Quality Assurance in VET in Ireland An Evolutionary Approach

Roisin Sweeney
Manager, Programme Validation
QQI

3rd Andragogy Symposium
Zadar, Croatia
28 May 2015

VET in Ireland

- VET:

  = Initial VET and Continuing VET

  = Further Education and Training (FET)

  - youth education and training

  - adult education training

  - apprenticeship

  - upskilling

  - re-training

QA Timeline

- 1990s – a range of organisations responsible for FET
  - Legislation Qualifications Education and Training Act (1999)
  - Public sector providers had access to national certification
  - Private sector providers could <u>not</u> access national certification, reliance on other awarding bodies
- 2001 – established 3 new organisations
  - National Qualifications Authority : National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
  - Higher Education and Training Award Council (HETAC): Higher education in the non-university sector
  - Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC): start of consolidation of further education and training into a recognised sector
- 2003 - NFQ Launched
  - Levels 1 to 10
  - Major, supplemental, special purpose and minor awards
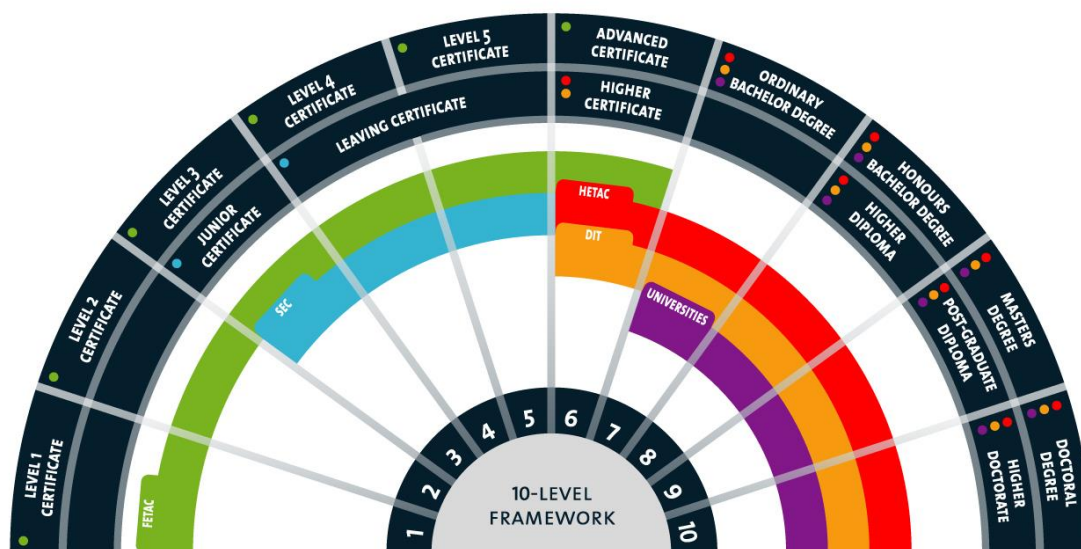
2003 NFQ

National Framework of Qualifications

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

KEY
- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission *(Department of Education & Science)*
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

■ new Framework awards

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Year	FETAC/QQI	Provider	QA Outcomes
2003-2006	**Policy** development: Quality assurance, Awards standards, Validation		Set of policies for FET sector
2005-2012	QA opens	Providers applied to FETAC	Registered Providers (~900)
	Monitoring	Self-evaluation by provider	Monitoring reports; Fewer providers (~750)
	NFQ Levels 1 - 6 Award standards development		New Awards on NFQ
	Validation open	Validation applications	Validated programmes

2005 – 2015
VET QA Developments

Year	FETAC/QQI	Provider	QA Outcomes
2012	QQI set up (FETAC/HETAC/NQAI /IUQB)		Services continued: Validation & Certification
2013-2015	QQI: New Policies € Fees introduced		Policy Plan & 17 'Green' papers
	New QA application stage	Application + fee	Validated programmes leading to QQI awards
	'Re-engagement' of existing providers		QQI relationship
2015 - 2018	New QQI Strategy		Qualifications Quality Assurance

FET in practice
2014 FET Certification Data

Award Class	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Major	463	1,253	2,592	1,989	17,464	4,739
Minor	816	7,196	32,479	36,126	108,484	20,021
Special Purpose	-	-	12	1,016	9,933	3,306
Supplemental	-	-	-	-	-	220
Total	1,279	8,449	35,083	39,131	135,881	28,289
% share	0%	3%	14%	15%	53%	11%

2014 Gender breakdown of award holders
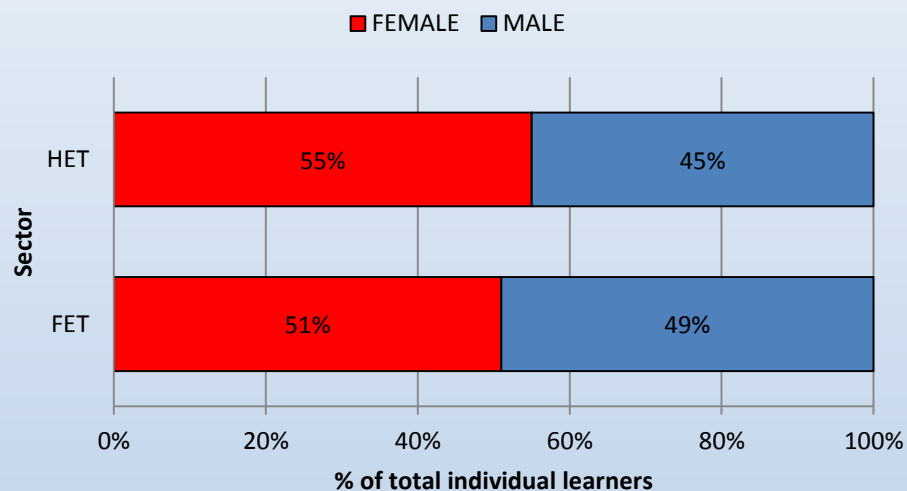
- Percentage share of all QQI awards made in 2014 by age category and sector
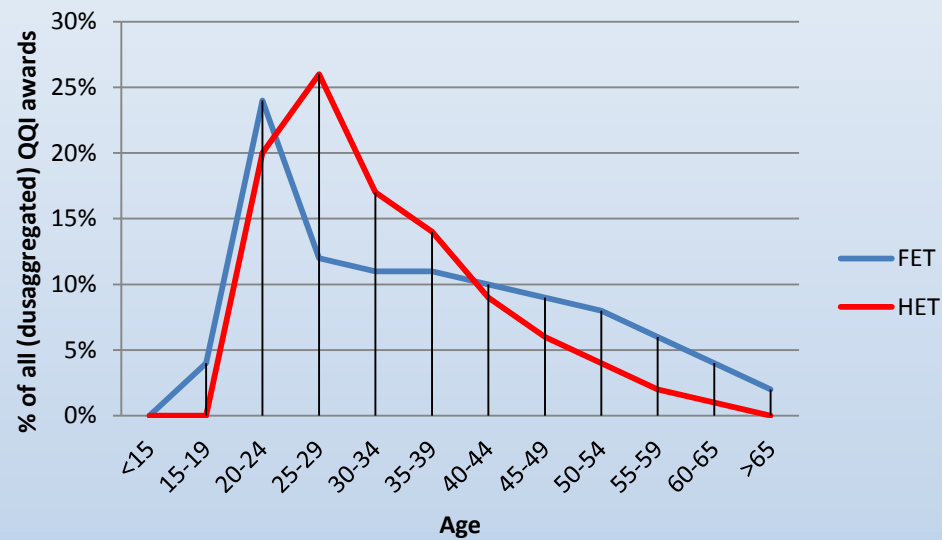
External Influences 2011-2015
Changes in the FET Educational Landscape

- Establishment of 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs)
  - responsible for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions
  - manage and operate second-level schools, further education colleges and a range of adult and further education centres

- Establishment of 'Solas' – the Further Education and Training Authority
  - 5 year Further Education and Training Strategy
    - Skills for the Economy
    - Active Inclusion
    - Quality Provision
    - Integrated Planning and Funding
    - Standing of FET

2001 – 2015
Impact of QA on FET Sector

- Provider impact
  - A framework for provider's strategy, development and operations
  - Cycle of continuous improvement
  - Not static, must change and grow
  - Realization that QA is a cost
  - Compliance with specific requirements e.g. Protection for Learners, Recognition of Prior Learning (PEL)
- External impact
  - As an indicator of quality, trust in provider and qualifications
  - As a source of data:
    - number and type of providers
    - Certification data by region, gender, age group, field of learning

Impact of QA on FET Sector

- Consistent with European developments
  - EQAVET
  - EC VET

- QQI Impact
  - Evidence base for development of the FET sector
  - Potential to integrate approaches between further and higher education and training
  - Different models
    - Subsidiarity, delegation of authority, models of validation
  - Lifecycle of Engagement with providers

Impact of QA on FET Sector

- Unintended consequences:
  - Misuses of QA: marketing/branding
  - Used as funding criteria
    - not always helpful
    - can drive demand for qualifications when what is needed is training.
  - Licencing/regulatory bodies: seek to use NFQ and QA as a proxy for regulation

2001 – 2015
How has QA in FET in Ireland evolved?

For providers:
- From a registration process based on a set of policy and procedures
- To a fully implemented QA system
- As validation and monitoring policies were implemented the provider's QA has been tested
- Stress points:
  - Provider capacity to design and deliver programmes
  - Assessment
  - Information to learners
  - Resources: staffing and support for learners
  - Commercial sustainability in the private sector
- More than a compliance activity

2001 – 2015
How has QA in FET in Ireland evolved?

- Introduction of fees:
  - change in provider behaviour
- Fewer providers:
  - 2011= ~900
  - 2015= ~685
  - 2018= ?

2015 NFQ

LIFE CYCLE OF PROVIDER ENGAGEMENT

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

CRITERIA

FEES

QA GUIDELINES

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

INFORMATION FOR LEARNERS

PROTECTION FOR LEARNERS

FEES

PROGRAMMES VALIDATED
RELATING TO QA APPROVAL AND CAPACITY OF PROVIDER

IEM CODE OF PRACTICE

FEES

ISSUING AWARDS

RESULTS TO QQI

QA OF ASSESSMENT

QQI

PROVIDER

QA ENGAGEMENT

PROGRAMME VALIDATION / IEM

MAKING AWARDS

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

STATUTORY PERIODIC REVIEW

REVALIDATION
(OF PROGRAMMES)
IEM CODE OF PRACTICE

MONITORING
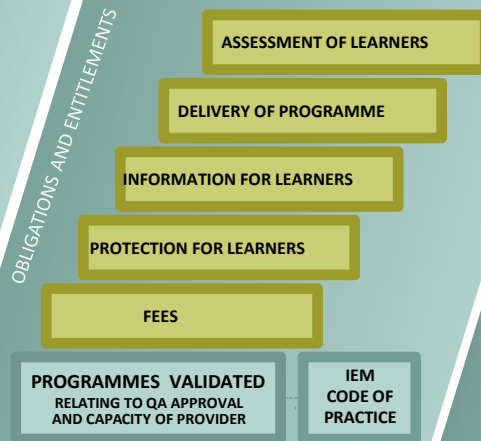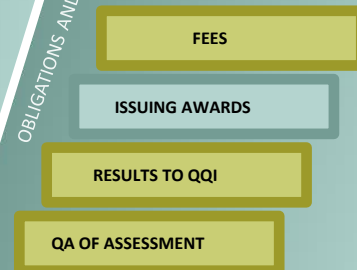
QA APPROVAL WITHDRAWN BY QQI

PROVIDER CAN APPEAL DECISION

WITHDRAWAL FROM ENGAGEMENT BY PROVIDER
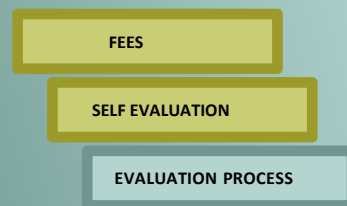
FEES

SELF EVALUATION

EXTERNAL REVIEW

MEET CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FEES

SELF EVALUATION

EVALUATION PROCESS

INTERNAL MONITORING

EXTERNAL MONITORING

REPORTING
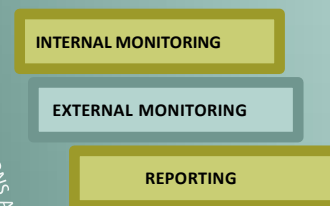
The Future

- Consolidation
- Capacity
- Subsidiarity
- More integration:
  - Processes
  - Experience
  - Language between further and higher education and training

Thank you!