19	18.2 %
2. The provider's Quality system is effective with minor areas for improvement	51	49.4 %
3. The provider's Quality system is moderately effective with significant areas for improvements	29	28.1 %
4. The provider's Quality system requires remedial recommendations	5	4.9 %
Total	104	100%

The findings indicate that:

- 68% of providers are effectively implementing their quality system (outcomes 1 and 2) and commended on their good practice and commitment to quality improvement.
- 50% have minor areas for improvement to be addressed (outcome 2).
- 28% have significant areas for improvement to be addressed (outcome 3).
- 5% have remedial areas that need to be addressed (outcome 4).

Significant areas for improvement (outcome 3) are identified when there are weaknesses in the providers' compliance with regard to assessment requirements and/or they have inadequate policies and procedures in place to support learners through the assessment process. Some of the incidences identified have arisen due to changes of personnel. However, there may also be a lack of real commitment to and/or understanding of the quality requirements set out in *FETAC's Providers Quality Assurance Policy and Guidelines*.

The monitors set out in their reports the specific areas for improvement with timelines for implementation. The provider is required to put in place the appropriate corrective action within a 4-6 week period. Monitors will follow up with the relevant provider to ensure compliance is achieved.

Outcome 4 demonstrates that during 2009, almost 5% of the 104 monitored by site visit (5) were classified as having 'essential remedial recommendations' as a result of ineffective quality systems. These are providers who were identified as having seriously inadequate quality and where their own procedures were not being implemented or adhered to.

In all of the five cases the Monitor immediately advised the provider of the essential areas to be addressed with timelines to achieve compliance. The provider's access to certification was immediately withheld until all issues are rectified. A second monitoring visit was scheduled in all five cases.

In three cases the providers once advised of the seriousness of the situation, responded very quickly and addressed all the issues raised.

In two instances the providers have not demonstrated evidence of compliance. Follow-up is ongoing at the time of writing.

If compliance is not achieved formal suspension of the provider's registration will be recommended by the monitor.

7.1.1. Detailed findings

The findings relating to the **ten core areas** of quality identified in the quality assurance agreements are detailed below.

As part of the process the monitor identifies both good practice and areas for improvement for each of the ten areas of the provider's quality system.

Where areas for improvement are recorded, they are categorised as desirable and essential. The desirable areas for improvement are to be addressed by the provider over time while the essential areas for improvement must be addressed by the provider within agreed set timelines.

(i) Communications

The majority of providers monitored were observed to have in place good mechanisms for effective communications such as comprehensive programme brochures, effective utilization of staff and learner feedback sheets, consultation with stakeholders and preparation of end of programme reports for submission to stakeholders/funders. The use of learner handbooks, email and websites as media for communicating with learners were effective in providers' quality systems.

Internal communications with staff (full and part time) were observed to be a desirable area for improvement for a small number of providers. While the quality system is being implemented, full knowledge and understanding of requirements did not extend to all personnel. In these cases the Monitors made recommendations for more regular all staff briefings on quality matters.

Essential areas for improvement were identified for 14 providers. These related to inadequate and inappropriate information provision to learners primarily but also communication weakness among staff.

(ii) Equality

Procedures relating to equality were noted as being implemented well by providers. Only seven providers are recorded as having 'essential' areas for improvement. In general, all providers have Equality Statements but not all providers developed Equality Action Plans. The resources of the Further Education Support Services (FESS) were, in relevant cases, recommended to providers.

(iii) Staffing

Good practice was noted where providers retained files for staff recruitment and development which contained relevant information i.e. sample advertisements, job descriptions, staff qualification details, staff training needs analysis, staff training records.

Monitors identified essential areas for improvement in only six cases with regard to the lack of clear, transparent arrangements for staffing, recruitment, induction and clear roles and responsibilities.

There was also a need for procedures to facilitate contingency planning when a tutor was not available - particularly for small providers.

(iv) Access, Transfer and Progression

Notable good practice was observed amongst ten providers which included the provision of Information to Learners on entry requirements for the programme, details of the awards and the framework level the programme leads to, and programme duration details. Learner supports were also evident particularly in relation to low-level literacy skills. The majority of the information provided was contained in programme brochures and learner handbooks.

Monitors noted that providers within the community and voluntary sector were particularly strong with regard to demonstrating evidence of good access, transfer and progression arrangements. Areas for improvement were noted amongst 17 providers the majority of which were minor issues in relation to improvements in accuracy of learner information and details of learner supports.

(v) Programme Development Delivery and Review

All providers monitored demonstrated good practice with regard to this element of quality. Provider strengths lie very clearly in programme development, delivery and review with 16 providers specifically noted for very good practices in this area. Facilities observed were appropriate and generally fit for purpose and the providers were fully implementing their own quality assurance procedures in this area. Good practices included the availability of programme descriptors/schemes of work/ programme specifications, clear programme aims and objectives linked to assessment. Training programmes in many cases were linked closely to industry needs as many programme participants (learners) were already employed in the industry, which the training related to. This was evident particularly for private providers. There was good evidence also of learner attendance records. Feedback from learners was positive in respect of programmes and their delivery. Areas for improvement were noted in 18 cases - these related to programme content, records of participation and learner information material.

(vi) Assessment policy and procedures

Registered providers are required to implement fair and consistent assessment policies and procedures to quality assure the outcomes of assessment in their centres. The 104 providers who were monitored with site visits also had their assessment documentation and records reviewed on site.

Monitors observed good practice for 15 providers who had strong on site evidence of effective implementation of assessment procedures.

Good practices noted include the development of in-house assessor guidelines and general compliance with FETAC assessment requirements. Marking systems and sampling strategies were evident as were secure assessment storage facilities. Learners received assessment information and were also provided with relevant and constructive feedback. Good quality reports from internal verification and external authentication were also noted as evidence of good practice.

However, the implementation of assessment was identified as a weakness for many providers. The documentation of B6 assessment procedures and presentation of evidence such as external authenticator reports, internal verification reports and results approval documentation was poorly completed in many cases.

This is supported by 59 incidences noted of the 104 providers monitored with 'essential' areas for improvement in respect of assessment. Particular areas for improvement included incomplete external authenticator reports, incomplete internal verifier reports and poorly documented results approval reports. Sampling strategies have also been noted as incorrectly devised and not representative of the range of learners being processed. The sampling arrangements set out in *FETAC's Assessment Guidelines* are not being fully complied with and it appears that they may not be fully understood by some providers.

Monitors have also observed that some providers do not have their own procedures regarding authentication fully documented, although they have complied with FETAC's requirements in terms of completion of actual internal verifier reports and external authenticator reports.

(vii) Protection for Learners

Protection for Learners (PFL) is a requirement for providers operating on a commercial basis who are offering programmes longer than three months in duration. Such providers are required to establish alternative arrangements for learners to complete their programmes with other providers in the event of the programme not completing. Ten providers were required to make minor improvements in this area mainly relating to information provision for learners.

During 2009, two private providers monitored who should have had protection for learner arrangements in place, did not have them in place. The providers in questions were informed that arrangements must be put in place and both complied immediately.

Given the growing number of private providers offering programmes on a commercial basis this area needs ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance across the sector.

(viii) Subcontracting

Subcontracting is an area which has not been identified as a major issue amongst providers monitored. However, there have been a small number (7) of instances where subcontracting procedures were not adequate.

Essential recommendations made included the development of appropriate procedures for subcontracting activities.

(ix) Self Evaluation of Programmes and services

Providers are required to undertake a self evaluation of at least one programme within a year of registration. Self evaluation reports are evidence of the extent to which providers are implementing their quality system and undertaking the appropriate internal monitoring. Providers are not in all cases complying with the requirement.

Essential recommendations were made to 29 providers to self evaluate a programme within 6 months. Minor areas for improvement were noted for a smaller number of providers (6) in relation to the timeframe for self evaluation and the methodology of the evaluation.

(x) Recognition of Prior Learning

One provider monitored in 2009 was observed to have essential areas for improvement in respect of the implementation of their RPL policy and procedures on RPL.

Overall general observations

Monitors observed evidence of providers taking a high level of corporate responsibility for delivering quality programmes and services. Two key pieces of evidence identified during the site visits in support of strong provider commitment to QA included the assigning of specific responsibility for quality to an individual within the organisation and the practice of regular all staff briefings on quality matters. Effective self evaluations of programmes were also identified as important indicators of provider commitment to quality implementation and improvement.

However, monitors found many instances of providers who have not kept their quality systems up to date. A total of 30 providers were observed to have essential areas for improvement in relation to their overall organisation's quality system. Staff changes and reorganisation were some of the reasons given for this situation. A key recommendation was for the provider to review and update their policies and procedures in all 10 areas regularly and to keep staff and learners informed about programmes and services. A further 15 providers were noted to have desirable areas for improvement which included the need for 'all staff' briefings on quality related matters.

7.2. Findings of desk monitoring

New assessment arrangements were introduced by FETAC for the further education and training sector in 2008. See *Assessment Guidelines for Providers*. The arrangements required providers to put in place processes for: internal verification, external authentication and results approval.

Therefore, during 2009, there was a particular focus on monitoring the extent of implementation by providers of the new assessment requirements.

Monitoring process and methodology

FETAC undertook a thematic desk monitoring activity with 41 providers over two assessment periods in 2009 (January and May). Their documentation and records with regard to assessment including internal verification, external authentication and results approval were requested and forwarded to FETAC for evaluation and review.

Evidence of good practice and areas for improvement were found.

Individual feedback reports were sent to each provider identifying specific areas for improvements and the providers were required to implement all the recommendations. It is planned to publish desk monitoring reports from 2010.

The findings of the desk monitoring of provider's assessment processes are summarised as follows:

	Numbers	%
Effective procedures	7	17%
Minor Recommendations	27	66%
Significant areas for improvement	7	17%
Total	41	100%

- 17% of the providers were found to be implementing effective assessment procedures.
- 66% (27) were found to be complying with the assessment requirements with minor recommendations made to improve the quality and content of the reports completed by the internal verifiers and external authenticators.
- 17% of providers were observed to have significant areas for improvement.

Good practice was observed among providers with regard to internal verification.

All providers had put in place a results approval process but the documentation of the outcomes varied in quality and detail.

The main areas for improvement identified were:

- Providers participating in the assessment process must ensure their policies and procedures for B6 are clearly established, documented, and operationalised in their centres.
- Report templates need to be fully completed for internal verification, external authentication and the results approval process
- Providers need to be more rigorous in implementing their assessment procedures including clarifying the roles of internal verifier and external authenticator and improving the content and detail of the verification and authentication reports.
- Providers need to establish appropriate sampling strategies. The samples must be representative of the number, range and type of awards offered during the specified assessment period. Providers should refer to the FETAC Guidelines on Quality Assuring Assessment Section 4.4 for guidance.

7.3 Responding to quality issues raised by stakeholders

During 2009, FETAC responded to a number of issues raised by stakeholders relating to:

- (a) “unregistered” providers offering FETAC awards and
- (b) registered providers offering accelerated programmes.

FETAC investigated these issues by monitoring the relevant providers through a site visit and recommended that corrective action was taken including:

- (a) clarifying (i) the arrangements required when two or more providers are involved in delivering the one programme or (ii) subcontracting arrangements;
- (b) ensuring providers’ assessment and learner support procedures are applied to short duration programmes.

Where relevant, FETAC withheld access to certification until the recommendations were implemented and compliance was achieved.

8. Conclusions

Wide range of practice amongst providers

The findings from monitoring activities in 2009 indicate that there was both good practice and areas for improvement identified amongst the 145 providers monitored.

Monitoring identified five critical areas for improvement across providers - assessment procedures, self evaluation, protection for learners, staff issues particularly relating to contract staff and communications between staff members and learners and staff.

As in 2008, the monitors noted that when on site, they were requested to provide ‘support’ to providers in a range of areas including assessment and standards.

Promotion of good practice

Monitors reported a very positive response from providers to their recommendations and feedback. They also reported that in general providers were committed to making improvements by implementing the recommendations and enhancing their systems.

The ongoing publication of providers’ monitoring reports will disseminate and promote good practice across the sector.

Future focus

FETAC intends to focus its monitoring activities in areas of greatest risk - this includes commercial

provision, short programmes, certain awards where there are issues of health and safety, and large volume awards.

Appendix I

Provider Quality Assurance Core Requirements	
B1	Communications
B2	Equality
B3	Staff Recruitment and Development
B4	Access, Transfer and Progression
B5	Programme Development, Delivery and Review
B6	Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners
B7	Protection for Learners
B8	Sub-contracting/Procuring Programme Delivery
B9	Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services
B10	Recognition of Prior Learning

See *Quality Assurance Policy and Guidelines for Providers* on www.fetac.ie

Appendix 2

List of Registered Providers (by type) December 2009

Registered Provider	
Provider Category	Number
Private Provider - Company	222
Community / Voluntary Sector Organisation	198
Training for People with Disabilities	55
Special School (DE&S)	48
Private Provider - Individual	40
Community / Comprehensive School	36
Voluntary Secondary School	35
VEC Further Education College	24
Hospital CNE	23
VEC School	20
Private Provider - College	20

VEC Adult Education Centre	18
Skillnet	18
Sectoral Representative Body	17
VEC - All Centres	17
VEC Adult Education Service - Multiple Centres	17
Higher Education Institute	15
Youth Service	6
Public Service Agency	6
Employer / Work Based Learning	3
BIM Training	1
Teagasc Training	1
FÁS Training	1
Fáilte Ireland Training	1
Total	842

Appendix 3 Providers monitored (by Type) - 2009

Provider Type Monitored	Number	%
Private Provider - Company	57	39.3%
Community/Voluntary Sector	40	27.6%
Private Provider - College	13	9.0%
Skillnet	8	5.5%
Sectoral Representative Body	7	4.8%
Training for People with Disabilities	6	4.1%
Private Provider - Individual	6	4.1%
Special School (DE&S)	3	2.1%
Youth Service	1	0.7%
Public Service Agency	1	0.7%
Hospital CNE	1	0.7%
Higher Education Institute	1	0.7%
BIM Training	1	0.7%
Total	145	100%

Appendix 4 Provider

Provider
Abacus Business Coaching
Abaris Training Management Ltd
Allenwood Community Development Association Ltd
Anderlift Safety Services
Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland
Athy District Resource Centre
B and B Nursing
Ballycommon Telework and Training Centre Limited
Bayford Training Centre
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
Belvedere Institute of Education Ltd
Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Border Counties Childcare Network
Business Management Institute
C and M Safety Ltd
Carline Learning Centre
Carlow Kilkenny Skillnets Ltd
Centre for Nurse Education - Bon Secours Cork
Chevron Training and Development Ltd
CITAS College Dublin
Citizens Information Board
Collane HR Solutions
College of Management and IT
Congress Centres Network Central Office
Daybreak School
Dorset College
Drogheda Tele-Training Company
Dublin Business and Language College Ltd
Dublinia Heritage Centre
Eastern Vocational Enterprises (EVE) Ltd
Eden College
Employment Development and Information Centre
Empower Learning Ltd
Enable Ireland
Energy Action Limited

Ennis Business College
Executive Coaching Solutions Limited
First Polymer Training
Forus Training
GPA Solutions
Grafton College of Management Sciences
Hanley Consulting and Training
HiTec Education Centre
IBEC Retail Skillnet
Institute of Beauty Science
Interface College Dublin Ltd
International Academy of Travel
International Business School
International Centre for Security Excellence
Iona College
IPPA, The Early Childhood Organisation
Irish Lifecoach Institute
ISIT Skillnet
KARE
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service
Laois Partnership Company
Leadership Management Ireland
Learning Waves Skillnet
Leixlip Resource Centre for the Unemployed
Life and Executive Coaching Institute
Lifestyle Development Group Ltd
MCM Training
MCM Training
MCX Training and Development
Meitheal Atha Fhirdia
mfg Meitheal Mhuscraí
MTS Consulting
National Adult Literacy Agency
National College of Ireland
National Irish Centre for Energy Rating Ltd
National Safety Centre
National Security Training Academy Ltd
North West Computers
NorthWest Training Centre
Our Lady of Lourdes Care Adult Education Group
Paramount HR Solutions

PARTAS
Pitman Training Ireland
Proactive Management
Professional Development Ltd
Pulse Recording College
Qualtec
Racing Academy and Centre of Education
Retail Excellence Ireland
Ronanstown Community Development Project
Rossan College Education Centre
Safety Solutions Swift Ltd
Safety Solutions Swift Ltd
School of the Divine Child
SIPTU College
SLM Training Ltd
St. Itas and St. Josephs School
St. Josephs Foundation
Success Training
The Carers Association
The College of Progressive Education
The Joyce English Language School
The Open College
Vision Training and Education Development
Warrenmount Community Education and Development Centre
Were IT Computer Training
Wicklow Information Network
Youth Training and Development Centre

Appendix 5 Providers

Provider
Bawnogue Education and Training Centre
Belvedere Institute of Education Ltd
Business Management Institute
Canal Communities Regional Youth Service
Canal Local Employment Service Network
CMD Training Institute
Construction Industry Federation
Dara Linn

Empower Learning Ltd
Enterprise Action
Europa Academy Limited
Executive Coaching Solutions Limited
Glencree Centre for Reconciliation Learning Centre
HB Safety Services Ltd
Heartbeat Safety
HSE Community Mental Health Day Services
HSE West Training Services TOBAR
Institute of Business and Technology
IPPA, The Early Childhood Organisation
Irish Association of Funeral Directors
Irish Times Training
ISIT Skillnet
Life and Executive Coaching Institute
Longford Womens Link
Mandate Trade Union Organising and Training Centre
Nagle Centre
National Learning Network
National Learning Network
National Safety Centre
Nifast
One Family
Paramount HR Solutions
Portobello Institute
Redeemer Centre for Ongoing Learning
SQT Training Ltd
St. Itas and St. Josephs School
St. Josephs Foundation
Technical Engineering and Electrical Union - Education Training and Organisation
West Offaly Training
Wicklow Trade Union Centre
Womens Community Projects Mullingar



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