

11. Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review



11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 What is the purpose of this policy?

- Self-evaluation is used to evaluate all areas of provision, including programme design, content, programme delivery, assessment, learning, associated services, resourcing, and learner attainment of programme objectives systematically and periodically.
- The periodic review of a programme refers to a process which is conducted at time intervals to consider the development of the programme over the previous period, regarding the achievement and improvement of educational quality. This policy outlines the objectives, scope, and methodology for Self-evaluation.

11.1.2 To whom does this policy apply?

- This policy applies to Directors, Academic Board, members of the Quality Committee, External Evaluators, Tutors, and other staff members involved in Programme Reviews.

11.1.3 Who is responsible for implementation?

- The Quality Committee is responsible for co-ordinating Programme Reviews. Internal Reviewers are responsible for completing Programme Reviews using the methodology outlined in this policy.
- An External Evaluator provides independent external input, subject matter expertise, and best practice insight from other QQI providers.
- The Academic Board is responsible for approving reviews and evaluating the outcome of reviews.
- Tutors and other staff members are responsible for providing input into Programme Reviews based on their own areas of expertise.

11.2 Self-Evaluation Review Policy

11.2.1 The nature of self-evaluation reviews

- Self-evaluation is used to evaluate all areas of provision, including programme design, content, programme delivery, assessment, learning, associated services, resourcing, and learner attainment of programme objectives systematically and periodically.
- This process is based on the criteria for self-evaluation provided in the QQI Self-evaluation Guidelines.
- CMIT involves key stakeholders in the process to ensure all relevant views are obtained and included, including Learners, Tutors, Academic Board, College Directors, External Evaluators, Administration Staff, and any other relevant stakeholders.
- Following the review, a Programme Improvement Plan is completed, which summarises the improvements to be made to a programme.

11.2.2 The goals of self-evaluation reviews

- To ensure that a programme of study is being provided effectively, maintaining academic standards, and offering students a fair and reasonable opportunity to engage with the intended learning in a stimulating education environment.
- To ensure that curriculum design and structure is effective.
- To ensure that contemporary best practice in student-centred learning is reflected in the teaching and assessment practices.
- To obtain feedback about organisation-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of programmes.
- To improve stakeholder confidence in the quality of provision by promoting transparency and public awareness.
- To support system-level improvement of the quality of the learning experience.
- To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice.
- To provide an opportunity for stakeholders to input into all aspects of the learning experience.
- To communicate to stakeholders the findings of learner experiences with programmes.

11.2.3 Self-Evaluation Review timing and scope

- The timing and scope of an individual evaluation is determined by the Quality Committee based on the following policies: (1) a self-evaluation review will be undertaken of (at least) one programme each year, (2) a self-evaluation review will be undertaken each major award programme within three years of initial validation, (3) all programmes are reviewed at least every four years.

- Where an outcome of ongoing monitoring includes a concern about the programme, it may trigger a review of a programmes where this is deemed appropriate by either the Quality Committee or Academic Board.
- The Academic Board must approve all reviews prior to commencement.
- The Academic Board and evaluate Programme Review recommendations and planned improvements.

11.2.4 Review Team and External Evaluator

- The Quality Committee will create a Review Team which comprises Quality Committee members, Tutors, Internal Reviewer(s), and a suitable External Evaluator.
- An External Evaluator provides independent external input, subject matter expertise, and best practice insight from other QQI providers. The External Evaluator is a person who is independent of programme delivery and capable of comparing the quality of the programme(s) with that of similar programmes elsewhere. They will have: (1) education, training, or industry experience in the broad subject area of the programme being evaluated, (2) experience in national/international certification systems, (3) experience in one or more of the following:
 - Programme design.
 - Programme delivery.
 - Programme evaluation.
 - Cross moderation of standards.
 - External verification of standards.
 - Auditing of quality systems.
 - Centre accreditation.
- The External Evaluator will carry out their activities as follows:
 - **Confidentiality:** all material received and produced in the conduct of the evaluation should be treated as confidential.
 - **Anonymity:** the focus of the evaluation should be on the programme(s) and related services, and as such it will not be necessary to identify individuals.
 - **Objectivity:** declare any potential conflict of interest they have with any Provider if they feel that their objectivity may be in any way compromised. During the evaluation, comments / statements should be based on evidence and subjective comments should be avoided. Findings should be made based on actual evidence to back them up.
 - **Deadlines:** the feedback on an evaluation should be provided within an agreed time. Positive Approach and Improvement: sometimes it is easier to find fault than good practice.
 - **Continuous Improvement:** Evaluators make a conscious effort to find and record good practice as well as things which could be done better. The aim of the evaluation should be to bring about ongoing improvement. Recommendations should be made available to management which could, if implemented, make a positive difference to the programme(s) or services.

11.2.5 Improvements

- Following the completion of self-evaluation reviews, recommendations for programme enhancements are compiled into the Programme Improvement Plan.
- **Responsibility and accountability:** The Programmes Director is responsible for ensuring that recommendations are implemented according to the timelines set in the Programme Improvement Plan. The implementation process is overseen by the Quality Committee, which holds regular follow-ups to monitor progress.
- **Resource allocation:** Necessary resources, including staffing, training, and budgetary allocations, are identified and provided to support the implementation of recommended improvements.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Continuous engagement with stakeholders is maintained throughout the implementation phase to ensure that their insights and feedback are considered in the practical application of the improvements.
- **Documentation and reporting:** All steps taken, resources allocated, and outcomes achieved during the implementation phase are documented in detail. Regular reports are generated and presented to the Academic Board and College Directors for review.
- **Transparency and communication:** Programme Review documents are published on the public website. Regular updates regarding the status of implementation are communicated to all stakeholders through the internal action tracking system.

11.3 Self-Evaluation Methodology

11.3.1 Collation of data

- Learner, staff, and tutor feedback is collated, along with statistical analysis and other relevant information.
- The following statistical data is reviewed:
 - Demand for the programme.
 - Completion of the programme by Learners.
 - Results and certification.
 - Progression to third level and/or employment.
 - Learner Net Promoter Score (NPS).
 - Enrolment statistics.
- The following learner data is reviewed in relation to the scope of the review:
 - Learner satisfaction scores and verbatim comments.
 - Work experience placement reports.
 - Feedback of learner experience while on the programme.
- The following tutor data is reviewed in relation to the scope of the review:
 - Staff response from questionnaires/focus groups/interview findings, e.g., strengths, weaknesses, and suggested improvements to the programme.
 - Other stakeholders' response from questionnaires/focus groups.

11.3.2 Self-evaluation checklist

- The Review Team conducts an initial self-evaluation by completing the **Self-evaluation Checklist**.
- The checklist is an assessment by the Review Team following review of all the data and feedback collected in the first phase.
- The completed checklist template evaluates the effectiveness of CMIT's quality assurance procedures in the context of the programme being reviewed. The following grading system is used:
 - 3 (strength): "There is evidence, from each programme evaluated, to indicate that achievement in this area is above average. This is an area where practice should be disseminated elsewhere."
 - 2 (acceptable): "There is evidence that achievement in this area meets expectations, though maybe not in all programmes evaluated. With further development, this could become an area of strength."
 - 1 (for improvement): "There is little or no evidence that achievement in this area meets what is expected. Improvement is needed."

11.3.3 Self-evaluation report

- A **Self-evaluation Report** is to be completed based on the findings of the Self-Evaluation Checklist.
- The report will include qualitative and quantitative judgments on the programme and associated services.
- The report will include findings on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and recommendations under the following headings:
 - Programme Design and Content.
 - Programme Delivery.
 - Assessment of Learning.
 - Associated Services and Resourcing.
 - Attainment of Programme Objectives.
- When the report has been drafted, the External Evaluator verifies the findings in the draft report and contributes suggestions for improvement based on their expertise.
- The Evaluator should both verify and evaluate the findings of the Provider. Where appropriate the Evaluator may draw on their own expertise and experience to advise of practices being employed elsewhere in the sector. In so doing evaluators may make recommendations to the Provider on their QA and Self-evaluation methodology as well as aspects of the specific programme under evaluation.
- The Review Team then completes a final Self-evaluation Review report which encompasses the External Evaluators recommendations.

11.3.4 Programme Improvement Plan

- A **Programme Improvement Plan** is completed, which outlines recommended improvements.
- The Programme Improvement Plan will be reviewed by the Directors and presented to the Academic Board for approval.
- The Programme Improvement Plan will identify the person(s) responsible for implementation and the date for completion. The agreed actions will be logged into the corrective action system and managed by the Quality Committee.
- As a result of the findings and recommendations from the Self-evaluation exercise and the learning derived from conducting the Self-evaluation process itself, it may be necessary to amend the Quality Assurance system.
- Annual reports are filed and available for QQI to review if requested.