

Quality Review of FETAC: Response to the External Panel's Report

Introduction

The Further Education and Training Awards Council welcomes the report of the External Panel. In particular FETAC welcomes the panel's acknowledgement of the significant progress made by the Council since its establishment and the conclusion of the panel that

- the Further Education and Training Awards Council has performed all its principal statutory functions satisfactorily in a complex environment taking into account the objectives established by the Council for performing these functions;
- the Council's internal processes reflect best practice, are considered and are appropriate;
- in the performance of its relevant functions, the Council complies with the Common Quality Assurance Framework for European vocational education and training.

FETAC welcomes the strong endorsement given by the panel to the self evaluation carried out by FETAC and its concurrence with the analysis and summary of the key issues identified by stakeholders during the review process.

In addition to the main findings the panel selected various aspects of the performance of FETAC for affirmation and commendation. FETAC appreciates these commendations which are:

- i. developing the FETAC 'brand';
- ii. maintaining appropriate continuity with previous awarding arrangements in the early years of its existence;
- iii. establishing quality assurance as a foundation for making awards in further and vocational education and training in Ireland;
- iv. establishing a reputation as an organisation committed to promoting quality, securing and maintaining standards and setting appropriate national benchmarks;
- v. the consultative approach adopted by it in discharging its functions and objectives;
- vi. its significant role in facilitating change within the further education sector in Ireland and in contributing to the wider process of national education and training development;
- vii. its learner-centred focus;
- viii. the accessibility and approachability of its staff;
- ix. its generally good relations with providers; and
- x. the commitment and leadership that it has demonstrated in relation to the development of vocational education and training in Europe, particularly in respect of the quality assurance arrangements underpinning such education and training.

Background to the review process

In March 2007 the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) commissioned a quality review of FETAC, under the terms of the Qualifications (Education and Training Act) 1999. The terms of reference of the Quality Review were to evaluate:

- how successfully FETAC has performed its functions as identified under the 1999 Act;
- how effective the processes established by the Council have been to-date;
- the extent to which it has been successful in achieving the objectives set by the Council itself in 2003;
- the level of compliance with the European Common Quality Assurance Framework.

The agreed approach to the review centred on self-evaluation by the Council and external evaluation by an external panel. In July 2007 following extensive internal and external consultation FETAC published its Self Evaluation Report.

Through a series of interviews conducted during October with a range of stakeholders the panel sought to validate, or other wise, the findings of FETAC's own self-evaluation. The panel published its report in November 2007.

The purpose of this document is to outline FETAC's response to the conclusions and recommendations of the Panel Report. It also addresses FETAC's responsibility to develop a plan to implement the recommendations and highlights the relationship between the Self Evaluation Report, the External Panel Report and the FETAC Strategic Plan 2010.

The External Panel Report provides the panel's conclusions in relation to their terms of reference, a series of commendations and a number of recommendations. To respond to the report this document is structured as follows:

Section 1 outlines FETAC's general response to the Quality Review and Section 2 provides responses to the individual recommendations made by the panel.

FETAC expresses its sincere thanks to the members of the External Panel for their contribution of expertise and considerable commitment of time and energy to the review process. FETAC particularly acknowledges the commitment of Jim Flanagan, the Review Panel Chairman and David Parry the Review Panel Secretary who ensured the review process was of benefit to all.

Section 1 FETAC's general response to the Panel Report

The timing of the Quality Review by the NQAI coincided with the development of FETAC's second strategic plan. A decision was taken, by FETAC, early in 2007 to combine the work involved in strategic planning with the self evaluation element of the Quality Review.

On conclusion of the self evaluation activity, including external consultation, FETAC had identified five key strategic issues which it would be required to address in its plans for the next three years. Following discussions with stakeholders the Panel Report concurs with this analysis and summary:

- i. The need for a comprehensive suite of awards to meet the needs of learners, providers and social and economic needs.
- ii. FETAC's capacity to meet the demand for new awards.
- iii. The recognition of FETAC awards as awards with status and value, in particular with employer and industry groups.
- iv. The full implementation of all FETAC functions and the challenge of achieving this through partnership with others.
- v. The need for a system of assessment and certification which supports diverse modes of learning.

In line with the Panel's suggestion FETAC's plans for the implementation of the outcomes of the review are incorporated into the strategic goals and objectives of Strategic Plan 2010 (Appendix 1).

FETAC will also build on the achievements acknowledged and commended in the Panel Report and is committed to implementing a model of continuous improvement. FETAC's project management approach will be applied to the implementation of the strategic plan. This will ensure that progress against the plan and the implementation of the outcomes of the Quality Review are formally measured and monitored and that corrective action can be taken as required.

Two formal reviews of Strategic Plan 2010 will be conducted and reports published in early 2009 and early 2010 respectively. These reviews will evaluate progress against plans and report on the implementation of the outcomes of the Quality Review and will be made available to the Authority.

How FETAC will address each of the individual recommendations of the panel is outlined in section 2.

Section 2 Response to the Panel's individual recommendations

The panel made twelve individual recommendations. The Council has considered these recommendations and its response is presented here. Where possible the recommendations have been grouped. For each recommendation there is a short explanatory statement followed by a statement of FETAC's response. In addition the specific references from the strategic objectives, actions and milestones are included. The reference numbers included refer to the paragraph numbers of the Panel Report.

Recommendation 1: *That FETAC simplifies and streamlines as much as possible its procedures for renewing existing, and approving new, awards [2.8];*

Recommendation 2: *That FETAC gives priority to completing the development of standards for awards [2.11];*

FETAC's placement and classification of awards on the framework over the last six years has brought coherence and structure to the awards of the five former awarding bodies within what is acknowledged as a very diverse sector (2.47).

The panel commends FETAC's phased approach to the introduction of its functions, maintaining appropriate continuity (2.6, 2.28) and establishing quality assurance as a foundation for making awards (2.20).

Both FETAC and the panel recognise that with these foundations in place the time is now right to concentrate on the development of a comprehensive suite of awards. This will include the review of existing and the development of new awards to meet the needs of learners, providers and to meet social and economic needs (2.7).

Simplifying and streamlining procedures for renewing existing and approving new awards

FETAC has recently commenced standards development under the common award system.

Through this system new awards will be developed by standard development groups. Existing awards will be either converted, where a single standard currently exists or harmonised where more than one standard currently exists. The conversion and harmonisation of existing awards will enable the fast tracking of development where agreed standards for awards are already in existence.

During and since the self evaluation activity FETAC has engaged with stakeholders to explore stakeholder involvement in the standard development process. These discussions have included consideration of how other awards and existing standard development processes can be incorporated into the new system.

FETAC will continue to discuss the various options with the key stakeholders and is confident that this open and collaborative approach to the development of standards will enable the development of a comprehensive suite of quality assured and relevant awards that have status and value for the learner.

The need to prioritise and speed up the pace of development as indicated through the Self Evaluation and the Panel Report have capacity and budgetary implications not only for FETAC but for the various stakeholders involved. FETAC will undertake a review of organisational structure and capacity and will engage in discussions with the Authority in this regard.

Prioritising standards development

The first goal of the proposed strategic plan (2008 - 2010) is "A comprehensive suite of awards will be in place" by 2010.

The development of new awards and the conversion or harmonisation of all existing awards is the key activity of the Council over the next 3 years. The aim is to have all existing awards compliant with the new awards system by 2010. In addition a range of new awards will have been developed and published.

FETAC will monitor the quality and effectiveness of the standards development process and procedures throughout this period and will implement change as necessary.

Capacity

FETAC's standards development policy ensures that standards for awards are developed, not in isolation but, in partnership with the relevant stakeholders. This approach not only ensures that FETAC has greater capacity to develop new awards but that these awards once developed will be accepted and recognised and have status and currency for the sector, for employers and for providers of higher education and training. This partnership approach does have budgetary implications for stakeholders and for FETAC and the pace of development will be dependent not only on capacity and funding but on the likely impact of change on the sector.

FETAC, through the statement of its values, is committed to the **simplification of its processes** facilitating positive interactions with all of its stakeholders. Systems, processes and materials will be checked for clarity of expression and freedom from unnecessary complexity. This value will be applied to the development of the FETAC suite of awards.

Strategic objective 1.1

FETAC will:

Further develop a comprehensive and relevant suite of FETAC awards which meet the needs of learners, the economy and society

Prioritise and schedule the development of awards with due regard for the needs of learners and providers and in the context of legislative, economic and social change

Develop a suite of awards using the Common Awards System (CAS)

Review all existing awards

Develop new awards through the establishment of standards development groups in a range of fields

Manage, facilitate and monitor the quality and effectiveness of the standards development process

Continue to investigate and explore different ways of developing standards for awards

Milestones:**2008**

Awards plan activated

Conversion and harmonisation process for existing awards commenced

Range of standards development groups established

2009

New awards published

2010

New awards published

Standards Development policy reviewed

Conversion and harmonisation activity complete

Comprehensive guide to FETAC awards published

Recommendation 3: *that FETAC takes into account more prominently the diversity of providers in giving help and support to providers seeking to comply with Council requirements [2.21];*

Recommendation 4: *that FETAC considers ways in which the Council might improve its engagement with industry, and advance workplace learning in the context of the National Skills Strategy [2.21];*

Recommendation 5: *that FETAC considers the further development of a system of assessment and certification that supports diverse modes of learning [2.36]*

Helping and supporting diverse providers

To ensure the effective and efficient implementation of FETAC policies for providers FETAC carries out a range of initiatives relating to the dissemination of information and best practice, the development of detailed guidelines, rules and regulations and where necessary the provision of briefings, interactive help lines and web based solutions.

Conscious of the legislative and role constraints of the Council as an awarding body FETAC intends to continue to assist a diverse range of providers to offer FETAC awards. In particular FETAC is aware of the diverse needs of employers as providers and of the community/voluntary sector. FETAC will continue to advocate networking and other self development mechanisms to enable these providers to offer FETAC awards.

FETAC will continue to influence the funding departments and support agencies to help in the identification of resource and other implications in order to assist all providers to implement FETAC policies.

Improving the engagement with industry

Employers and industry groups have to date played an active role in the development of FETAC policy through representation on Council, technical working groups, the standards forum and individual working groups. In its self evaluation FETAC recognises that there is a need to build on this involvement and increase the level of engagement with industry. This will be enabled by the establishment of an industry forum during 2008. FETAC will consider the possibility of establishing this forum in partnership with HETAC.

The aim of the forum will be to ensure the currency of FETAC awards and increase recognition amongst the social partners. Through the forum FETAC will aim to increase industry involvement in the development of standards for awards and ensure awards are relevant to the workplace, increase awareness and recognition of awards, identify the needs of employers as providers of education and training and explore how closer relationships between providers and industry can be created and encouraged.

Advancing work place learning

Integral to the advancement of workplace learning is a system of assessment and certification which supports diverse modes of learning. FETAC awards are currently achieved in a range of settings which involve diverse modes of learning including colleges, training centres, in the work place, in the community, in prisons etc. The current FETAC system which encourages the accumulation of awards over time is seen as a key facilitator for the recognition of workplace learning.

To meet the challenges presented by the National Skills Strategy FETAC will continue to work to improve its systems and processes and will develop a suite of awards that are

relevant to and for the workplace, awards that can be achieved in a diverse range of settings and that enable access, transfer and in particular progression of learners.

FETAC values all learning equally and is committed to enabling people to achieve their potential. There is a strong commitment to advancing work in relation to the recognition of prior learning which will support and encourage participation by learners in the work place. FETAC will continue to develop its system of assessment and certification to enable the recognition of all learning.

Helping and supporting diverse providers seeking to comply with Council requirements

Strategic objectives 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2

FETAC will:

Promote best practice in the implementation of FETAC policies through a range of initiatives including briefings, guidelines, codes of practice, web information, help lines etc.

Build partnerships with various support and funding agencies to aid in planning effective and timely interventions for providers as they implement FETAC policies.

Encourage networking and other self-development mechanisms to enable providers implement FETAC policies with particular emphasis on enabling small providers and those in the community/voluntary sector

Facilitate the independence of providers and promote the principle of subsidiarity

Agree Memorandum of Understanding with key stakeholder to ensure clarity of role and function

Disseminate information in relation to change in a timely and user friendly manner

Engage in dialogue with funding agencies on resource implications for providers relating to the implementation of policies and the various funding options available

Engaging industry, advancing work place learning and further developing a system of assessment and certification which supports diverse modes of learning

Strategic objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1 and 5.1

FETAC will:

Develop standards based on appropriate research and input from relevant statutory, professional and/or lead bodies, further and higher education providers and agencies, employers and industry groups

Establish an industry forum to ensure the currency of FETAC awards and increase recognition amongst the social partners

Build stronger relationships with employers, unions and industry, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment including Forfás and other employment focused bodies such as ICTU, IBEC and the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs

Participate in national debate on economic and social issues, relating qualifications to future skill needs while ensuring a strong further education and training presence

Develop and implement a planned and structured approach to the recognition of work place learning

Design awards that that can be achieved in diverse education and training settings

Refine and improve mechanisms for assessment in the workplace

Initiate and encourage partnerships between industry, employers and providers of further education and training

Promote lifelong learning

Develop a comprehensive and relevant suite of awards that facilitates the recognition of learning and enables access, transfer and progression for levels 1 to 6 of the national framework of qualifications

Review FETAC processes and systems to facilitate flexible provision

Enable learners to accumulate awards over time

Include generic and transferable skills within awards

Increase the opportunities for the recognition of prior learning

Carry out a range of promotional activities designed to increase awareness and recognition of awards by employers, *trade unions* and industry groups

Promote the recognition of FETAC awards for access to employment and/or promotion within work

Certify informal learning (prior and work based)

Milestones

2008

Industry forum established

Communication strategy published

Guidelines to support successful implementation of new assessment and authentication procedures disseminated

Main streaming of the recognition of prior learning initiated

2009

Work place learning strategy published

Provider briefings on FETAC Business System commenced

Recommendation 6: *that FETAC considers ways in which non-FETAC awards may be used more effectively to meet the demand for awards in the short-term and considers how it might bring such awards within the Framework to aid learner progression [2.42];*

The Council's main priority is the development of a comprehensive suite of FETAC awards. Resources will be focused over the coming years on the development of new awards and the conversion and harmonisation of existing awards.

However, it is acknowledged that a number of learners are currently following programmes which lead to awards that are outside the framework. Since the initial self-evaluation activity FETAC has been considering how this situation can be addressed both in the short and the longer term.

In the short term, a range of new awards has been proposed for fast track development under an existing process. To-date approval has been granted for the development of six new major awards at level 5 and sixteen new major awards at level 6. This will facilitate access to framework awards in 2008 by many learners in the Further Education Sector who have not had access up to now.

In addition the funding agency, in this case the Department of Education and Science, has reached agreement with its providers to ensure continuity for learners attending programmes not yet leading to framework awards.

In the longer term the solution lies in the prioritisation of the development of the FETAC suite of awards (recommendation 1 and 2) and in the implementation of the Authority's policies and criteria for the alignment and inclusion of awards. FETAC has commenced work in this area (2.41, 2.42) and will publish its plans for the implementation of the Authority's policies, in 2008.

Strategic objective 1.2, 3.1

FETAC will:

Implement the Authority's policies for the alignment and inclusion of awards from other bodies

Develop working relationships with a range of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies to ensure the status of FETAC awards

Publicise the recognition of other awards by FETAC, simplify the process and improve access and transfer opportunities for holders of such awards

*Build on the agreed approach to international engagement with NQAI and HETAC
Support the work of the Authority in aligning the Irish Framework with the European Qualifications Framework*

Milestones

2008

Awards plan activated

Policy for the implementation of policies on alignment and inclusion of awards from other bodies published

2009

Process for the alignment and inclusion of awards from other bodies active

Guide to other awards recognised by FETAC published

Revised system and process for the Recognition of Other Awards reviewed

Recommendation 7: *that FETAC works with HETAC to resolve the continuing confusion and ambiguity around awards at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications and in promoting greater understanding of the rationale underpinning the two award types. [2.48];*

The Authority has determined the two existing award types at level 6, the Advanced Certificate awarded by FETAC and the Higher Certificate awarded by HETAC. The Authority is committed to reviewing the situation at level 6.

The panel recognises that FETAC's work has been characterised by consultation and collaboration over the last six years (3.6). A closer working relationship with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council is now needed. FETAC in a partnership approach will work more closely with HETAC and the NQAI on the implementation of the framework and other areas of common interest. It is acknowledged, by the panel, that in its work to date on access, transfer and progression FETAC has improved access for learners previously outside the framework; improved the mobility of learners between framework levels and, to an extent, at the boundaries between further and higher education and training. It has also made progress in embedding the principles of atp in providers' policies and procedures (2.47).

A priority of the strategic plan (goal 3) is that learners will be able to navigate the national framework of qualifications and progress to higher levels of education and training and to employment. Work in this area will include creating coherence and streamlining similar awards at different levels, avoiding duplication and providing the basis for progression, with clear unambiguous information about awards at all levels, devising a communications strategy which will include a joint promotional strategy with NQAI and HETAC (2.48). This will include the awards at level 6 of the framework.

With specific reference to the progression opportunities for holders of the Advanced Certificates at Level 6 in Crafts (2.46) FETAC is currently addressing this specific issue in conjunction with the NQAI, FÁS and the Institutes of Technology.

Strategic objective 1.2, 2.1 and 5.1

FETAC will:

Strengthen the working relationship with NQAI and HETAC to ensure the full implementation of the national framework of qualifications

Develop standards based on appropriate research and input from relevant statutory, professional and/or lead bodies, further and higher education providers and agencies, employers *unions* and industry groups

Involve HETAC and the Higher Education Institutions in standards development to ensure a coherent approach to development which avoids duplication and provides the basis for progression

Devise a communications strategy which builds on the established FETAC brand and engenders greater understanding and recognition of FETAC awards within the context of the National Framework of Qualifications

Carry out a range of promotional activities designed to increase awareness and recognition of awards by employers, unions and industry groups

Carry out joint promotional activity with other bodies including NQAI and HETAC

Milestones

2008

Strategy on Access, Transfer and Progression published
Joint promotional activity with NQAI and HETAC initiated
Guide to Access, Transfer and Progression Opportunities published
Implementation report relating to the Authority's study of the implementation and impact of the framework

2009

Access, Transfer and Progression policy reviewed

2010

Comprehensive Guide to FETAC awards published

Recommendation 8: *that FETAC in consultation with NQAI, takes the initiative in commencing discussions with relevant stakeholders to explore the options for, and implications of, delegation to make further education and training awards provided for under Section 19 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 [2.54];*

Under the 1999 Qualifications Act, FAS, Teagasc and Fáilte Ireland may apply for the delegation of authority to make awards. To-date there has not been a formal declaration of interest in making an application in this regard.

FETAC will continue to acknowledge and share the experience and expertise of the former awarding bodies. It will continue to promote the principle of subsidiarity in implementing its functions with them as providers.

FETAC undertakes to consult with the NQAI on the options for and implications of the delegation of authority. There is a need to explore the long term impact and benefits of the delegation of authority on learners in a relatively new sector where coherence, structure and clarity play a key role. The short term resource implications for FETAC and the relevant bodies need also to be considered.

Strategic objective 4.2

Explore the possibility of delegating, to the relevant bodies, the authority to make awards

Milestone

2008

Exploration of delegation of authority initiated

Recommendation 9: *that FETAC speeds up the pace at which it implements its policies, consistent with the maintenance of appropriate standards [2.57];*

Since 2001 in the interest of providing continuity for learners and the sector and to enable consultation FETAC has adopted a phased approach to the introduction of its functions. This incremental approach to change has enabled FETAC build the necessary partnerships and credibility which are key to the successful implementation of its different functions. The approach was commended by the panel (2.6) as enabling a smooth transition (2.28) and building the foundations for full implementation (5.2).

In its self-evaluation report FETAC identified the need to progress now to the full implementation of all functions (2.57). The implementation of the remaining functions will continue to be approached on a phased basis, it will be done in partnership with others and will be characterised by being learner centred (3.6) and quality driven (2.56).

FETAC will successfully implement its functions only by working in partnership with others and in particular by delegating to and encouraging the autonomy of providers. FETAC will implement the validation of programmes, the new assessment arrangements to be implemented by providers and monitoring during 2008.

The panel's report acknowledges that providers in the further education and training sector have expressed concerns in relation to the resource implications for them of the implementation of FETAC functions (2.19, 2.35, 3.6). There is also acknowledgement of the dichotomy of views expressed by stakeholders in relation to the resource implications and the pace of consultation and implementation (3.6).

The pace and phasing of implementation will be carefully managed with due regard for the impact on learners and providers and will be underpinned by the principles of quality, partnership and subsidiarity.

Milestones

2008

- Process for the validation of programmes established
- New assessment arrangements commenced by all providers
- Monitoring plan and guidelines published and activated
- Mainstreaming of the recognition of prior learning initiated
- First programmes levels 3 – 6 validated

2009

- Agreement of provider's quality assurance policy and guidelines reviewed
- FETAC business system developed
- Protection for learners, policy reviewed
- Recognition of other awards policy reviewed
- Revised system and process for the recognition of other awards in place
- Access, Transfer and progression, policy reviewed

2010

- Discussion paper on quality assuring provider to offer FETAC awards abroad published
- Review of effectiveness of provider's quality assurance agreements commenced
- Conversion and harmonisation activity complete
- Recognition of prior learning, policy reviewed
- Impact and affects of implementation of new policies explored
- FETAC Business System in place

Recommendation 10: *that FETAC pursues issues of common interest between itself, the Authority and HETAC in areas such as, for example, quality assurance, programme design, data collection and analysis, and research [2.57];*

FETAC's consultative and collaborative approach has been acknowledged and commended by the panel report (2.56). Both the NQAI and HETAC in their feedback to the Council during the self-evaluation process acknowledged that there is a positive working relationship between each of them and FETAC.

In pursuing areas of common interest FETAC will continue to build on these good relations and will participate in and contribute to tripartite initiatives. In particular there are already plans for the development of joint *activities* on promotion and on access, transfer and progression. In addition the development of the FETAC Business System (FBS) will enable improvements in sharing information.

FETAC is of the view that stronger links between the three bodies will benefit all. The Council is committed to exploring issues of common interest and initiating and participating in other joint initiatives as appropriate.

Strategic objective 1.2, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2

FETAC will:

Carry out joint promotional activity with other bodies including NQAI and HETAC

Continue to implement policy in relation to access, transfer and progression. Liaise with the Authority and HETAC to clarify further the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders

Develop an agreed approach to quality assurance with HETAC for providers offering programmes in both further and higher education and training

Involve HETAC and the Higher Education Institutions in standards development to ensure a coherent approach to development which avoids duplication and provides the basis for progression

Strengthen the working relationship with NQAI and HETAC to ensure the full implementation of the national framework of qualifications

Develop and publish a research policy

Publish statistics and reports pertinent to the Further Education and Training Sector

Milestones

2008

Strategy on access, transfer and progression published
Joint promotion activity with NQAI and HETAC initiated

2009

Research policy published

2010

Report on progression trends of learners and award holders published

Recommendation 11: *that FETAC produces documentation for public consumption in a more user-friendly language and format in general and for specific target groups where necessary and feasible [3.6];*

The production of FETAC documentation is managed and co-ordinated through the implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy. Currently documentation is published in a range of different formats, leaflets, booklets, guidelines, hard copy and web. Documentation is currently tailored to meet the information requirements of different groups. Recently the translation of key documents including certificate supplements to a range of different languages has commenced.

The strategic plan identifies simplification as a value through which FETAC is committed to checking systems, processes and materials for clarity of expression and freedom from unnecessary complexity.

Strategic objectives 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 6.3 and 7.1

FETAC will:

Publish a comprehensive guide to FETAC awards (including access, transfer and progression information)

Publish a register of validated programmes

Publish the FETAC Learner Charter

Publicise the recognition of other awards by FETAC, simplify the process and improve access and transfer opportunities for holders of such awards

Publish a comprehensive directory of other awards recognised by FETAC

Publish a guide to progression opportunities for award holders

Publish statistics and reports

Disseminate information in relation to change in a timely and user friendly manner

Increase accessibility of information and services

Provide up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information that is easily understood and available in different languages

Implement an eServices strategy to provide self-service options for key stakeholders including providers and learners

Continue to provide guidance for providers accessing electronic services

Provide learner specific information that is clear and unambiguous and available in a variety of modes and languages

Update and publish the Learner's Guide to FETAC Awards in a variety of languages include access, transfer and progression information, information protocols and capacity to succeed statements

Milestones

2008

Learner Charter published

Guidelines to support the successful implementation of new assessment and authentication procedures disseminated

Monitoring plan and guidelines activated and published

Communications strategy published

First annual national monitoring report published

Guide to Access, transfer and progression opportunities published

2009

Provider briefings on FETAC Business System commenced

Guide to other awards recognised by FETAC published

New FETAC website launched

2010

Comprehensive guide to FETAC awards published

Guide to progression opportunities for FETAC award holders published

Report on progression trends of learners and award holders published

Recommendation 12: *that FETAC considers, as a matter of urgency, providing a Certificate to each learner as soon as possible after successful completion of a programme leading to a Council award [3.17].*

The volume of awards made has increased from 30,000 in 2001 to approximately 130,000 in 2006. The frequency of certification has increased to meet the demand of key industry sectors, so that, for example, FETAC now issues over 2,000 certificates on a fortnightly basis to FAS learners (3.14). Frequency of certification has also increased for other national providers including Teagasc and Fáilte Ireland. For a large number of other providers in the Further Education Sector results are currently processed twice yearly.

As providers in the Further Education Sector begin to implement the assessment policy (2008) they will be responsible for external authentication of results and results approval processes at a time of their choosing. This in turn will enable FETAC to increase the frequency of certification to match their timing. Certification will always be quality assured and certificates will only be issued after due process.

Strategic objective 6.3

FETAC will:
Increase the frequency of certification

Milestones

2008

Frequency of certification increased
Schedule of new certification periods published

Strategic Goals and objectives

Goal 1: A comprehensive suite of awards will be in place

Strategic Objective 1.1: To establish an appropriate range of quality assured awards at levels 1 to 6 of the national framework of qualifications

Strategic Objective 1.2: To ensure that FETAC awards have status and currency

Strategic Objective 1.3: To contribute to the achievement of the national skills strategy

Goal 2: FETAC awards will be recognised nationally and internationally

Strategic Objective 2.1: To promote wider recognition of FETAC awards by employers and the public

Strategic Objective 2.2: To build recognition of FETAC awards internationally

Goal 3: Learners will be able to navigate the national framework of qualifications and progress to higher levels of education and training and to employment

Strategic Objective 3.1: To create transparent and systematic pathways for learners through levels 1 to 6 of the national framework of qualifications

Strategic Objective 3.2: To consolidate and improve progression opportunities for award holders

Goal 4: All FETAC registered providers will be continually improving the quality of their programmes and services

Strategic Objective 4.1: To embed a culture of continuous improvement through developing and implementing of FETAC processes

Strategic Objective 4.2: To embed a culture of continuous improvement by enabling providers to build their capacity

Goal 5: Effective partnerships will underpin FETAC's relationships with all key stakeholders

Strategic Objective 5.1: To build on the partnerships which have been established with key stakeholders

Strategic Objective 5.2: To continue influencing national, education and training, policy development and implementation

Goal 6: FETAC will deliver a quality service

Strategic Objective 6.1: To enhance the effectiveness of FETAC staff to achieve our strategic goals

Strategic Objective 6.2: To enhance FETAC's, systems, processes and technological capabilities to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan

Strategic Objective 6.3: To offer a high quality customer service

Goal 7: Learner needs will be central to the work of FETAC

Strategic Objective 7.1: To foster a learner centred culture across all FETAC activities