

<b>Document Title</b>	Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and QA Framework
<b>Policy Area</b>	Area 11: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
<b>Document Code (version #)</b>	QAP11-1 (V4.0)
<b>Applies to</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific ( <i>Ongoing monitoring is performed for all SQT programmes through appropriate mechanisms. External Peer Review is limited to QQI only.</i> )
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input type="checkbox"/> Learners only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff and Learners

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<b>Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</li> <li>- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), et. al (2015), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</li> <li>- Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions, (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes (2023), QQI</li> </ul>
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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to support the ongoing monitoring and continuous enhancement of:

- I. Programmes including related services and activities (considered in Section 5 below)
- II. SQT's Quality Assurance Framework (considered in Section 6 below)

## 2. SCOPE/APPLICATION

- I. All SQT programmes, regardless of mode of delivery are subject to ongoing monitoring to identify areas for change and inform incremental improvements to the programmes over time.
- II. As a QQI provider, SQT is subject to systematic oversight by QQI. This includes external monitoring activities such as peer review of programmes ([QAP11-2: Programmatic Review](#)) and the external review of the QA framework ([QAP11-2: External Cyclical Review \(QQI Institutional Review\)](#))).

## 3. BACKGROUND

SQT is committed to the ongoing self – monitoring and review of all activities. This provides the opportunity for reflection and considered improvements / actions, which ultimately lead to the enhancement of its provision and quality framework. Table 1 below sets out SQT's self – monitoring and self – evaluation process.

	Self – Monitoring	Self – Evaluation
<b>Purpose:</b>	Serves as an early warning system to identify areas of provision that are performing well and those that are not meeting quality standards.	To explore, reflect and report on the effectiveness of programmes, services and the quality assurance system which supports them. In doing so, existing good practices are identified and maintained while areas needing improvement are identified and addressed.
<b>Frequency:</b>	Ongoing (e.g. daily review of learner and Tutor feedback and weekly review of KPI's).	Periodic (e.g. 5 yearly programme review)
<b>Focus:</b>	Specific indicators (e.g. Coursecheck feedback).	Broad scope (e.g. review of an individual or suite of programmes)
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Identifying a measure of quality and monitoring against this measure. Such measures include benchmarks and/or KPI's e.g. learner satisfaction ratings, certification rates, relevance of outcomes to the market place etc.	The self-evaluation is undertaken through the following stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Agreeing terms of reference</li><li>- Completing an Self-Evaluation Report (SER)</li><li>- Review of SER and review by an independent panel</li><li>- Recommendations made by independent panel via a panel report (IER)</li><li>- Improvement plan published, monitored and updated regularly</li></ul>
<b>Outcome:</b>	Where the measure indicates that quality is lacking, remedial action is identified and taken. Self-monitoring can also identify areas of good practice and innovations.	In the case of programme revalidation, the independent panel recommend to QQI whether the programme should be revalidated.

Table 1: Self-Monitoring vs Self-Evaluation

## 4. POLICY

All monitoring and self-evaluation activity is expected to identify areas for improvement and innovation. Figure 1 presents SQT's methodology for ongoing monitoring, periodic review and continuous improvement. It also incorporates the independent peer review mechanism adopted by QQI.

1. This process draws on information from a variety of sources through appropriate monitoring mechanisms as set out in 5.1 below.
2. Feedback and information collected informs a review by the relevant operational or academic unit. For example, feedback relating to programme content is reviewed by the programme delivery team in the first instance and then by the Programme Board. However, feedback pertaining to a venue may be reviewed by the Operations Management Team initially and subsequently noted at the Programme Board.
3. The relevant review unit determines the necessary action required (e.g. corrective action, QA update, programme update etc.).
4. Actions are collated by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs and are included in SQT's quality improvement plan. These action plans are live documents which are continuously updated by the personnel responsible for implementing the action. The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with oversight from the Quality Committee and reports on this to the Academic Council. Relevant Programme Directors are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Programme Improvement Plan (PIP) and reports this to the Programme Board and Academic Council, where relevant.

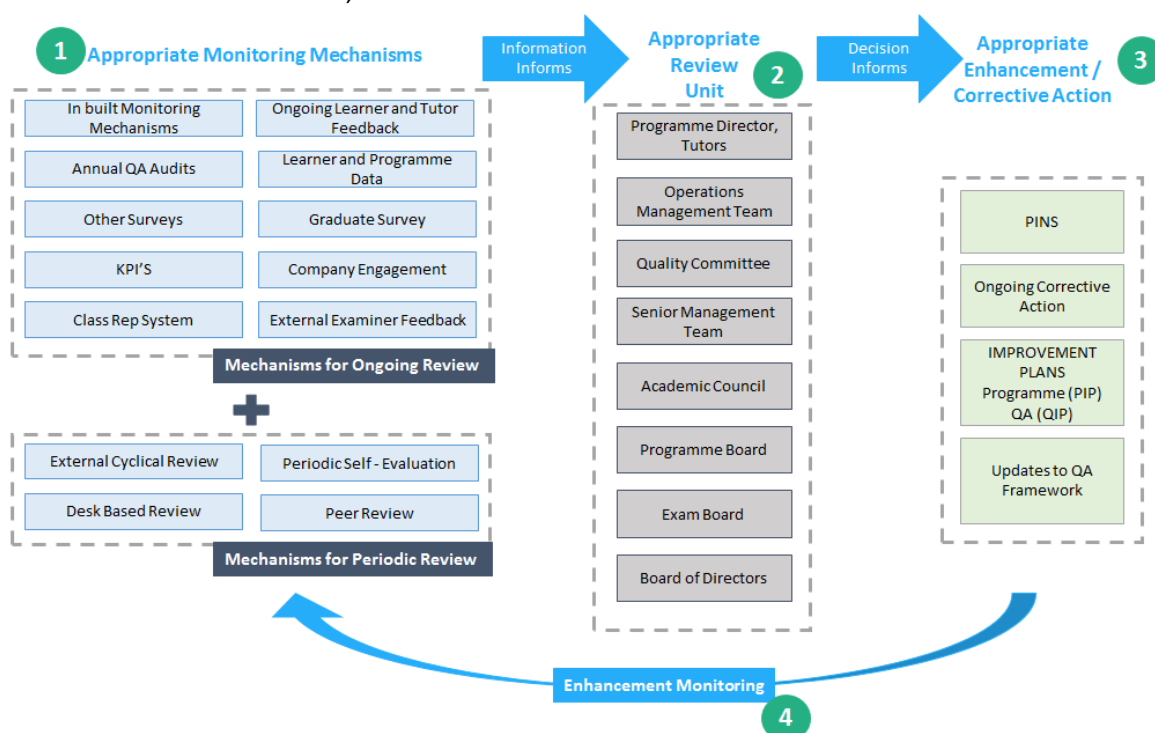


Figure 1: Ongoing Monitoring, Periodic Review and Continuous Improvement Cycle

## 5. ONGOING MONITORING & PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

### 5.1. Information Sources and Mechanisms for Effective Monitoring of Programmes

The on-going monitoring process draws on information from a variety of sources, including:

- I. Systematic **learner feedback** to include: -
  - a. Learner evaluation forms are completed at the end of each course, in the case of longer courses interim feedback is also gathered
  - b. Ad hoc / informal feedback
  - c. Feedback from learners via other channels such as discussions with Tutors or Course Administration Managers.
  - d. Graduate surveys (if relevant)
- II. Systematic **Tutor feedback** to include: -
  - a. Review of Tutor Reports which are completed at the end of each course
  - b. Ad hoc / informal feedback
  - c. Output of Tutor peer review activities
- III. **External stakeholders input** such as
  - a. Engagement with companies (management level)
  - b. Engagement with Course Organisers
  - c. Engagement with external bodies such as IBEC, Skillnets etc.
- IV. **Reports received** from External Examiners, Appeals Board or Disciplinary Committee.
- V. **KPI's** – SQT has developed a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess how its activities are achieving the organisations objectives and delivering on its overall strategy. The objective is for continued improvement in these metrics, and adverse variances offer an opportunity to investigate what initiatives need to be undertaken to improve quality.
- VI. **Benchmarking data** - SQT uses benchmarking data such as performance statistics available within the QQI infographic portal.
- VII. **Review of Learner and programme data** – information such as registration numbers, completion rates, examination statistics etc.

### 5.2. Forums for Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

Information is gathered via a number of mechanisms as set out in 5.1. This information feeds into a number of forums such as

- Programme Boards and Programme Team Meetings
- Informal Tutor Correspondence
- Tutor Peer Review

Table 2 below provides a summary of the key evaluation methods, including the stakeholders involved, the frequency and the programme elements considered.

Evaluation Method	Stakeholder(s) Involved	Frequency	Programme Elements Reviewed
<b>Learner Course Feedback (Online via CourseCheck)</b>	Learners	Interim and on completion of programme delivery	Items considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Course objectives</li> <li>- Tutor delivery and interactivity</li> <li>- Course materials provided</li> <li>- Training facilities and use of technology</li> <li>- Provision of course information</li> <li>- Programme administration</li> <li>- Assessment (where relevant)</li> </ul>
<b>Tutor Course Feedback (Form)</b>	Tutors	Interim and on completion of programme delivery	Items considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflection on programme delivery</li> <li>- Training facilities</li> <li>- Technology</li> <li>- Issues with learners</li> <li>- Support from SQT</li> <li>- Changes to programme documentation</li> <li>- Response to learner ratings</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Board Meeting</b>	Programme Directors, Tutors, Director of Quality and Academic Affairs, Managing Director, Course Administration Manager and Learner Rep (if applicable)	Annual or Biannual (QQI HET)	Items considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learner performance</li> <li>- External Examiner reports</li> <li>- Learner feedback</li> <li>- Tutor feedback</li> <li>- Feedback from other relevant stakeholders</li> <li>- Review of PINs (Performance Improvement Notifications)</li> <li>- Review of programme information provision</li> <li>- Items specific to various delivery modalities</li> </ul>
<b>Informal Correspondence with Learners and Tutors</b>	Learners and Tutors	On-going	All aspects of programme content and provision
<b>Examination Board Meeting</b>	Programme faculty, internal staff and External Examiner	Biannual	Items considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion rates</li> <li>- Learner achievement</li> <li>- Statistics and trends with respect to assessment</li> </ul>
<b>External Examiner Reports</b>	External Examiner	Three times per year	The report is developed using the following as headings: Evidence considered, Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes, (knowledge, skill, competence), Actual Attainment of Learners, Assessment Procedures, Trends
<b>Course Organiser Feedback Forms</b>	In-house course organiser	On-going	Items included include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administration, planning &amp; organisation</li> <li>- Course delivery</li> <li>- Appropriateness of support materials provided</li> </ul>
<b>Management Meetings</b>	SQT/MD and/or Programme Director, Company Management	As required	All aspects of programme content and provision.
<b>Peer Review of Teaching Sessions</b>	Tutors	As required	Items considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflection on programme delivery</li> <li>- Areas of good practice</li> <li>- Action plan</li> </ul>

Table 2: Programme Evaluation Mechanisms

### 5.3. Outcomes of Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

The on-going monitoring process may lead to:

- Normal day-to-day operational changes to the management and provision of the programme, as deemed necessary by the Programme Director, in consultation with any /or all of the Senior Management Team.
- Proposed minor changes to the programme and where deemed appropriate by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs in accordance with [QAP3-2: Updating Programmes and Course Material](#).
- Reports to the Programme Board in relation to the performance of the programme.
- Recommended changes to a policy or procedure.
- Technology and online delivery platform adjustments – changes in online learning platforms, tools, or technology-related resources to improve learner accessibility and engagement.
- Adaptations based on learner feedback on digital experience – enhancements to course structure, delivery methods, or materials specifically for blended and fully online formats.

### 5.4. Periodic Programme Review

A core feature of self-evaluations is independent peer review. To lend credence to the self-evaluation process, findings of the internal self-evaluation review (SER) are supplemented by a review carried out by a panel of independent external reviewers with appropriate expertise.

Programme review is a provider-owned quality assurance procedure that addresses a single programme or group of related programmes. Its purpose is to:

- I. Identify strengths in the programme as implemented since it's last validation by QQI
- II. Identify areas for improvement which can be incorporated into a new version of the programme to be put forward for revalidation by QQI.
- III. Achieve independent backing for the findings of the review and for the proposed new version of the programme

The policy and procedure for programme review is set out in [QAP11-2: Periodic Programme Review and Revalidation of QQI Programmes](#).

## 6. ONGOING MONITORING & PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

### 6.1. Ongoing Monitoring of the Quality Assurance Framework

The Quality Committee develops a comprehensive QA Audit schedule to ensure a thorough review of the QA Framework, with all eleven areas assessed at least once every three years. Assigned staff with responsibility for specific areas are required to review current policies, procedures, work instructions, and guidelines in the light of feedback on blended and fully online learning from various stakeholders (learners, Tutors, technical support teams), focusing on ease of access, platform functionality, and learner engagement. Additionally, staff must evaluate these elements with attention to digital accessibility standards and the suitability of digital tools for diverse learner needs, informed by data

analytics for online engagement metrics (e.g., participation rates, assessment completion times, and interaction frequency). The review also considers ongoing updates in educational technology (EdTech) and external changes, such as new standards, data protection requirements, and best practices recommended by awarding bodies. The policy and procedure for Annual Internal Quality Audits are set out in [QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents](#).

## **6.2. External Cyclical Review of the Quality Assurance Framework (QQI)**

As a provider of QQI awards, SQT is subject to cyclical external review, which is typically known as an Institutional Review. This process takes place at least once every seven years or as otherwise directed by QQI. The policy and procedure for External Cyclical Review has been informed by the Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions, 2016 (QQI). It is set out in [QAP11-3: External Cyclical Review \(Institutional Review\)](#).



## 7. POLICY MONITORING

Responsibility	Frequency	Methods
- Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Per QA audit schedule	- Review of documentation as set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.
- Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Ongoing	- As per the mechanisms set out within the policy.

## 8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Approval Date	Description of Revision	Originator	Approved By
2.0	14/12/18	Complete revision and new document format.	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Academic Council
3.0	17/6/24	Removal of NEBOSH references.	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Academic Council
4.0	15/11/24	Amendments to take account of monitoring specific to blended and fully online learning.	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Academic Council