



Iona College
Self Evaluation Report
Healthcare Support Certificate
5M4339

Executive Summary.....	3
Background to the College.....	3
Background to the Report.....	3
AQC Meeting.....	4
Rationale for Selection of Programme for Review	4
Healthcare Support 5M4339.....	4
Legal and Policy Framework Supporting the Report	5
The Process	5
Stage 1 Planning.....	5
External Evaluator.....	6
Stage 2 Preparation	6
Stage 3 Implementation.....	6
Tutor Virtual Meeting	7
Determination of Quality Indicators.....	8
Stage 4 Evaluation and Analysis of Data	9
Strengths Identified	10
Areas for Improvement.....	10
Production of the Report and Development of Quality Improvement Plan.....	11
Dissemination of Feedback to Contributors	11
Closing Virtual Meeting for Self Evaluation Team	12
References	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Executive Summary

A self evaluation was commenced in early 2021 to review the Healthcare support major award QQI level 5 which is currently being delivered by the college on behalf of LMETB and in partnership with Rutledge Training and Recruitment. This process was initiated after the submission of our application for re engagement in response to a suggestion made at a meeting of the AQC Covid-19 emergency meeting.

The terms of reference for this process was to determine areas that are in need of improvement as well as recognise areas of current good strong practice and to develop a quality improvement plan for the coming months to ensure that the quality training delivery service that our learners expect, continues to move with the changing times, remain relevant without compromising quality.

Iona College has always been a leading training provider in this field and has further cemented this position by our quick response to the pandemic so that learners were not disadvantaged. All the while new learners started to hear about the experience of others with the college and decided to take the plunge into training. For some it was a new experience having never done assignments, for others cross skilling or upskilling was their goal due to job losses in the pandemic.

It is to capture this stakeholder experience that is the aim of this self evaluation report and the team in Iona feels that this has been largely accomplished with some work ahead.

Background to the College

Iona College was originally set up in June 2004 and was called Iona Training Services Ltd. Since February 2005 the College has been facilitating QQI Level 5 and 6 certificate programmes. We are committed to creating an environment where you can enjoy a positive learning experience and achieve your goals. We are an Irish owned training and job placement company providing training and career services to a wide variety of clients. Our team of experts is enthusiastic and ready to respond to the needs of our learners. We are dedicated to helping our learners achieve their full potential by ensuring that all our courses are engaging, relevant and progressive.

Background to the Report

Iona College strongly believe that a process of self evaluation which is systematic and structured to review the experiences of all stakeholders is both necessary and valuable to form the foundation of continuous improvement which is a corner stone of our QA system. At a minimum self evaluation will allow the college:

- To engage with all stakeholders to assess the service being provided.
- Speak with tutors in terms of programme delivery, its strengths and weaknesses
- Opportunities to review, reflect and improve
- Use the academic governance structure to monitor performance
- Take a 360 approach to reflective practice
- Promote positive change in the college, its programmes and services

AQC Meeting

At an emergency meeting of the Academic Quality Council (AQC) where a contingency plan needed to be developed for continuity of training delivery during lockdown, it was suggested at that point that a programme self evaluation would be completed so as to confirm the continued delivery quality service expected by stakeholders.

There would potentially be a very new cohort of learners and client stakeholders who had not had access to the college previously as well as new teaching techniques for staff using the virtual space. This meant that the data that could be accessed would reflect on the current delivery of the programme and that we could compare and contrast with former learners to evaluate the programme.

In addition to this contingencies also involved the need for alternative assessments which needed to be developed by the PLAC and approved by the PREB and AQC as it was reasonable to expect that examinations would not be held in the near future. In addition a mechanism for skills assessment needed to be determined as workplaces would not be facilitating placement hours for learners during the pandemic.

Rationale for Selection of Programme for Review

Healthcare Support major award was selected as the programme for review as it is the main programme being delivered in the college and has been since the college started trading. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic it was decided by the AQC that due to the fundamental changes in programme delivery, moving everything online in response to the pandemic, that this was the ideal programme to review.

Healthcare Support 5M4339

The Healthcare Support QQI Level 5 major award is the main award delivered by the college. It consists of 8 component awards consisting of 5 mandatory and 3 elective modules. Elective modules may be selected from a list of modules each comprising 15 credits with the ultimate credit value of 120 credits required to achieve the major award.

This programme has been delivered on an ongoing basis for the past 17 years in the college in classroom based learning. The modules are delivered part time one day per week typically in a classroom. For the online delivery the modules are being delivered over 8 or 9 days from 9.30 to 1.30 each day.

The programme makes up about 85% of the overall turnover of the college. In 2021 in answer to Ireland's call the Covid -19 response was instigated by the government and an effort was made to train people in infection prevention and control primarily and subsequently as healthcare assistants to assist with the care of vulnerable people. Learners could then be employed as HCAs in a variety of settings including the home, hospital, nursing homes etc. Approximately 1200 learners to date have completed modules with in excess of 60 component awards delivered virtually to date this year and Iona College is contracted to deliver until the end of the year on behalf of LMETB.

Legal and Policy Framework Supporting the Report

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.
- 1. QQI Self-evaluation of Quality Assurance Procedures (Self-evaluation against core QA guidelines (April 2016)
- 2. Iona College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- Iona College Quality Assurance Manual Version 2.0 2020

The Process

Stage 1 Planning

Planning involved selection of the team with responsibility for planning and implementing the Self Evaluation and the selection of the programme for evaluation. This was led by the Programme Review and Evaluation Board (PREB) under the guidance of the AQC.

The team consisted of:

- Director of Learning and Development
- Head of AQC (external)
- Lead assessor
- Training Co-Ordinator

We kept to a small team so that we could survey more tutors and members of the team. A meeting of the AQC was held with the members of the self evaluation team selected from the AQC, PREB and Programme Leadership and Assessment Committees (PLAC). The team was then briefed on the process of carrying out a self evaluation from Section 11 of the QAM and the Policies and Procedures Manual P&P 09. Prior to publishing of the report it was agreed that the AQC would reconvene to discuss the report before accepting the recommendations. AQC members were also encouraged to provide assistance to the team when requested and identify areas that they deem in need of improvement while highlighting current strengths.

The aims of the self evaluation were clarified during the meeting and included:

- Determine the impact, if any, of moving to the virtual classroom on training delivery and the learner/tutor experience during the Covid 19 pandemic
- Determine that materials and assessments remain fit for purpose
- That the learners potential to learn is maximised and supported
- Any additional supports or technology that could improve the programme delivery
- Criteria to measure the success of the programme
- Develop a Quality Improvement Plan and set deadlines for completion

External Evaluator

The head of the AQC is an external person who is independent of programme delivery with a background in quality assurance who can compare the quality of the programme being evaluated against those of other providers. She has industry experience in the subject matter area and has worked as an external authenticator in the past for QQI so is very familiar with standards and certification.

Stage 2 Preparation

A broad based approach, which is inclusive and evidence-based, is preferable for a self evaluation. As we are still in the midst of a pandemic it was impractical to set up interviews with external stakeholders and so comprehensive surveys with both qualitative and quantitative questions were to be developed and approved for distribution. Surveys were developed by the lead assessor for clients, the Training Co-ordinator for the learner and tutors. Surveys were to be completed post course asking simple questions some of which involved rating performance and others required input of more detailed responses so that we could have qualitative as well as quantitative data to evaluate.

Lists of client stakeholders were developed by the training co-ordinator and distributed via email.

External Stakeholders include:

- Directors of Nursing in nursing homes, day care centres
- Workplace Assessors who assess skills in the workplace
- Social care sector
- ETB personnel in Training standards and Contracted training
- CE supervisors
- Private clients
- Principal of a school

In addition all tutors and a selection of current and former learners of the programme were contacted and asked to complete and return the survey. There was no requirement for learners to sign the survey to maintain confidentiality and the comments would in no way impact their current course of study or grades.

Stage 3 Implementation

Surveys were sent out by the Training Co-ordinator by email to all stakeholders, explaining the purpose of the survey and how the resulting information would be used, as well as a time frame for the return of the documentation. The Training Co-ordinator kept the team up to date on the level of response from stakeholders which was nearly 100%. A date was then set for the review of the surveys received and the collation and analysis of the data within a 4 week time period.

In addition to the surveys and the virtual tutor team meeting, data was also collated by the Training Co-ordinator from Smartsheet to review the following information:

- Enrolment statistics to see what the uptake for the programme was and to assist with identifying the more popular modules
- Drop-out rates and the reasons for learners dropping out to assess if we could improve their retention on the programme. For most it was due to lack of childcare or the fact that they were returning to work.
- Assessment results
- Attendance records
- Tutor daily reports
- End of course evaluations of learners
- Work experience placement reports which were for former learners as no placements were possible during the pandemic
- Learner comments communicated informally, to tutors, to the Training Co-ordinator or directly to the College directors.
- Tutor response from meeting minutes
- Internal Verification reports
- External Authentication reports
- Stakeholders' response from survey, emails and telephone calls.

Tutor Virtual Meeting

A meeting was held between the Managing Director, Director of Learning and Development, the Training Co-Ordinator and the tutors virtually on Zoom and the topics for discussion included:

- Demand for the programme
- Completion of the assessments
- Standard of completed work
- Grades awarded and certification
- Learner experience in class and their engagement with tutors
- Any other comments tutors wished to highlight in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of the programme
- Comments made to them by learners that are relevant to this evaluation.

The training co-ordinator stated she had been in communication with LMETB recruitment service and that there was a strong demand ongoing for the modules across the full suite of component awards.

Completion rates were examined in terms of the number of people attending each module in full which was approximately 90% and the completion of the assessments which was approximately 75% of those who finished the module. Learners dropped out for mainly 2 reasons:

1. Childcare barriers, crèches and schools were closed and so children were at all at home making it difficult to set aside time for class each morning. The requirement for home schooling the children for some meant competition for laptops.
2. Return to work. Some industries returned to work and were seen as essential so learners dropped out.

The standard of the work completed and the certification awarded has been comparable to in class training results. It may be assumed therefore that the virtual classroom is not compromising the training delivery.

One tutor commented that a learner had said that they felt that the intensive online training was more favourable as they could work from home and maximise their time by completing assessments in the afternoon when they would ordinarily have been in class.

Some learners worried that the one to one tutor support which learners experienced in class could be missing and so tutors made time at the end of each lecture for one to one support. This strategy allowed those learners who did not need assistance to leave the virtual classroom and those that wished could then stay behind and look for further clarification or for questions to be answered, which they did not wish to pose to the tutor in the open forum of the classroom. This support was outlined on the first morning of training for each module.

In consultation with the contracted training officers further contracts have been secured to continue delivery until the end of this year in the current virtual format.

The tutors felt that the only difference to the delivery of the programme is the virtual classroom instead of a physical classroom and getting used to using the Zoom application. The content and assessments remained largely the same. The notable change was the addition of extra assessments to compensate for the lack of theory examinations as well as the proctoring of the skills demonstrations online instead of in the workplace. Tutors did not report issues as learners could pick a time slot to suit them and knew what was expected to be completed in the online skills demonstration.

Tutors commented that they were enjoying their own peer to peer learning as some were more nervous than others in terms of the online delivery. Where difficulties arose they were able to contact their colleague as well as the team in the college to assist them. This was particularly relevant around the assessment of skills.

The training co-ordinator and some tutors remarked that there was a real community of learning developing between learners on courses. Some of which had set up ad hoc Whats App groups and felt that this was very beneficial as well as being an unexpected but welcome outcome.

Determination of Quality Indicators

Surveys were sent back to the training co-ordinator who divided them between the three groups for ease of analysis and to compare and contrast the experience of all parties to the programme of study.

Areas of review included:

- The quality of the programme delivered
- The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance system supporting the programme and related services
- Demand for the programme

- Completion of the programme by Learners
- Results and Certification
- Progression to third level and/or employment
- Learner experience while on the programme
- Levels of Learner engagement

Stage 4 Evaluation and Analysis of Data

Enrolment figures are high and are continuing to remain high with limited marketing or advertisement to date. This will be monitored in conjunction with LMETB so that we can encourage new learners to join if we see numbers starting to dwindle.

Learners are progressing to employment and/or further education as can be seen from reports from employers who have employed learners or offered placement once the restrictions lift. For some learners they only needed a couple of modules to achieve their major award and progress to further education. Very few learners only completed one module. Most learners signed on through LMETB to complete the full major award albeit on a module by module basis.

Learners are attending classes regularly as scheduled and are on time each day. Class times and break times are rigidly adhered to but allowances are made for some learners who have small children to attend to or deliveries to the front door.

Learners are completing the programme. The drop out rate compares favourably to in class training.

Learners are achieving comparable results to in class training. Cross moderation and internal verifications concurs with this finding.

On review of the end of course evaluations which all learners are required to complete at the end of each module. Learners rated the pace, delivery and content of the modules were excellent across the board. Some learners in their feedback highly complimented the fact that they were reassured by the tutor in terms of anxieties around remote online learning. Another comment made consistently in the feedback was that for some learners who were in attendance in the college, they were delighted that they had the same tutors who knew them and they felt more at ease to answer questions and reassure others. This suggests that a community of learning had developed between learners as well as between tutors and was evident from the outset of the online training.

Resources are reported as excellent, adequate and appropriate to the learner cohort and employers are reporting that the content is up to date and appropriate to the potential future healthcare roles of learners. HIQA standards as well as requirements for safeguarding and associated certifications are also being met and surpassed.

Learners are availing of the support services as appropriate via email, text or phone call in particular sending through drafts of the work for review by tutors throughout and at the end of the module in advance of their deadline. It was determined therefore that the supports in place are meeting the needs of the learners.

Strengths Identified

The feedback from all stakeholders from learners, training standards and recruitment departments as well as employers and tutors has been extremely positive across the board. The programme is relevant, attainable, realistic and practical. Learners commented that for those who were at home, tutors particularly on safety and health at work and infection prevention and control modules made the content relatable to the home being their workplace. They felt included as a result of this as some had not had a job to date and so had limited reference points. The interview skills aspect of communications got particular mention as some had not completed interviews for a long time and for some had never interviewed and they felt that this was a valuable tool.

Learners particularly liked the assignment writing lecture which shows them how to structure their assignments, learner records, reports and skills demonstrations by providing an outline document of suggested headings in addition to their briefs which were a ready reference for them once class was finished. They also commented on the lecture on referencing Harvard style as for some this was new to them and they required additional support. Some commented that they had achieved a degree level education and never understood referencing until now which was a positive reflection on all tutors and their support for learners.

Areas for Improvement

1. It was suggested that for learners who are looking to read in full the policy documents pertaining to certain aspects of training that links could be put into the learner handbook which will direct them to the relevant content in the manuals.
2. Tutors requested that marking rubrics be developed for assessors and cross moderators to assist with consistent application of marking criteria.
3. Plagiarism and Malpractice of assessment have happened infrequently and we have not to date looked critically at the data pertaining to this. It was suggested that this data be compiled by the PLAC and presented to the RAP panel meeting.
4. While not necessarily pertinent to the Self Evaluation report, A consistent challenge for our learners has been the availability of adult career guidance. Iona College has tried to guide learners on an ad hoc basis to date but now seek to employ a career guidance consultant who will be available to support learners as an additional learner support mechanism.
5. In the area of Work Placement, learners were unsure of what was expected of them as many have been unable to complete it during the pandemic. Iona College has therefore developed a Work Experience Placement Guidance to assist both workplace assessors and learners while on placement.
6. The management feel that an Integrated Learner Support model need to be developed to improve the Pastoral care of learners. This will consist of 3 main elements as follows:
3 main elements:
 1. Centralised support in the form of a new Learner Support and Advice Leaflet
 2. Programme focussed support providing academic, employability, and career pathways (in response to Covid-19);
 3. Academic support through the programme of study on which a learner is registered from the Tutor, Programme Leader and/or Director of Training and Development.

7. Survey monkey to be used to enable easier collection and analysis of data for future self evaluations or other surveys to be undertaken

Production of the Report and Development of Quality Improvement Plan

Programme Self Evaluation Report was developed from the documented findings and the first draft of the report was compiled by the External Evaluator working alongside the PREB and presented to the AQC for review. They will in turn finalise the agreed findings and sign off the Evaluation Report and its associated Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) based on agreed recommendations. The QIP was commenced in light of actions which need to be completed on review of the Gap Analysis exercise for re engagement. It was decided that it would be more efficient to add to this current QIP rather than create an additional one. The full QIP may be found at the end of this report.

The QIP sets out the following:

- The actions agreed
- The person(s) responsible for ensuring that each action is implemented
- The deadline for implementation

It is believed that by implementing the suggested recommendations over the coming months that it will lead to an improved programme. The recommendations are seen as achievable and realistic with the resources needed available.

Dissemination of Feedback to Contributors

The recommendations identified in the Self Evaluation report and the actions highlighted in the QIP must be communicated to the contributors to the report including staff, learners and other stakeholders.

This was completed by completing a virtual tutor meeting and a written report will be circulated to external stakeholders and will be posted on the website.

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 is not necessary for Iona College to amend our Quality Assurance system as it had been completely overhauled for the re engagement process with QQI and the findings of this report were included at that time as actions to be completed on a time frame.

It is imperative to ensure that the QIP is implemented and is used to inform the next cycle of Self Evaluation. Iona College will inform relevant stakeholders on the progress of completion of the various actions and the progress made and outcomes related to the actions in the plan as necessary.

Closing Virtual Meeting for Self Evaluation Team

A closing meeting was held to wrap up the self evaluation process and to present the findings. At this meeting it was determined that the range and focus of the Self Evaluation process was appropriate and the objectives set out were achieved. The methodology used was appropriate and inclusive of all stakeholders. The use of the external evaluator was important to ensure that the process was transparent and free from bias.

We would use survey monkey for future large scale projects as it would facilitate the analysis of data in a more streamlined fashion. The findings have been compiled into a comprehensive report and circulated to the necessary personnel and are reasonable and honest accounts of the results of the surveys.

The process will start again with the next suggested programme being the Early Care and Education Level 5 major award.

The management of Iona College will be responsible for internal evaluations of our programmes every two years.

The management of Iona College, with the approval of the AQC, will ensure the provision of time, resources, expertise and support to ensure self-evaluations are carried out, without prejudice.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the contributors to this report and welcome additional feedback that you may have to improve the service delivered by Iona College.

IONA COLLEGE – QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) – March 2021 V.1.

Provider Improvement Activity	Overall Provider Improvement Activities <i>Enter the Overall Provider Improvement Activity in this box. An Overall Provider Improvement Activity should be broad in scope. Use the subsequent lines to list all steps for completing the Overall Provider Improvement Activity. (A separate Overall Provider Improvement Activity template should be used for each activity.)</i>	Lead Person <i>List the name of the lead person responsible.</i>	Timelines <i>Indicate start and end dates for the full activity and for each step.</i>	Evidence <i>List possible ways for verifying the activity took place.</i>	Resources/Materials Required <i>List any specific resources needed in order to complete the activity.</i>
1.	Compliance Audits for effective risk management	Helen Macken, Director of Learning and Development	01/06/2021 ongoing	Checklist development	Checklist template
2.	Career guidance consultant to support learners with further education and training opportunities.	Agnes Loftus Managing Director, Carolann Clarke, Training Co-Ordinator	01/06/2021	Cvs	CGC to confirm budget for additional resources

3.	Learner completions; Grade distributions in specific components). Findings going forward will be reported to the Academic Quality Council for discussion and next steps to be identified and ratified for implementation.	Carolann Clarke, Training Co-Ordinator AQC	Next Submission for Certification in June 2021	Smartsheet	Report to be devised on Smartsheet
4	Work Experience Placement Guidance'	Helen Macken, Director of Learning and Development	In place. Completed 06.01.2021	Learner handbook	None
5.	Pastoral support as Integrated Learner Support (ILS) with the new model comprising of 3 main elements: 1. Centralised support in the form of a new Learner Support and Advice Leaflet 2. Programme focussed support providing academic, employability, and career pathways (in response to Covid-19); 3. Academic support through the programme of study on which a learner is registered from the Tutor, Programme Leader and/or Director of	Agnes Loftus, Managing Director Carolann Clarke Training Co-Ordinator Career Guidance Advisor	01.09.2021	Leaflet	Budget for Career guidance advisor and printing of leaflets

	Training and Development. Section 7.0				
6.	A risk register exercise is applied to new companies or stakeholders on a first meeting basis	Helen Macken , Director of Learning and Development	As needed	Template already in use	None
7.	Plagiarism/malpractice/conduct data	Helen Macken , Director of Learning and Development Orla Griffin, Senior Assessor , PLAC	Next submission for Certification June 2021	RAP findings	Gathered from Smartsheet
8.	Self Evaluation Report is collated documenting the range of the feedback reviewed (as outlined above), along with recommendations for continuous improvements.	All staff	Completed March 2021	Stakeholder Surveys Report published	Self Evaluation report
9.	Corrective Action Log	Carolann Clarke Training Co-Ordinator	Completed March 2021	Log	None
10.	Customer Complaints Log	Carolann Clarke Training Co-Ordinator	Completed March 2021	Log	None
11.	Develop marking rubrics	Orla Griffin. Senior Assessor and the PLAC	Ongoing	Rubrics	None
12.	Internal self evaluations every 2	Helen Macken,	Ongoing Healthcare	Self Evaluation	None

	years	Director of Learning and Development and the AQC	completed March 2021	report generated	
14.	Link content in handbooks to the Quality Assurance Manual and Policies and Procedures	Helen Macken, Director of Learning and Development	Once re engagement is completed and the content is approved in both manuals	Available in Learner Handbooks published on the website	None
15.	Survey monkey to be employed fro all evaluations in future.	Carolann Clarke Training Co-Ordinator	Ongoing commencing June 2021	Survey monkey completed surveys	None