



Self-assessment guidance for post-16 providers

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Audience

Further education institutions; work-based learning providers; adult community learning partnerships; HM prisons delivering offender learning; other providers if specified in their funding agreement.

Overview

This guidance sets out detailed advice on how post-16 providers should undertake annual self-assessment and quality development planning.

Action required

None – for information only.

Further information

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

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Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at:
www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

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Introduction

- 1 This guidance provides detailed advice on how post-16 providers should undertake annual self-assessment and quality development planning.
- 2 It applies to:
 - further education institutions (FEIs);
 - work-based learning (WBL) providers;
 - adult community learning (ACL) partnerships;
 - HM Prisons delivering offender learning; and
 - other providers if specified in their funding agreement.
- 3 The Welsh Government's [professional standards for the FE and WBL workforce](#) have been developed to set high expectations for all practitioners and be more explicit about the role of high-quality, collaborative professional learning. Providers should take account of these when developing their quality development plans, as the standards will provide an important tool to support improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.

Features of effective self-assessment

- 4 Self-assessment is a tool for evaluating, monitoring and managing the quality of their provision, not as a requirement imposed by external inspectors or funding bodies. It should be a continuous process, not an annual 'snapshot'.
- 5 It is each provider's responsibility to manage and improve the quality of their own delivery, with close involvement of their learners in the process.
- 6 Effective self-assessment:
 - focuses primarily on learners, their experiences and achievements, as the basis on which judgements are made;
 - honestly identifies shortcomings and areas for development, as well as strengths;
 - demonstrates a consistent approach across all areas, showing that where different teams have carried out the self-assessment, their findings have been drawn together and validated by senior management;
 - involves learners, staff, managers and governors from across the organisation;
 - takes account of the views of learners, employers and other stakeholders, including partner organisations and sub-contractors where applicable;
 - tracks progress from year to year in consolidating strengths and remedying weaknesses;
 - draws together and evaluates evidence from a range of reliable sources and activities; and
 - is fully integrated with the provider's planning cycle, so that objectives, targets and actions for each year reflect the outcomes of self-assessment.

Scope and content of the self-assessment report

- 7 The process of self-assessment, and its use to support improvement, are more important than the SAR itself. We do not prescribe a specific format or style for the SAR. However, it should:
- cover the previous year (funding, academic or financial);
 - include a brief introduction, setting out relevant background information, a summary of the process for undertaking self-assessment and a summary including significant strengths and weaknesses identified;
 - include the specific areas of focus detailed in paragraphs 8-10 below;
 - be cross-referenced to an appropriate range of sources of evidence supporting each judgement;
 - evaluate statistical data on learner participation (including equality and diversity) and outcomes;
 - be evaluative rather than descriptive, clearly identifying both strengths and weaknesses;
 - be open and honest in recognising where improvement is needed;
 - identify actions which have already been undertaken, or are underway, to address weaknesses; and
 - refer to external inspections, assessments and reviews and show progress that has been made in addressing their recommendations.

Welsh-medium learning

- 8 The Welsh language strategy [Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#), sets out the Welsh Government's long-term approach for achieving the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The strategy includes a specific aim to:
- develop post-compulsory education provision which increases rates of progression and supports everyone, whatever their command of the language, to develop Welsh language skills for use socially and in the workplace.
- 9 All providers are required to show how they contribute to this aim, how they address the need to develop Welsh-medium and bilingual provision and the quality assurance of provision for the post-16 sector.
- 10 In preparing their SAR, providers should refer to the actions and targets set out in their Welsh language curriculum action plans to demonstrate progress against the national targets.

Quality development plans

11 Providers should take action to address all of the weaknesses and areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment. The QDP can be presented as a summary document with cross-references to more detailed action plans, but it must clearly show how the most significant issues identified via self-assessment will be addressed. In terms of prioritisation, if resource implications prevent all of the shortcomings from being addressed, the QDP should show how resources have been prioritised to deal with the most important issues.

12 The QDP should include a brief introduction, setting out:

- a summary of the process for developing the plan, including involvement of staff, managers and governors;
- clear identification of the priorities to be addressed over the next year; and
- a summary of how progress and outcomes will be monitored and reported to managers, governors and stakeholders.

Features of effective quality development plans

13 Quality development plans should:

- be cross-referenced to strengths and weaknesses in the SAR;
- indicate priorities for action;
- identify specific actions to be taken to address weaknesses and build on strengths;
- include measurable targets and performance indicators wherever possible;
- identify timescales for completion and, where actions are long-term, interim review dates;
- identify resources required to undertake actions;
- identify where external expertise is needed to undertake actions;
- identify staff responsible for undertaking each action;
- identify a manager (or managers) who will take responsibility for reviewing progress against the QDP and measuring the resulting improvements; and
- include cross-references to Estyn inspection reports, strategic/business/service delivery plans and more detailed action plans for specific departments or areas of activity.

14 Effective self-assessment should be an integral part of all providers' quality systems including monitoring progress towards the QDP. Although there is no requirement for providers to routinely submit quarterly QDP updates to Welsh Government, we expect providers to continue to regularly monitor progress in implementing the QDP. We may ask to see these updates to ensure that we have current and relevant information on providers' progress. We also expect

providers to ensure that actions being taken in response to Estyn inspections are integrated into their QDP cycles.