Learning and Development Quality Assurance Manual

A Guide to Learning & Development

in Irish Wheelchair Association

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April 2023 Version 3

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1. Provider Profile

- o Company Registration No 352483
- o Charity Regulatory Authority CRA 20007997
- o Registered Charity No CHY 5393

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is Ireland's leading representative organisation and service provider for people with physical disabilities. We advocate for the needs of people with physical disabilities and provide services and supports to over 20,000 members in their homes and communities throughout Ireland every year.

IWA is a non-for-profit company limited by guarantee with charitable status and is wholly owned by its members, people with disabilities and others with impaired mobility, family members, friends, and volunteers. IWA is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority and is 'triple locked.' The Board is responsible for the strategy and future direction of IWA and ensuring effective and efficient delivery of its plans and functions.

Everything we do is driven by IWA's vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities can enjoy equal rights, choices and opportunities and live their lives independently.

IWA Vision

IWA has a vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities enjoy equal rights, choices, and opportunities in how they live their lives, and where our country is a model worldwide for a truly inclusive society.

IWA Mission

IWA (IWA) works with, and on behalf of, people with physical disabilities to drive positive change in Ireland through the influencing of public policy, the provision of quality services and enabling accessibility to all aspects of society.

IWA Values

Building on our legacy, IWA strives towards new ways of doing things to meet the current and future needs of people with disabilities. We are deliberately ambitious as a leader in our sector, driving positive change by listening and being creative in supporting and empowering disabled people to live the life they choose.

IWA is proud of what we do and how we do it. We always behave ethically in ways that are authentic and trustworthy.

IWA's commitment to excellence underpins our quality services, adherence to best practice governance, partnerships, and relationships in all areas of our work.

IWA fearlessly says what needs to be said and does what needs to be done. We are not afraid to fail and try again. We are resolute in championing the rights of people with disabilities.

IWA believes in creating a culture and environment of fun and enjoyment in all that we do. IWA is a community to which people want to belong.

Aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), IWA believes in a fair and inclusive society. We work actively to ensure that every person with a disability in Ireland can achieve their right to an independent life, with equal access to opportunities, services and supports within their communities.

IWA is open to new ideas, new ways of working and to building new and existing partnerships to achieve our vision. We are committed to working in a truly transparent way.

Fig 1

1.1 Organisation Structure

IWA is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee which is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors and managed by our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Management Team. The Association's structure, locations and contact details are described in detail on our website www.iwa.ie . The IWA delivers its services and supports in every county.

The full IWA Organisational Chart can be found in Appendix 1. Terms of Reference for the SMT Appendix 1.A are also available.

Figure 1 provides a high-level overview of the organisational structure.

 Figure 1: Overview of the organisational structure

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  IWA Board of Directors  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Chief Executive Officer  │
                    │          (CEO)           │
                    └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │ Chief Operational Officer│   │ Senior Management Team  │
   │          (COO)           │   │          (SMT)          │
   └─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │         Service          │   │   Department Managers   │
   │                          │   │ (including Head of L&D) │
   └─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │      Area Manager        │   │       Team Leads        │
   └─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │   Coordinator &Teams     │   │ Frontline Support staff │
   │                          │   │ E.g.: National QQI Lead,│
   └─────────────────────────┘   │        Trainers         │
                                  └─────────────────────────┘
   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │ Frontline Support staff  │
   │ E.g.: QQI Leads, Tutors  │
   └─────────────────────────┘
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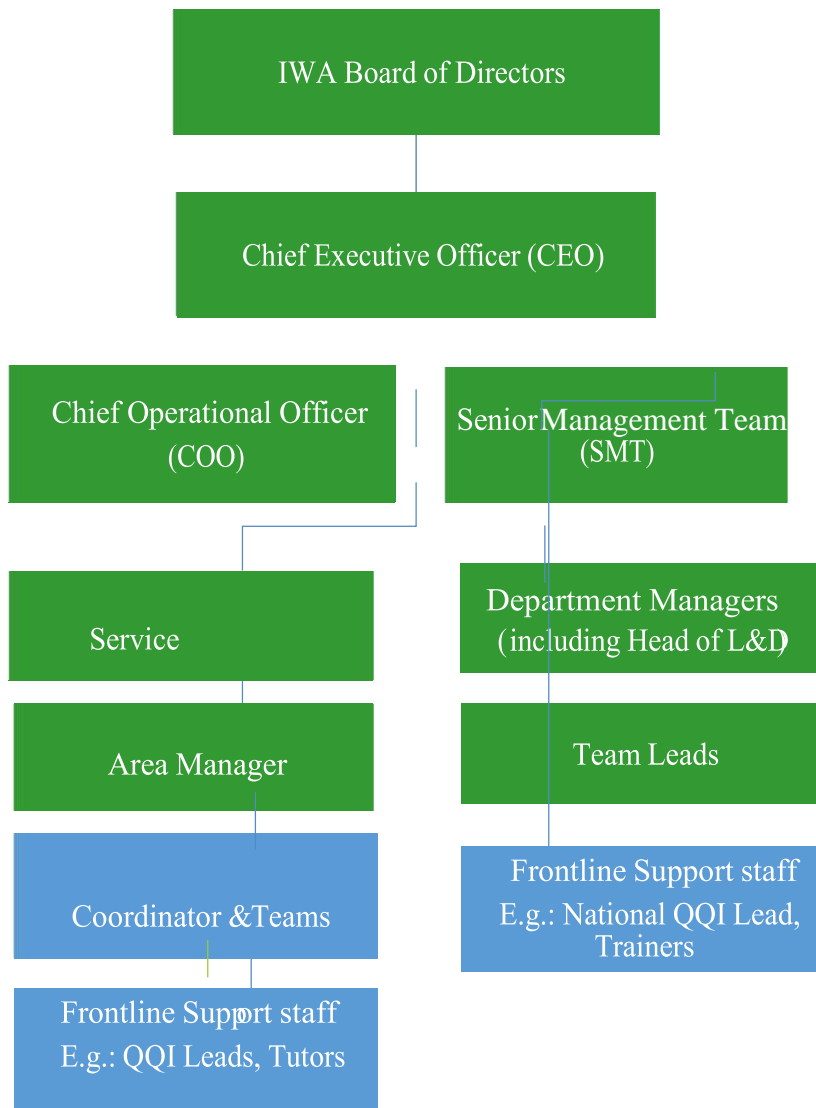
Fig 2

1.2 IWA Services and Supports

IWA provides a choice of services and supports that are delivered in the person's home and/or community. Our diverse range of services and supports respond to people's expectation to be independent and active in the social and economic life of Irish society. IWA services and supports are developed in line with IWA's Vision, Mission, and Values.

Central circle: People are at the heart of everything we do

- Assisted Living Service, Community Centres, Rehabilitative Training Unit, Holiday Services
- Independence
- Departments of Finance, People & Development, Quality & Standards
- Choice
- Sport, Youth, Housing & Access, Driving School, Accessible Fleet of Buses
- Fundraising, Charity Shops, Volunteers and Branches
- Participation
- Customer Care, Advocacy Campaigns, Spokeout Magazine, Publications

Fig 3

1.3 IWA National Standards

IWA is committed to providing consistent, quality, person centred services throughout the country. To achieve this all staff and volunteers operate to IWA national standards. These IWA standards are based on legal requirements, best practice, and are underpinned by IWA's core values.

To achieve quality standards, IWA publishes operational manuals that outline, in detail, the policies and procedures for all areas of service delivery. Polices are implemented using operational procedures (SOP's). Staff access IWA's policies and procedures on SharePoint and through their line manager.

1.4 Safeguarding and Protecting Learners

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting learners aged 18 or under and vulnerable adults through the implementation of the IWA safeguarding policy and p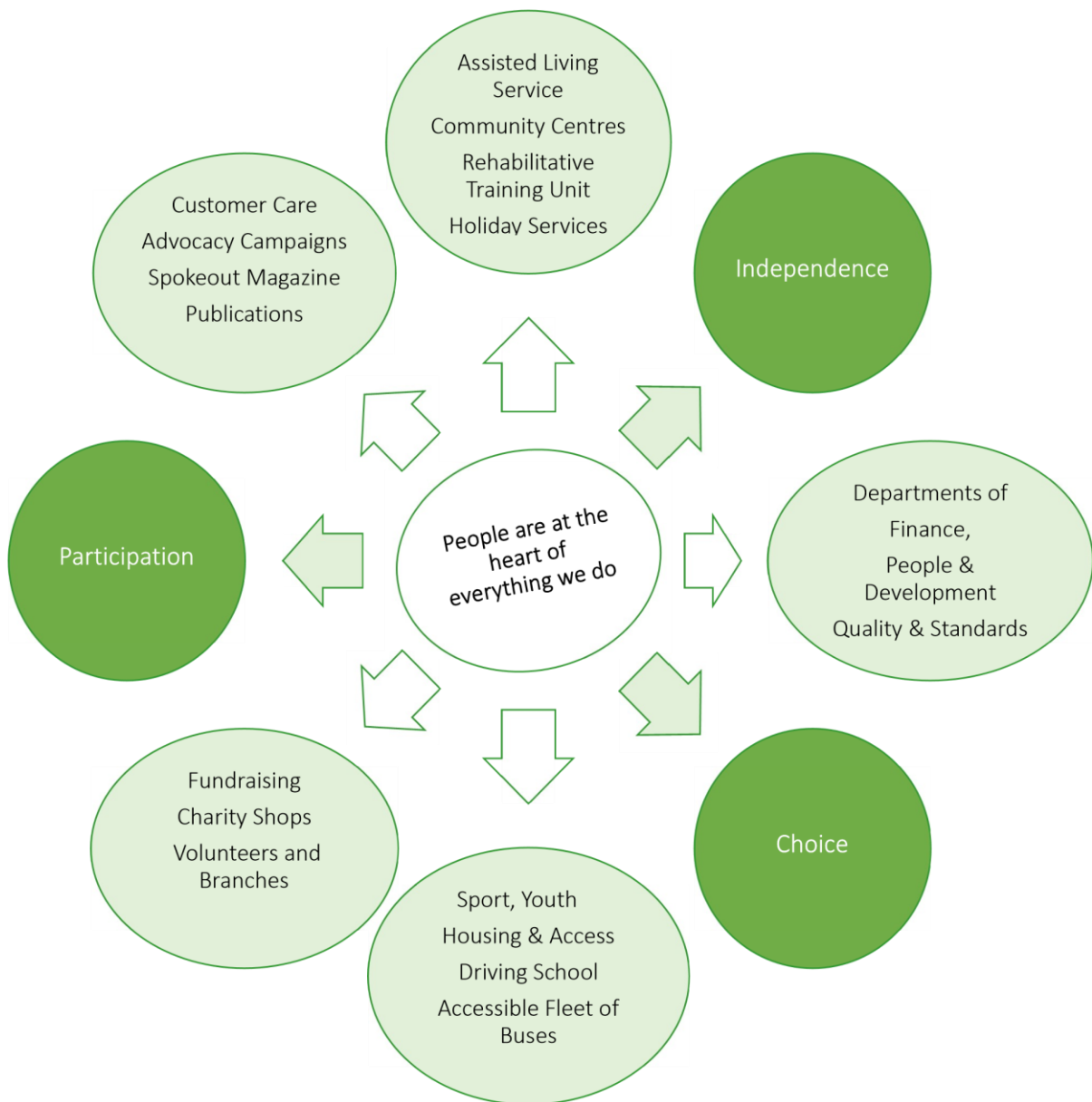rocedures, [Child Protection Policy & Procedure](#) (Appendix 2) and [Safeguarding Adults Policy & Procedure](#) (Appendix 3). The Head of Learning & Development is responsible for the implementation of this policy in the L&D department. All stakeholders have a responsibility regarding safeguarding and these responsibilities are clearly set out in the safeguarding policy and in the learner handbooks. IWA has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse and promotes a culture which supports this approach.

1.5 IWA Community Supports Directorate

Irish Wheelchair Association operates community centres with day services, member transport, training, holidays, outings, school leaver activities and outreach programmes through 58 full and part-time community centres around Ireland. More information on Community Centres can be found on the IWA website https://www.iwa.ie/services/community-centres/. Community centred are staffed by An Area Manager, Service Manager, Service Coordinator, Service Support Officer, Tutor and/or QQI Lead Person. [Role descriptions Community Supports Directorate](#) (Appendix 4) are developed for all roles.
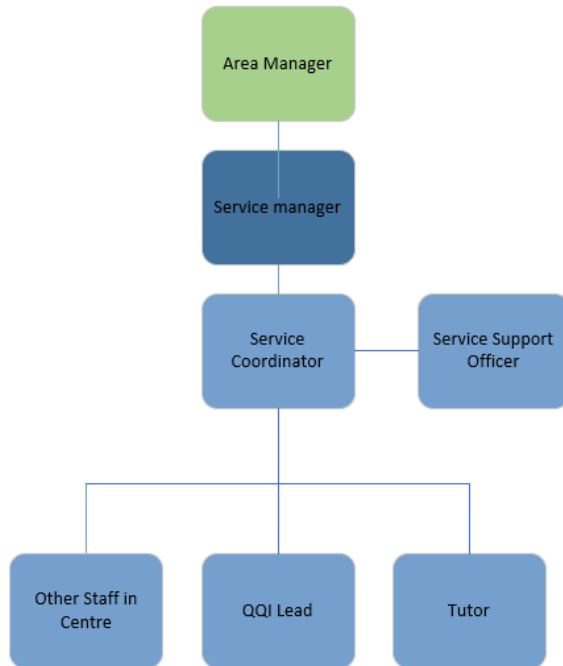
Fig 4

1.6 IWA Learning & Development Department

The Learning & Development department is part of the People and Development directorate of IWA. It is staffed by Head of Learning & Development, Training Team Lead, 5 Regional Trainers and a Training Coordinator and a National QQI Lead/Administrator. If a programme leading to a QQI award is being delivered in a training location, the Head of Learning & Development appoints a QQI lead to coordinate delivery and ensure the Quality Assurance system is implemented. Role descriptions Learning & Development Team (Appendix 5) are developed for each role.
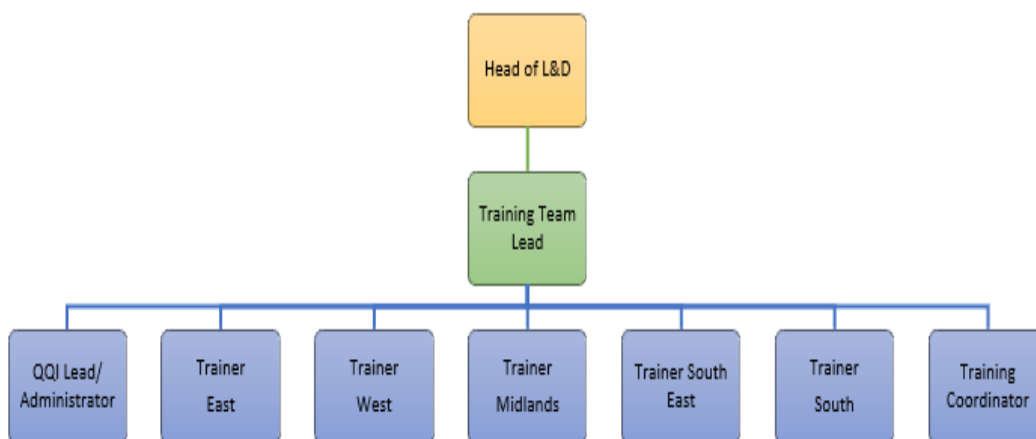
Fig 5

The IWA locations are used to deliver accredited and non-accredited training to staff and other stakeholders including QQI Level 5. This is coordinated nationally through the Training coordinator and National QQI lead from our head office in Clontarf, Dublin 3.

Mission Statement of Learning & Development

"*To provide quality training and education to people with disabilities, staff, volunteers and external clients in a flexible and innovative manner to enable individual learners to reach their full potential in a safe inclusive environment.*"

Scope of Provision

o   Accredited Programmes

A programme leading to a Level 5 major award in Community Health Services 5M4468 delivered to staff of IWA.

A Rehabilitative Training (RT) programme delivered in Clontarf, Kilkenny and Ballycanew leading to a Level 3 major award in General Learning (3M0874). This programme is delivered by the IWA Community Supports Directorate (CSD) to IWA service-users.

ASDAN: Life Skills Challenges: UK-accredited flexible online life skills challenges from pre-entry to Level 3 for people with disabilities

o   Compliance training.

The training of employees on laws, regulations and organisational policies that apply to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

o   Professional Development

We make a range of options available to employees to engage in professional development including support for further education, management development and government funded schemes such as Springboard.

o   Non-Accredited Programmes

Programmes of group activities and individualised training based on service-users Individual Service Plans

2. Governance and the Management of Quality

2.1 Governance

IWA is committed to the principles of good governance in further education and training in line with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) 2012 & 2019. The Board of Directors are the highest level of governance for all IWA operations. They are guided by the IWA Governance Manual available on the IWA website and in compliance with recommended best practice and relevant rules regulations and guidelines. The Board is supported in its work by sub-committees including the Academic Committee.

The Role of the Board

The Board is responsible for the strategy and future direction of IWA.

o   the effective and efficient delivery of its plans and functions.

o   Ensuring high standards of corporate governance.

o   Establishing the strategic direction and priorities of IWA

o   Encouraging high standards of propriety and promoting the efficient and effective use of resources.

o   Promoting quality in IWA and its activities and services.

o   Monitoring performance against agreed objectives and targets.

o   Ensuring that members of the board and IWA corporately, observe principles of public life as set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

2.1.1 Risk Management

The Quality team is responsible for the implementation of the IWA risk management process at an organisational level. The Head of L&D is responsible for identifying and detailing risk for learning and development activities. This process is underpinned by the development of a Risk Register (Appendix 6), specific to the activities of learning and development, from needs identification to the completion of training. The Quality Team monitors the Register, reviews it

on a quarterly basis and reports on it to the Senior Management Team who may add relevant high level, sector wide risks, to the Register.

The process of identifying and analysing risks is part of the overall management of the L&D department and the risk register is reviewed and updated on a regular basis in line with the Risk Management Policy (Appendix 7).

2.1.2 Health and Safety

IWA is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and development of service users, learners and staff and has a documented Health and Safety Statement (Appendix 8) which is published on SharePoint. All IWA policies and procedures reflect the considered role of our staff and volunteers in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for learners, staff, and volunteers.

2.1.3 Academic Governance

Academic Governance in IWA includes policies, structures, relationships, systems and processes that collectively provide leadership to and oversight of learning and development activities.

2.1.4 Academic Committee

The Academic Committee is responsible for the governance and academic oversight of all teaching and learning activities, acting as the ultimate authority on all academic matters.

Academic Committee Terms of Reference (Appendix 9) are in place.

2.1.5 Results Approval Panel (RAP)

The Results Approval Panel ensures that the validity, authenticity, and reliability of the programme assessment process is respected, and ensures fairness and consistency in marking and grading, identifying inconsistencies and proposing corrective action. Results Approval Panel Terms of Reference (Appendix 10) are in place. A Results Approval Panel Report Template (Appendix 10.A) is used to draft the RAP report.

2.1.6 External Authentication

IWA conducts External Authentication to ensure that the organisation's assessment policy and procedures are being applied in a consistent manner. The External Authentication process is outlined in the External Authentication of Assessment SOP (Appendix 11). The External

Authenticator Role Description (Appendix 11.A) outlines the responsibilities and the criteria for selection. The External Authentication Report Template (Appendix 11.B) will be used to record all Internal Verification).

2.1.7 Internal Verification

IWA conducts internal verification to ensure that the organisation's assessment policy and procedures are being applied in a consistent manner by Trainers/Tutors who are assessing learners' work ahead of relevant certifying bodies, i.e., QQI or ASDAN.

The internal verification process is outlined in the Internal Verification SOP (Appendix 12)

The Head of Learning & Development has overall responsibility for Internal Verification and appoints an Internal Verifier(s) to review all assessed work by all learner groups in a timely manner. The assigned Internal Verifier for QQI Level 5 modules is the Learning & Development Department's Training Team Lead. The assigned Internal Verifier for QQI Level 3 modules is the Service Manager for Dublin North City & County (DNCC). The assigned Internal Verifier for ASDAN Life skills Challenges is the Service Coordinator in the Rehabilitation Training Unit in Clontarf. The Head of Learning and Development may also select alternative or additional qualified persons to act as Internal Verifiers, if necessary, where these persons meet the criteria for selection of Internal Verifiers. The Internal Verifier Role Description (Appendix 12.A) outlines the responsibilities and the criteria for selection. The Internal Verifier Report Template (Appendix 12.B) will be used to record all Internal Verification.

2.1.8 Quality Assurance Steering Group

The role of the Quality Assurance Steering Group is to support and develop the Quality Assurance processes across all Learning & Development activities in IWA. The Quality Assurance Steering Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 13) are in place.

2.1.9   Programme Approval Group

The programme Approval Group provides oversight of submissions for development, review, and submission for validation to accredited bodies. The Programme Approval Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 14) are available to staff on SharePoint.
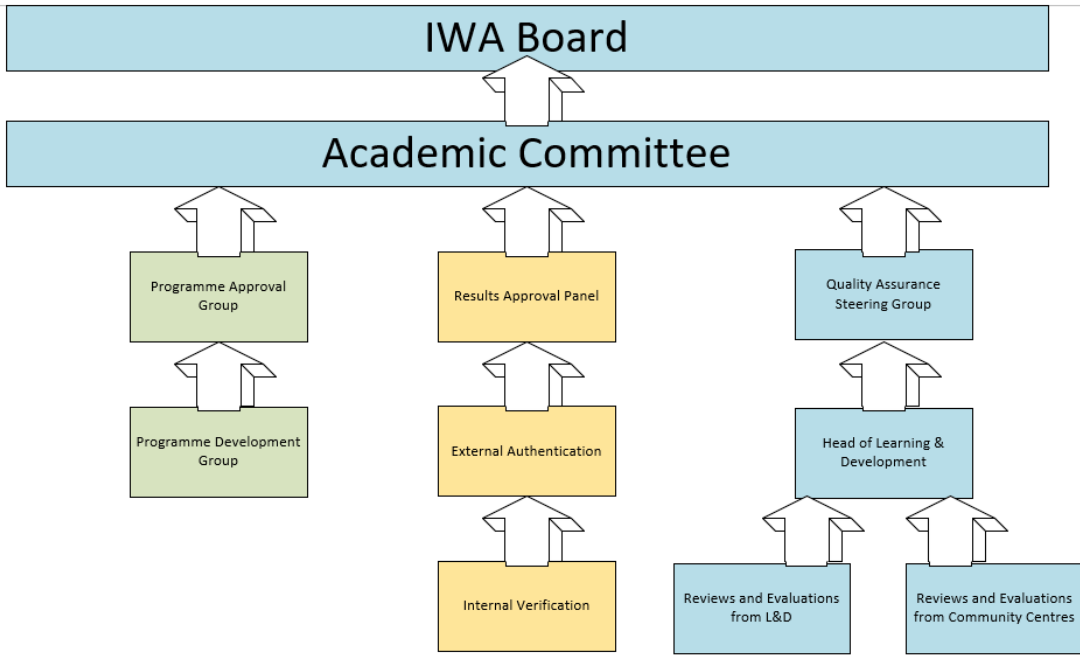
Figure 6 outlines the group relationships.

Fig 6

2.2 Management of Quality

Quality Assurance applies to all learning and development activities within IW. IWA is compliant with all relevant legislation including

- o Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) 2012 & 2019
- o QQI Core Statutory Guidelines 2016
- o Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- o General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- o Equal Status Acts 2000-2015
- o Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015

The Quality policy (Appendix 15) states IWA 's continuous effort to ensure we deliver quality services that meet the requirements and expectations of people with physical disabilities and the community. To support this, IWA monitors and always improves the work of the organisation, and therefore, outcomes experienced by people who avail of our services.

IWA is committed to identifying, developing, and delivering a high standard of learning and development, through the implementation of a QAS system, to staff and service users in the organisation across a broad range of functions, disciplines, and skill levels.

2.2.1 Aims of the Quality Assurance System (QAS)

- o To set out clearly IWA standards and best practice in delivering learning and development opportunities.
- o To guide and support managing all aspects of our training to a high standard.
- o To ensure we meet the needs of all our stakeholders effectively, particularly Learners.
- o To provide staff, Learners, awarding bodies and the other stakeholders with reliable and accessible data and information about our Programmes, outcomes, and standards.
- o To support us and identify any area of improvement where quality is compromised.
- o To increase Learner satisfaction with a view to enhancing our learning and development provision
- o To ensure consistency across all Programmes in needs identification, Programme design, Programme delivery and Learner supports

2.2.2 Scope of the QAS

The QAS applies to all activities associated with learning and development and to all Trainers/Tutors and auxiliary staff in IWA in the context of learning and development. This is addressed in the Learning & Development Quality Assurance Manual under the following sections:

o Governance

o Management of Quality

o Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

o Programmes of Education and Training

o Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

o Learning Resources and Supports

o Teaching and Learning

o Assessment

o Information and Data Management

o Public Information and Communication

o Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

2.2.3 Responsibility for the QAS

L&D oversees the resourcing and implementation of the QAS. Responsibility for day-to-day activities associated with implementing the learning and development QAS is delegated by IWA to the L&D Department. The Head of L&D is responsible for ensuring the QAS is implemented at an organisational level. The Head of L&D ensures that staff, Trainers/Tutors, Learners, and relevant stakeholders are aware of their respective QA responsibilities.

2.2.4 Embedding a Quality Culture in IWA

The Head of L&D is responsible for ensuring that the Quality Assurance System (QAS) and a culture of quality in embedded in the learning and development activities and underpins how it operates. The Head of L&D is also responsible for ensuring that the QAS is properly resourced and supported. IWA has delegated responsibility to the L&D Team for evaluating

and monitoring the implementation of the QAS across learning and development activities, and to ensure its effectiveness in achieving its aims.

Its aims are achieved by:

o   Quality assurance/quality matters is an agenda item at all L&D Team meetings.

o   Our approach and commitment to quality provision is clearly set out in our Learner Handbooks and is discussed at Learner and Trainer Induction

o   Staff members' responsibilities in ensuring quality provision are detailed in their role descriptions.

o   The Head of L&D ensures that accurate data on the quality of our provision is available and accessible to relevant stakeholders through SharePoint and on the IWA website.

o   We encourage and invite ongoing feedback and commentary from stakeholders with regard to quality and operate an open-door policy with regard to suggestions for enhancements and improvements to our quality initiatives.

o   We invite the users of the QAS to input into the design of QA policies and procedures to promote a sense of ownership of quality amongst our stakeholders and increase user commitment.

o   Review of the Annual Learning and Development business plan

o   Review of the Annual Learning & Development Budget

3. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

This chapter describes IWA's quality assurance policies and procedures, the processes involved in developing and monitoring these and a summary of quality management processes in the wider IWA organisation. The overarching Quality Assurance Policy (Appendix 16) for the organisation can be found on SharePoint

3.1 Documented Quality Assurance Policy & Procedures

IWA quality assurance policies and procedures are developed in line with best practice and regulatory requirements from external bodies such as the QQI statutory assurance guidelines and are consistent, person centred, and focused on the IWA's core values. To achieve quality standards, the IWA uses operational manuals that detail the policies and procedures for all areas of operation including learning and development. For each area of operation, including learning and development, there are documented policies and procedures that staff must implement to ensure the quality-of-service delivery. Some polices are department-specific and general policies have cross-department application. Our procedures are set out in the form of standard operational procedures (SOPs) using a standard template and maintained in an SOP manual.

IWA's Policies, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are published on the IWAs SharePoint, accessible by all internal members of the organisation. They are also published on our LMS 'Develop' for all Learners to have full access. All IWA's policies and procedures are designed to inform management, staff, trainers, learners, and any other stakeholders of IWA's commitment to quality in its learning and development provision and how it relates to IWA's overall commitment to quality in all its organisational activities and services. The Manual's operational policies and procedures (SOP's) are supported by IWA's corporate and nationally shared policies and procedures. See table 1.

Table 1:

Our policies state the national standard to be implemented by everyone in the work of Irish Wheelchair Association			
		Policy Category	Description
IWA Policies And Procedures	A.	Standard Operational Procedures (SOP's)	o Each service works to a Manual that states a standard operational procedure (SOP) for each aspect of service delivery.
	B.	Department Policies	o Under Corporate Services IWA operates several departments that support the work of IWA. o Everyone in IWA implements these policies when engaging with these specific functions.
	C.	National Shared Policies	o This category hosts general polices that are not explicit or for the sole use by an operational or corporate service.

The need to develop or revise a policy in the IWA can arise through.

o Legislation

o A change in accredited body guidelines such as QQI

o Feedback from management, staff, and learners

o Self-evaluation

o External advice/ reviews

o Review period of 2 years expires.

Policy and procedures that are developed are overseen by the departments of expertise and the quality assurance manager. Policies and procedures must be in line with the IWA's overall goals and mission and with accredited bodies guidelines. They must be written in a language appropriate to our learners, staff, and stakeholders. We supplement the use of narrative in our

QA documents, particularly our procedures, with the use of workflows and flowcharts to give the user an overview of the process to be undertaken. We use visuals in our QA documents where they are appropriate and help to clarify the meaning of the text and support the users understanding of the text. Visuals take many forms, process maps, QA schema, organisation chart, flowcharts. The following are the key visuals included in the QA manual.

o   A visual representation of the governance structure

o   A visual representation of the organisational structure

o   A Process map of our QA system on the QA schema designed by QQI.

To ensure our policies are fit for purpose they undergo a development and approval process involving departmental staff, senior management, and relevant standing committees.

Policies and procedures requiring development or review are identified through QA governance system.

A draft copy of the Policy and procedure document is sent to the academic committee for approval..

Document control update relevant document on SharePoint & send out a communication to all staff.

Head of the department assigns the responsibility of development/review to the relevant competent person.

Once approved the Policy and procedure document is sent to document control. New policies & Procedures or existing documents with significant changes must go to SMT for approval..

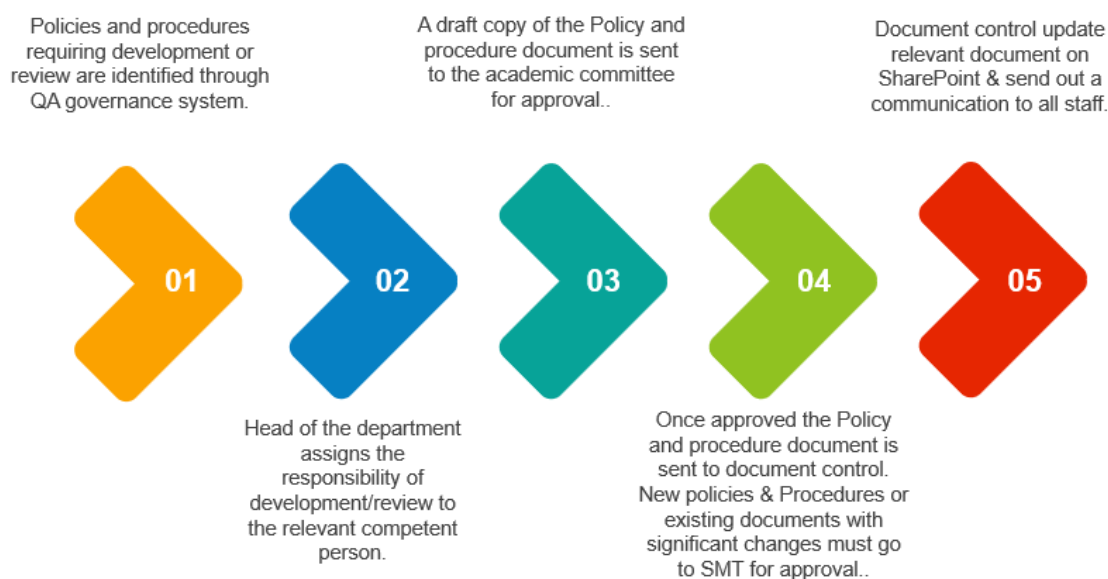*Fig 7*

The policies and procedures surrounding learning and development within the IWA:

o   Apply or will apply to all IWA training, including QQI accredited training, compliance related training, professional development training, ASDAN and any informal learning opportunities.

o   Guide and inform staff and learners on their respective roles and responsibilities.

o   Give all stakeholders an understanding of what quality standard to expect from IWA.

o   Inform learners of their own responsibilities over their own learning and development.

The Quality Assurance System is documented and available to learners through SharePoint and Develop. The key documents available are:

o   Learning and Development Quality Assurance Manual

o   Learner Handbook Level 3 (Appendix 17)

o   Learner Handbook Level 5 (Appendix 18)

3.2 Learning and Development Quality Assurance Manual:

This is IWA's overarching learning & development quality assurance document, communicating IWA's approach to implementing the quality assurance guidelines in all learning and development activities including QQI.

3.3 Learners Handbook:

A Learner Handbook is designed to include core specific relevant information. Each learner receives a copy of the handbook on commencing an IWA programme either by hand or via Develop. The handbook is discussed with the learner on the first training session to highlight its importance. This ensures consistency and clarity of information across all programmes. The learner handbooks provide the learner with information or links on information on the following topics:

o   Module Descriptions

o   Learner support

o   Learner's welfare, dignity, respect, and equality guidelines

o   Safety

o   Classroom Rules

o   Disciplinary processes and the appeals processes

o   Teaching methods applied.

o   Assessment procedures

o   Relevant IWA policies and procedures

o   Data Protection

3.4 Learner Induction:

Course Induction takes place at the beginning of each programme and is designed to introduce the learner to the programme. The induction is completed by the QQI Lead. The Induction is time where the learner can be notified of policies and procedures and how to access them. On an ongoing basis, the Trainers/Tutors are primarily responsible for day-to-day communication with learner's and are tasked to ensure that all communications are issued to all learners, selecting appropriate methods according to geographic location and programme mode.

3.5 Communication of Quality Assurance to Staff, Learners, and Stakeholders:

IWA has developed high quality internal pathways of communication that demonstrate openness and transparency. It will provide staff and learners with timely, relevant, and accurate information relating to quality assurance. The organisation employs several different mediums for communicating information:

o   SharePoint

o   Staff meetings with line managers

o   Internal memos

o   Newsletters

o   LMS 'Develop'

o   Social media including Facebook, and other platforms.

o   Organisation Prospectus and other printed materials e.g., flyers

o   Newspaper and radio advertising

o   Organisation Open Days

o   Participation in Conferences and Recruitment Fairs

IWA recognises the importance of facilitating efficient and effective communications with staff, learners, and stakeholders in all centres to ensure that they have an inclusive and responsive

learning experience for our learners within the organisation and to ensure consistency in learning and development quality assurance across the whole organisation.

IWA is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect as outlined in the Dignity & Respect Policy (Appendix 19)

3.6 Staff Communication

Staff communication involves collecting and collating the views of staff members on a periodic basis as well as keeping staff members informed of issues relating to their roles, responsibilities, and programme areas. Systematic consultation with IWA staff and Service Users includes gatherings of all staff and Service Users to review and inform the strategic direction of the organisation. Staff members discuss and provide feedback on their contribution to the business plan and the strategic plan through the IWA Performance Development System and discuss their responsibilities. This information is recorded and reviewed through the Performance Development System. Minutes pertaining to other meetings are circulated as appropriate. IWA publishes relevant documents and policies internally on SharePoint and on the website, as appropriate. The cycle of review of policies and procedures facilitates continuous communication with relevant stakeholders and the opinions, views and suggestions of staff add value and relevance to policy formulation and revision.

3.7 Systematic Implementation of Quality Assurance policies and procedures in the IWA

IWA takes a rounded approach towards quality assurance with accountability as a central element. IWA aims for continuous improvements in quality, this is done by integrating quality assurance policy and procedures within all its services.

3.8 Corporate policy and procedures

IWA has corporate policies and procedures that apply across the organisation. These policies and procedures are available on SharePoint for internal access. Table 2 identifies the key departments and the policies and procedures linked to each as an overview.

Table 2:

IWA Services and Supports A. Standard Operational Procedures (SOP)	IWA Corporate Services B. Department Policies	C. IWA National Shared Policies
Assisted Living Service (ALS)	Clinical Team	Quality Policy
ALS Children Services	Communications	Person Centred Policy
Community Centre	Customer Care	Data Protection
Holiday Service	Design	Photography
MATTS	Finance	Student Work Placement
Rehabilitation Training	Fundraising	Personal Care
School Leavers	Housing	Handling Monies
Sport	Health and Safety	Maintenance etc.
Supported Hotel Holidays	ICT	
Supported Independent Living Service	People and Development (HR & L&D)	
Volunteering	Procurement	
Youth Services	Quality	
	Retail	
	Safeguarding	

3.9 Academic Domain for Quality Assurance

The learning and development policies and procedures are implemented by the Head of L&D, QQI leads, trainers/tutors and administration staff. The Head of L&D communicates such policies and procedures via, SharePoint, Develop, emails and team meetings. This process ensures that the quality assurance policies and procedures are:

o   Documented and robust

o   Fit for purpose.

o   Have a formal standing within the IWA.

o   Are consistent with relevant legislation.

o   Align with the overall strategies and goals of the organisation.

o   Inform and comply with accredited bodies such as QQI.

4. Programmes of Education & Training

IWA is committed to providing a quality learning experience for its learners, and therefore the quality of its programmes is of fundamental importance. Programme development is informed by IWA's L&D strategy, Service Users consultation, stakeholder involvement, demands within the health and social care sector and the policies and criteria of awarding bodies such as QQI.

A process has been agreed for the development and approval of new accredited and non-accredited training programmes in line with the Programme Development and Approval Policy (Appendix 20) and all programmes are developed in line with QQI Guidelines for validation https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qp-17-policies-and-criteria-for-the-validation-of-programmes-of-education-and-training.pdf .

4.1 Programme Development Group

When a new programme is identified as part of the Training Needs Analysis or Annual Planning Process or in response to the learners needs, the proposal to develop it will be discussed by the relevant department with the Head of Learning & Development. All Programme development groups will be provided with the Programme Development Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 21). The programme development group will develop the new programme and submit the Module Development Template (Appendix 21.A) to the Programme Approval group.

4.2 Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition

IWA is committed to ensuring that the quality of the Learner experience from application to certification is clear, transparent, consistent, and equitable for all. This is outlined in the Access, Transfer and Progression Policy (Appendix 22). This includes Recognition for Prior Certified Learning which can be applied for using the Recognition of Prior Learning Form (Appendix 22.A) All learners are required to register for QQI modules. The steps involved in this process are outlined in the Registration of Learner SOP (Appendix 23). Learners contribute a €20 administration fee towards their QQI module which can be deducted from salary if requested using the QQI Administration Fee Consent Form (Appendix 23.A). Learners complete a Registration Form (Appendix 23.B) before commencing their learning journey.

An overview of The Learner's journey at Level 5 (Appendix 24) outlines the roadmap for learners at level 5. An overview of the Learners journey at Level 3 (Appendix 25) outlines the roadmap for learners at level 3.

5. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

IWA recognises the valuable contribution of staff without whom the organisation would be unable to deliver its vision and mission. A commitment is made to attract and retain excellent staff with the expertise necessary to advance learning, development, inclusion, and equality goals. The crucial role of administration and support staff is also recognised.

A suite of HR Policies and systems are in place to provide staff with a supportive environment that allows them to conduct their work effectively and to encourage ongoing personal and professional development of all employees.

5.1 Staff Recruitment

IWA recognises that people are its most important asset and fundamental to its success. It recognises that to maintain standards, it must focus on attracting, recruiting, and retaining the best staff. The Recruitment and Selection Policy (Appendix 26) outlines the procedures for recruitment and selection in IWA. All staff recruited must abide by the organisation Code of Conduct Policy (Appendix 27) and complete a period of probation when they commence as outlined in the Probation Policy (Appendix 28)

The People & Development Department has overall responsibility for the recruitment of staff. It considers and, if appropriate, sanctions the appointment of replacement and additional staff based on a recommendation from the Director of the relevant service. IWA aims to promote best practice in recruitment by:

o   Ensuring that recruitment processes conform with relevant legislation.

o   Providing a transparent, systematic, framework for recruitment which enables fair selection decisions.

o   Ensuring that all relevant staff with recruitment responsibility are aware of IWA's recruitment and related policies and procedures and the importance of adhering to best practice.

To ensure a systematic approach to fair and transparent recruitment and to make sure that staff have sufficient experience and expertise to fulfil their designated roles, all relevant staff with

recruitment responsibility are supported in the development of detailed job specifications, shortlisting criteria, marking grids and other support material by the organisation's People and Development Department. Figure 5.1 below summarising the process for staff recruitment in IWA.

Vacancy Identified

Business case prepared and submitted.

Approval by Director of Service and P&D

Advertising Position

Shortlisting Criteria Applied

Interview & Selection Process

Offer of Employment

Reference Check & Verification of Qualifications

Contract of Employment

Figure 8: Staff Recruitment Process

5.2 Induction

All new employees receive an Induction to their new role. During induction, policies and procedures are brought to the attention of staff by their Line Manager and are available to all employees on the Organisation's SharePoint. In addition to this, new employees are assigned a mentor or buddy and will also shadow more experienced employees to familiarise them with the role and the organisation. The Staff Induction policy (Appendix 29) outlines how induction is carried out and recorded.

5.3 Performance Management & Development

All managers are guided by the organisations' Performance Development Policy (Appendix 30) and the Performance Development Framework (Appendix 31) which includes regular formal and informal meetings. Appraisal of all staff, including the collection and use of regular and timely learner feedback, informs decisions relating to recruitment, selection, probation, and tenure. Permanent tenure in IWA is subject to a satisfactory period of probation.

All Departments prepare business plans with each individual staff member actions detailed and actively implemented thorough GROW, the internal Performance Development System. Opportunities for staff input and feedback are processed through GROW. In recognition of the importance of continuous self-improvement and lifelong learning, IWA's Learning and Development Strategy (Appendix 32) IWA's Learning & Development Policy (Appendix 33) and Support for Further Education Policy (Appendix 34) supports all staff across the organisation to engage in further studies and training, as appropriate, with a view to meeting the needs of an evolving and innovative organisation.

Staff input with respect to the leadership, management and strategic direction of the Organisation is collated through the strategic planning process, staff review and consultation meetings, GROW and informal feedback mechanisms.

5.4 Staff Communication

IWA has developed high quality internal pathways of communication that demonstrate openness and transparency. Staff communication involves collecting and collating the views of staff members on a periodic basis as well as keeping staff members informed of issues relating

to their roles, responsibilities, and programme areas. Systematic consultation with IWA staff and Service Users includes gatherings of all staff and Service Users to review and inform the strategic direction of the organisation. Staff members discuss and provide feedback on their contribution to the business plan and the strategic plan through GROW and discuss their responsibilities. This information is recorded and reviewed through the GROW system. Minutes pertaining to other meetings are circulated as appropriate.

IWA publishes relevant documents and policies internally on SharePoint and on the website, as appropriate. The cycle of review of policies and procedures facilitates continuous communication with relevant stakeholders and the opinions, views and suggestions of staff add value and relevance to policy formulation and revision.

5.5 Analysis of training needs

Identification of training needs within the organisations is a critical step in the learning and development process.

5.5.1 Training needs of Service Users

All services users receive a person-centred service withing the community centre. In IWA each person availing of a Community Centre Service has a plan which states the service and supports they requested through the year.

Introductory Period

The Introductory Period gives the new applicant an opportunity to attend the centre, meet fellow participants, staff, and participate in the Centre programme. The Introductory Period also enables the service to get to know the person's requirements and preferences. At the end of the Introductory Period the applicant has the experience and knowledge to make informed decisions about the service. The process results in an Individual Service Plan (Appendix 35) being drafted.

The Individual Service Plan is the contract with the person, it states what the person has chosen to participate in and what the Centre is committed to providing throughout the year. The

person's plan is an active document that is updated through the Individual Service Plan Review (Appendix 36) as and when required with a new plan drafted each year.
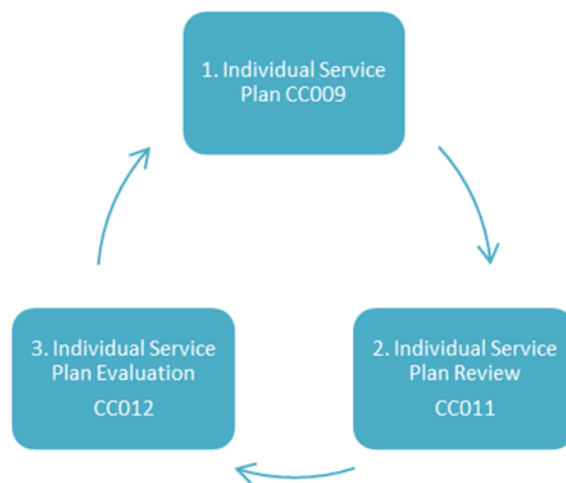

Fig 9 Service Users Planning cycle

This Individual Service plan is supported by IWA staff team and is reviewed and evaluated through the year using the Individual Service Plan Evaluation (Appendix 37). When evaluating the Individual Service Plan at the end of a year, the new Individual Service Plan for the following year is also agreed.

All people availing of the service are offered the opportunity of 1:1 support to achieve a personal goal. This is offered through their Individual Service Plan and Centre Service Review (Appendix 38) meetings or it can be requested at any stage throughout the year. The coordinator works with the team to identify a staff who is most suited to support the person

We want employees to acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are relevant for their current and future function in the organisation. This way, learning is a way to create new business capabilities and is a means to an end – it has a goal. It could be the identification of a new set of skills that are needed or simply making sure that everyone gets their mandatory compliance and role specific training in time so they can continue to do their work safely and effectively.

5.5.2 Training needs of Staff

Identifying training needs of staff in IWA happens in three ways.

o   Organisational analysis. In this phase, the short and long-term goals of the organisation are analysed. The goal is to define the training needs that will help the company realise its business goals. These goals need to align with the organisational strategy to be effective in the long term.

o   Function/Job analysis. Besides the identified organisational need, it is important to look at a function or task level. What are the competencies and skills required to be successful in one's job? The goal here is to identify the most important knowledge, skills, and attitudes for employees to be successful in their jobs.

o   Individual analysis. In this analysis, job performance is evaluated. Current competencies and knowledge, performance, and skill levels are identified. The key source for this analysis is oftentimes the employee's performance evaluation. The outcome of the analysis serves as input for the definition of the training needs.
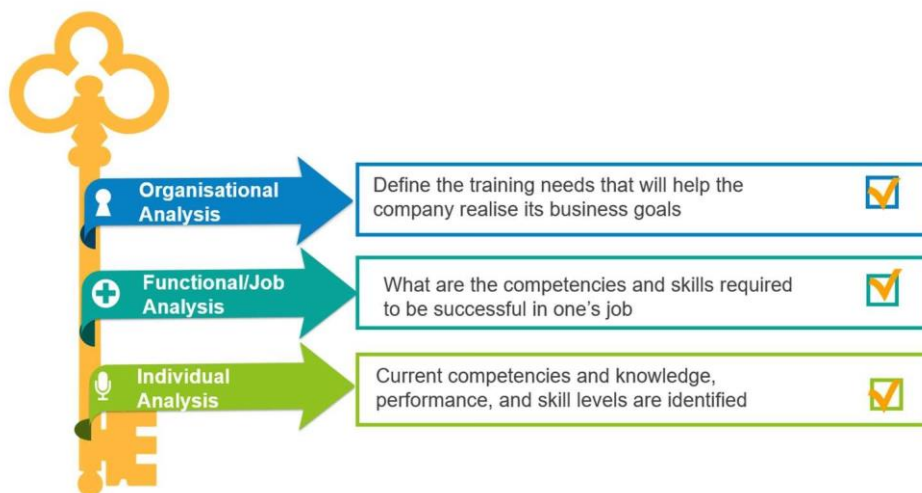

Fig 9

5.6. Staff Development Opportunities

The knowledge, experience and skills of employees constitute IWA's most valuable asset. To fulfil its responsibilities to all stakeholders, IWA must ensure that the quality and calibre of this resource is continually enhanced. IWA's Learning & Development policy and Support for Further

Education Policy includes provision for the support of staff training and development activities, study, and examination leave. In addition to this a range of development opportunities are identified through the Performance Development Process. A range of opportunities to enable employees to upskill are available. This includes:

o   Support for Further Education: A staff development fund is available through our support for further education policy to enable employees to apply for support to achieve an accredited qualification relevant to their role, their career preference and the organisation's strategy.

o   Positive to Work Skillnet: Access to Positive to Work Skillnet provides a range of training solutions that build employee resilience and enhance employees' skills in a range of technical and soft skills related to their role.

o   UCD Professional Academy: IWA's partnership with UCD Professional Academy offers employees tailored programmes that are industry focused and provided in a flexible way.

o   Springboard Employees are informed about opportunities through Springboard which is an upskilling initiative in higher education offers free and subsidised courses at certificate, degree and masters level leading to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy.

o   Coaching and Mentoring. Coaching and Mentoring is available to managers to enable them to develop as the potential leaders of the future. A Coaching Policy (Appendix 39) and Mentoring Policy (Appendix 40) have been developed and communicated.

o   Develop: Our inhouse LMS, Develop, provides links to a range of learning & development sites such as HSELand, The Wheel, eCollege, and LinkedIn learning

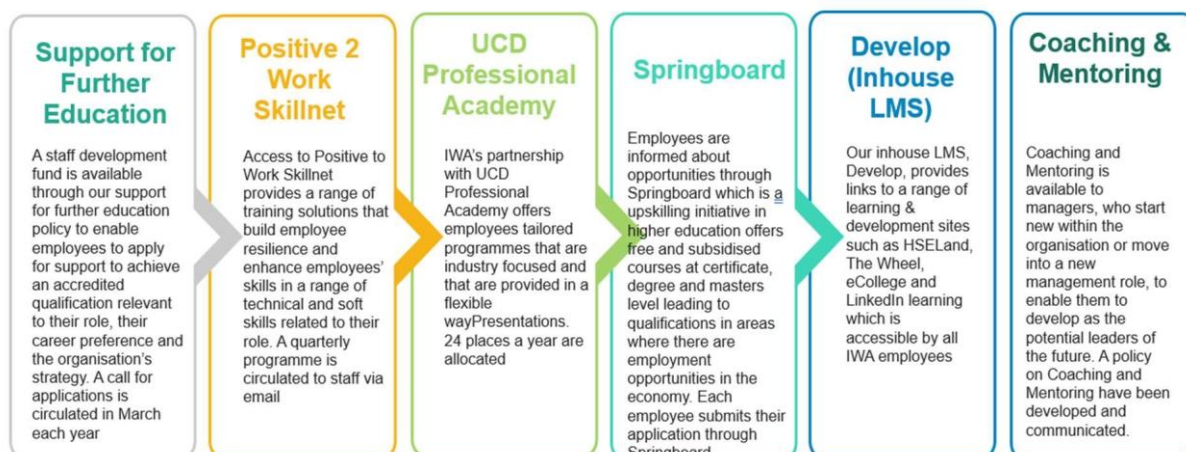Figure 10: Staff Development Opportunities

5.7 Specific Trainer/Tutor Training

Trainers/Tutors are expected to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. A range of options are available to them including but not limited to

o   Nala's Preparing Learning Materials training

o   Ahead's Universal Design for Learning

Collaborating with our colleagues in Enovation, our aim is to continue the professional development of our staff, ensuring that all Trainers/Tutors that are using Develop complete the Moodle Educator Certificate (MEC), and that all support staff have the necessary training and knowledge to support our Learners and Team members. This will provide us with integrity in on-line training & e-learning and guarantee our progression as a Learning & development Team.

6. Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are core activities in IWA, and it involves all activities – both formal and informal – that support or influence learners' development of knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, values, and practices. It extends beyond learning and development activities to the communication processes that take place between the Trainer/Tutor and the learners, and the support processes which have been put in place within the Organisation.

Programmes are developed through a range of training and learning approaches including presentations, practical workshops, directed learning, blended learning and individual tutorials. Coursework, in its various forms, is used to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for the understanding of a subject and its application in a variety of relevant settings. Individual and group project work focuses especially on critical and analytical skills and on problem-based learning. Workshops emphasise group and teamwork and help to develop interpersonal and communication skills. As learners progress through their courses, they develop and demonstrate skills of independent study in their preparation of assignments and projects.

Course materials are developed using the relevant template to ensure consistency across all training materials and creating a consistent experience for learners across all modules. A Handout Template (Appendix 41), Workbook Template (Appendix 42), and Assignment Brief Template (Appendix 43) and Marking Sheet Template (Appendix 44) are available on SharePoint.

IWA deliver both non-accredited and QQI accredited training to people with disabilities, staff, volunteers, and other learners using a variety of modes of delivery including face to face training, E Learning solutions and virtual classrooms to ensure maximum flexibility and accessibility for learners. Coaching and mentoring and one to one support are also provided. This is represented in figure 7.
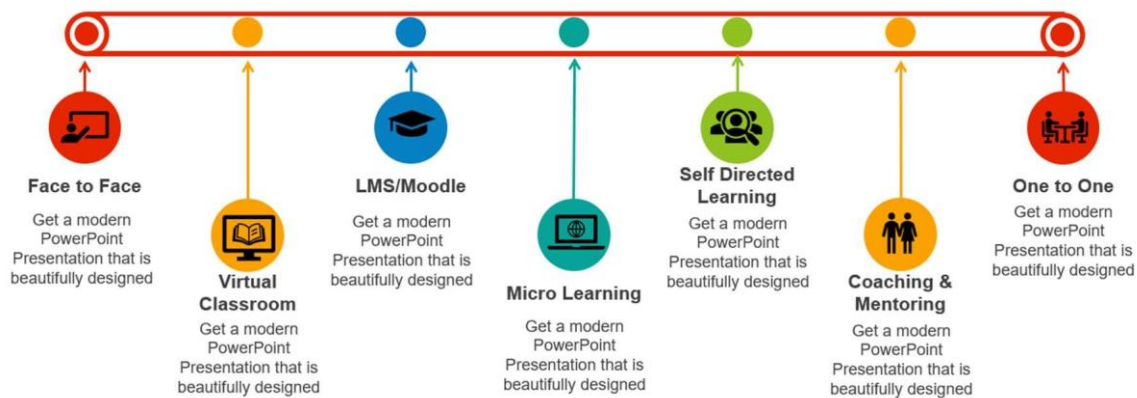
Fig 11

6.1 Provider Environment that Promotes learning

Quality teaching and learning begins with thoughtful planning and preparation. The Teaching and Learning Policy (Appendix 45) outlines IWA's approach to preparation, delivery, and assessment.

A Learner Handbook Level 3 (Appendix 17) and a Learner Handbook Level 5 (Appendix 18) are developed and available to the learner when they begin their course of study. Handbooks identify course structures, course and module learning outcomes, and expectations and requirements of learners to benefit from their experience in the course. The learning outcomes underpin all teaching, learning and assessment within the organisation. Learners' learning is enhanced through course work, group discussions with their peers and work placements as appropriate throughout their course.

Ongoing review of courses, modules, procedures, and processes is central to enhancing and maintaining the quality of our work. A survey is conducted at the end of each Major Award delivered. Trainers/Tutors seek learner feedback during and following courses, through feedback sheets and ongoing communication. Based on such reviews any changes required are integrated into the module.

L&D staff are also active in relevant national and international networks to enhance their practice. Examples of such activities are:

o   Engaging in further studies in Ireland

o   Participation in staff development programmes

o   Membership of professional organisations and networks (e.g., Learning & Development

Institute and Aontas).

o   Participation in national and international conferences

6.2 Blended Learning

Blended learning is an approach which combines conventional face to face training with digital

resources such as e-learning, webinars, and training videos. IWA's learning management system

(LMS), Develop has a wide range of e-learning modules, both mandatory and elective and is

available to all staff and volunteers through SharePoint. Develop uses Moodle which is a Virtual

Learning Environment (VLE). It is an online environment where learners interact with each other,

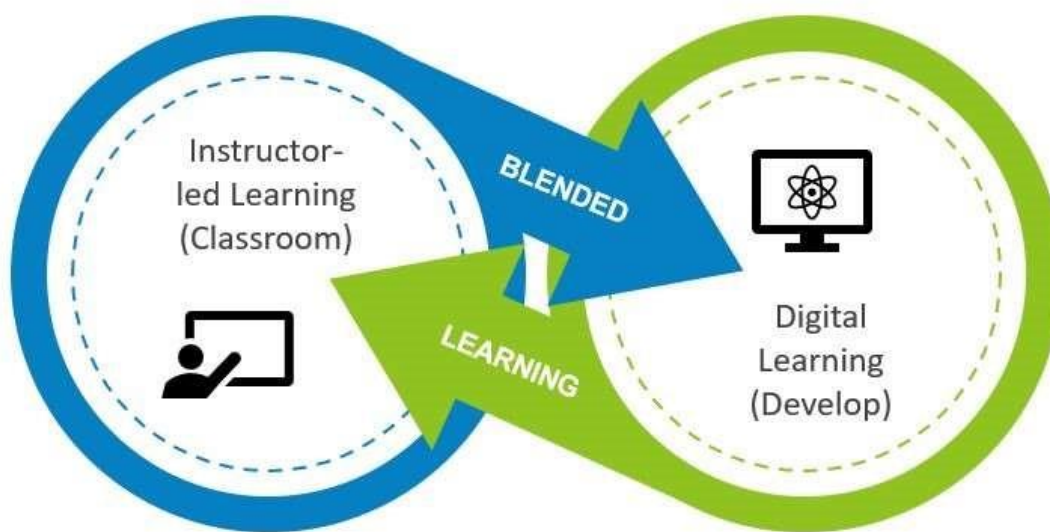and with learning resources for programmes and modules delivered in IWA.

Fig 12

Appreciating the passive nature of such approaches many programmes include interactive

elements, for example exercises and quizzes and are supported with face-to-face workshops to

further enhance quality and the overall learning experience. The E-learning environment is in

place to facilitate blended learning as appropriate and to ensure that learning takes place both

on and off site at times that are convenient for the learners. The E-Learning Policy (Appendix 46) provides learners with guidance on E-Learning in IWA. Regular communication with learners occurs through Develop. L&D continue to enhance and improve our Moodle site/LMS 'Develop.' After an upgrade in July 2020 with further updates in the future, we are now equipped to ensure ease of use for our learners by including an FAQ, Feedback forums and ongoing course development through our design and e-learning capabilities.

As a national organisation, courses are run in a variety of locations. These locations are IWA resource centres where staff are already working. On occasions where additional locations are required, IWA visit any premises it plans to use for training delivery before entering into any agreement to use the location as a venue for training courses. QQI Leads have responsibility to ensure that all venues are safe, accessible, and suitable for the training being delivered and the number of learners attending. They also ensure that all materials and equipment required for the training are available.

Where work placements are a core element of a module being delivered, a learner workbook has been provided to the learner to enable the learner to understand the requirements of the work placement and to record a variety of activities while on placement. The workbook provides a tool to connect the learner with the course delivery provided by the Trainer/Tutor and the on-the-job support provided by the supervisor. It also provides an opportunity for the learner to reflect on their learning experience.

6.3 Learner Supports

IWA recognise that Learner support is another critical component of an effective learning experience. IWA provide a range of supports to learners and recognises that everyone is different and supports therefore may be different for everyone. IWA places substantial emphasis on its learner-centred approach to education. IWA provide adequate and up-to-date learning resources and appropriate learning environments to support learners to maximise their potential achievement as outlined in the Support for Learners Policy (Appendix 47). We ensure that all our learners are provided with support appropriate to their context and specific circumstance.

Learner support focuses on what the Trainers/Tutors can do to support learners beyond the formal delivery of the programme. IWA strives to assist learners to achieve personal educational goals while meeting the academic standards of the programme. IWA have implemented the following processes to facilitate learner support:

o   Identifying learner difficulties- This is identified through disclosure by the learner, Trainers/Tutors observations and verbal communication between the learner and the Trainers/Tutors and the L&D department

o   Learner Handbook – Each learner received a Learner Handbook which provides them with information on all aspects of the course.

o   Learner packs - Each learner receives a Learner pack for each module. The pack consists of a Handout, Workbook, and a copy of the Assignment brief.

o   Learner Support Sessions- The trainer is available for 30 minutes before and after the course day. Learners can arrange to meet one to one or in small groups to discuss any challenges they may be having.

o   Feedback - The Trainer/Tutor provides individualised learner feedback on informal classroom assessment activities as a means of supporting the learner and enhancing their learning experience.

o   Peer support- The Trainer/Tutor facilitates collaborative learning activities/ experiences for the learners such as group work.

o   Counselling- The Trainer/Tutor informs all learners, who are employees, about the EAP service available to them should they require it. A list of other relevant support services is available on request to all learners.

o   A reader or scribe when required.

o   Extension for submission of formal assessment deadlines

If a learner feels that they are experiencing difficulties or need extra assistance, they are advised to contact the L&D department or talk to their trainer/tutor for support. This is explained to learners on the first day of each programme.

6.4 Facilitating Diversity Among Learners

Potential learners interested in applying for courses with IWA can do so through the IWA website. Competence in written and spoken English is an entry requirement. At Level 5, applicants whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate proficiency in English to an appropriate level as specified by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) by having an appropriate score in an approved examination in English language. We accept an IELTS test score of 6 which indicates that a person is 'competent', meaning they can cope in a classroom situation even though there may be some mistakes or misunderstandings with language. We also accept IELTS equivalents such as TOELF score 60-78 and Cambridge exam level B2. We ask applicants to provide evidence of a test result from a recognised exam centre when applying.

At level 3, it is necessary that learners have sufficient written English skills to complete this course. Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate proficiency in English to an appropriate level as specified by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) by having an appropriate score in an approved examination in English language. We accept a minimum English language competency of IELTS 5.5 for successful completion of this programme. We also accept IELTS equivalents such as TOELF score 46-59 and Cambridge exam level B2. We ask applicants to provide evidence of a test result from a recognised exam centre when applying.

Before commencing on their course of study, Learners complete a Registration form (Appendix 23.B) which will assist in identifying any individual needs that they may have. By taking their diverse needs into consideration, IWA endeavours to empower the learner to complete their programme. Any empowerment initiatives IWA offer is cognisant of the nine grounds of discrimination and do not violate them. The Trainer/Tutor reviews each registration form and contacts any learner who has self-declared the need for additional or tailored assistance. The Trainer/Tutor offers the learner suggestions of how we can facilitate them completing the programme and the learner can then choose which option they would prefer. The Trainer/Tutor must coordinate, facilitate, and evaluate the provision of any such supports. Some examples of facilitation of diverse needs include:

- o Providing flexible class times within a reasonable training framework

- o Providing support and guidance services to potential and existing learners

- o Continuing to promote accessibility by monitoring premises.

- o Providing reasonable accommodation for people with disability

- o Providing assessments in alternative formats for learners that request and require it, ensuring that the assessment is not compromised.

6.5 Learner Compliments and Complaints

IWA encourages all people to voice any compliments, comments, and complaints they have regarding a service, a staff member, other service users or any other party. All complaints are recorded and dealt with fairly in a transparent manner and within reasonable time frames as set out in the Customer Care Policy (Appendix 48) which is supported by simple English Customer Care Guide (Appendix 49). All complaints should be recorded on a Complaints and Feedback Form (Appendix 50) and passed to Line Manager. All compliments (verbal compliments, letters, thank you notes etc.) should be kept locally in a folder as evidence of customer satisfaction with the service. Every single complaint must be recorded regardless of the importance. You can record a complaint by using the Complaints and Feedback Form which is available on SharePoint and the IWA website. Verbal complaints should also be captured by you on the Complaints and Feedback Form as a record of the complaint.

Each class is offered the opportunity to elect a class rep who can bring matters of concern to the attention of the Trainer/Tutor.

6.6 Learner Guidance

All learners are given a Learner Handbook that provides guidance to the Learner regarding all aspects of the programme that they have undertaken. Each learner will receive one to one induction at the beginning of their course and can arrange to meet with their Trainer/Tutor on a one to one or group basis at any time during their studies.

6.7 Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)

IWA has considered the Protection for Enrolled Learners' (PEL) with the requirements of Part 6, Section 65 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. There is a temporary agreement with QQI that IWA do not require PEL pending the establishment of a National Learner Protection Fund (NLPF).

7. Assessment of Learners

IWA policy and procedures underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners that comply with QQI policy protocols, conventions, and guidelines on Assessment. The Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Appendix 51) outlines IWA's development, processes in relation to assessment. If the learners require an extension due to personal issues, sickness etc the learner can apply to avail of the extension of submission of work through the L&D department via the Request for Extension Form (Appendix 51.A)

IWA will ensure validity and reliability of assessment tools and methodologies and will ensure that learners will receive timely and constructive feedback on assessment. In composing the assessment strategy, IWA will always seek to ensure that assessment methodologies are clearly linked to modular and programmatic learning outcomes based on a knowledge, skills and competencies approach aligned to specified Awards Standards contained in the programme validation document or approved revisions of same.

7.1 Principles of Assessment

Assessment is a core teaching activity and a key tool in determining the knowledge, skills and attitude of learners who have attended a QQI module. The Assignment Design and Marking SOP (Appendix 52) outlines how assessments are designed for QQI awards in a way that is fair and consistent to learners and in line with QQI Statutory Guidelines.

The principles that underpin assessment are based on:

o   Mapping against the learning outcomes of the relevant programme

o   Fairness and consistency of assessment

o   Transparent and inclusive assessment policies

o   Clear communication of the assessment criteria

o   Internal and external verification

7.2 Criteria and Grading

All forms of assessment promote and support teaching and learning. This acknowledges curriculum and assessment as inseparable and requires a programme assessment strategy that is plainly written and communicated at induction and repeated throughout the programme. Assessment tasks, criteria and grading will be clear, unambiguous, and expressed in appropriate and accessible language with advance access to grading schemes for learners undertaking assessments.

All learners will be provided with an assessment brief that clearly outlines what they need to answer, the marks allocated to each topic and the date the assignment must be submitted. In exceptional circumstances an extension can be given to a leaner. This is done using the Extension of Assessment Form.

Marking schemes are set and documented for each assessment in advance and are consistently applied by Trainers/Tutors and internal and external authenticators. Confidence through confidentiality and professional integrity underpins the development of assessment tools, marking and invigilation and this will be actively communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

7.3 Fairness & Consistency

All forms of assessment are consistent between different examiners and different course centres, and evidence of reviewing and assuring this consistency is maintained.

To ensure that assessment and grading is fair and consistent, each module is marked initially by the module Trainer/Tutor in line with the assessment criteria provided with the module and using the marking sheet template available on SharePoint.

Where a learner does not reach the required standard and must repeat their assessment The Repeats Policy & Procedure (Appendix 53) must be followed

7.4 Authentication Process

All assessments will go through an authentication process in line with QQI guidelines and before submission to QQI. Authentication Processes include Internal Verification (IV) and External Authentication (EA). IWA operates an Authentication Process to verify all assessments by

Trainers/Tutors where learners' work may lead to certification by an external accrediting body, i.e., QQI and ASDAN.

This Authentication Processes include Internal Verification (IV) and External Authentication (EA). All assessments intended for QQI certification are subject to both Internal Verification and External Authentication. Administrative checks are conducted regularly by the National QQI Lead to determine both the accuracy and integrity of documented assessment policies and procedures.

Assessments intended for ASDAN certification are subject to Internal Verification only, in line with ASDAN guidelines, and following an initial ASDAN quality check of the first batch of assessments from any registered IWA Area or Community Centre. This is outlined in the ASDAN Delivery & Assessment SOP (Appendix 54). Tutors are also required to use the Internal Moderation Checklist (Appendix 54.A) under ASDAN guidelines.

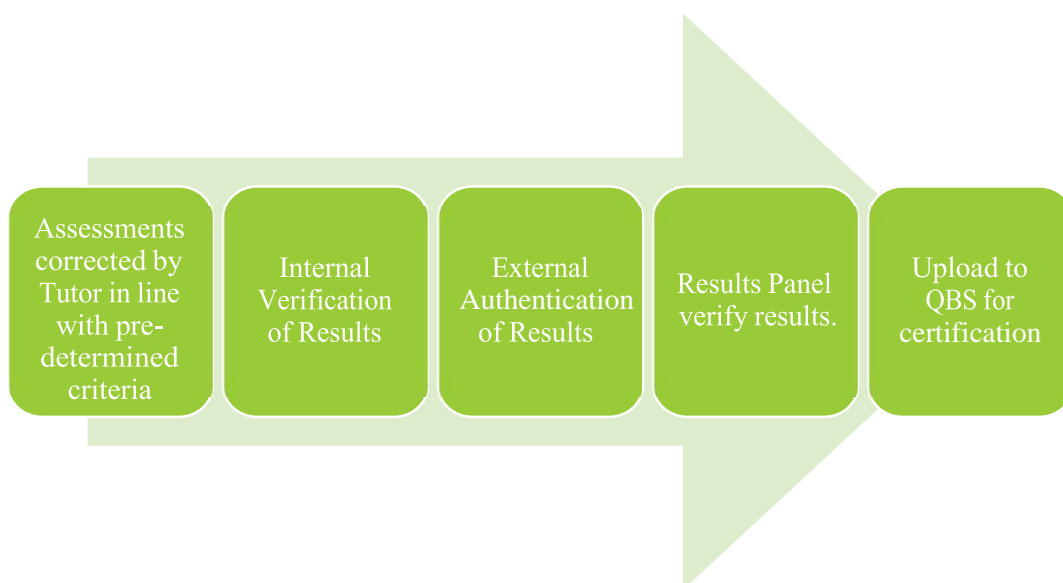| Assessments corrected by Tutor in line with pre-determined criteria | Internal Verification of Results | External Authentication of Results | Results Panel verify results. | Upload to QBS for certification |

Fig 13 Authentication Process

7.5 Assessment material and information

Assessment materials are held securely before and after the assessment takes place to protect the integrity of the assessment process. IWA operates an efficient, secure, and standardised record keeping around all assessment processes outlined in the organisations record keeping

guidelines. Results management systems are robust and accurate, and the statement of results occurs in a timely and efficient manner.

The IWA Learner Handbook contains information on policies, procedures and regulations pertaining to assessment. Each learner receives the Learner Handbook upon commencement of the programme. The Learner Handbook is reviewed and updated every two years.

7.6 Reasonable Accommodation

IWA is fully committed to equality of educational access and attainment among learners. As evidenced in the Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment of Learners Policy (Appendix 55), Management will actively seek to develop and implement policies and procedures which promote equality. Learners and potential learners with recognised disadvantages or disabilities may be given special consideration during course delivery and assessment and can make an application through the Application Form for Reasonable Accommodations (Appendix 55.A) . A substantial disadvantage is one that entails time, inconvenience, effort, or discomfort compared to other people or learners and which is more than minor or trivial. A reasonable accommodation is any action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage e.g., changing procedures, providing additional time at examinations.

7.7 Exceptional and Mitigating Circumstances

Assessment procedures address exceptional or mitigating circumstances that might hinder learners in fulfilling their assessment responsibilities and that these procedures are clearly stated in the organisation's regulations. Procedural responses to mitigating circumstances are based on reasonable accommodation adhering to the principle of adaptation rather than dilution of assessment criteria ensuring that those who do not receive reasonable accommodation are not disadvantaged. While all assessment would normally accommodate flexibility where necessary, any accommodation for flexibility should always be balanced by fairness and consistency for learner population taken as a whole.

7.8 Extension Requests

IWA acknowledges that circumstances of sufficient extenuation can arise and prevent a learner from meeting prescribed assessment deadlines. In such cases please refer to the Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Appendix 56). However, the policy is equally directed by the need to ensure fairness to all learners – consideration of fairness to those who meet an assessment deadline must therefore be factored when administering the policy.

7.9 Late Submission

All learners have a responsibility to submit assessment according to outlined timeframes and agreed modes of submission. This will be applied consistently to prevent learners who submit beyond the advertised deadline gaining unfair advantage over those who submit their work on time. Learners will be fully informed, both verbally and in the Learner Handbook, of all aspects of submission policy prior to undertaking any assignment.

7.10 Academic Integrity & Misconduct

Principles of best conduct are consistently attained and acts of plagiarism, collusion or any academic impropriety are actively discouraged by Trainers/Tutors and authenticators. All Trainers/Tutors and learners are made aware of the Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy (Appendix 57) and the Academic Misconduct Report Form (Appendix 57.A). All cases of plagiarism or suspected plagiarism will be dealt with in line with the policy and may result in a learner receiving a reduced mark or being excluded from the certification process.

When submitting work, learners will be asked to sign an authentication statement, confirming that the work is entirely their own. This may be done through a paper form or through Develop. If a trainer/tutor suspects that work has been plagiarised or copied, they will inform the learner in writing using the template provided and give the learner the options available to them. Where there is reasonable doubt that the work has been plagiarised or copied the learner will be given the opportunity to re-submit a new assignment within three weeks.

7.11 Results & Feedback

Learners receive timely feedback on performance for all forms of assessment that is clearly related to the assessment and learning criteria as communicated in the Learner Handbook. Feedback is formulated and delivered in such a way as to enable learners to improve their performance in future assessment tasks.

Learners will be provided with provisional results subject to Internal and External verification. If a change is applied to a result following verification process, the learner will be informed in writing.

7.12 Learner Appeals

A learner will have the right to appeal their results if they feel that it does not reflect the effort that they have put in. All appeals will be conducted in line with the Learner Appeals Policy (Appendix 58) and must be completed within the timeframes outlined in the policy to ensure it does not delay the certification process. The Learner Appeals Form (Appendix 58.A), The Trainer Feedback Form (Appendix 58.B) and the Outcome of Appeal forms (Appendix 58.C) will be used for any appeals.

7.13 Work placement

IWA facilitates work placement as part of their course offering. Assessment of a work placement is a collaborative effort between IWA and the work placement provider.

At Level 5 Work Practice is one of the components offered as part of the overall Major Award. All learners availing of this module are required to complete a course workbook and to get a series of tasks completed and signed off during their placement by their supervisor.

Learners availing of work placement at Level 3 is optional. If a learner chooses to take part in a work placement, they receive relevant support from IWA as assessed and agreed with the learner and outlined in the SOP: Work and Volunteering Placements for SU (Appendix 59)

8. Information and Data Management Systems

IWA use Moodle platform, known in IWA as Develop. Moodle is a learning platform which provides IWA with a single robust, secure, and integrated system to create personalised learning environments. A quality assurance DPIA – Data Protection Impact Assessment (Appendix 60) has been conducted to ensure security of the learners' data. Develop enables learners to access course details and materials, records attendance, and assessments, enables interactions between learners, provides an avenue to give feedback and allows L&D to monitor progress of learners.
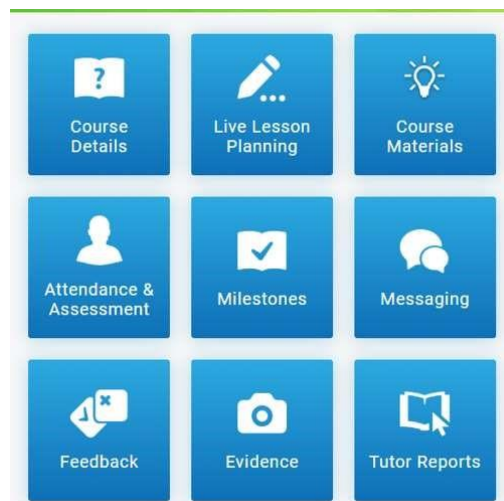
Fig 14

8.1 Disaster Recovery plan

IWA has a Service Agreement (Appendix 61) in place with Enovation Solutions. Enovation is an eLearning solutions provider. As part of our Service Agreement, Enovation provides an onsite, nightly, encrypted backup solution with 7-day retention. This level of protection allows for a service recovery within 24 hours. This service also provides Off- site backups and access to a 24/7 on call engineers to outage level issues.

The service covers systematic maintenance of all essential system components required to run the application – operating systems, databases, Web Application servers and additionally

management of various aspects of the system on a per request basis including, but not limited to users' permissions, custom configuration changes and auxiliary services like SFTP, SSH, SMTP. Critical security updates are implemented within two business days from the release, the loss of critical updates is implanted seamlessly or within a scheduled maintenance window.

The service is connected to multiple monitoring systems providing both active and passive health checks of critical service components. Availability is monitored every minute from multiple geographic locations to assure rapid problem detection and the system alerts the designated contacts of any outages or potential problems when readings reach predefined thresholds.

Automatic course backup setting is enabled, and backups are copied to a safe file on SharePoint monthly. For making the backup of Moodle files, permission is required to copy the folder to another location in SharePoint. A program is required to perform the file transfer like CyberDuck or FileZilla, which are freeware FTP programmes. Using this software, we can drag and drop files from Moodle to SharePoint to back up files when new files are uploaded on Moodle.

8.2 Policy on Data Retention

The IWA Data Retention Policy (Appendix 62) is operated in line with the requirements laid out in the EU General Data Protection Regulation and the Organisations policy of data retention. It ensures that records and information are safe and secure for all learners. All Trainers, tutors, and other support staff will familiarise themselves with this policy and all learners will be informed how their information will be used. The L&D Data Retention Schedule (Appendix 62.A) outlines the information specific to Learning and Development.

8.3 Document Protection

Documents (hardcopy, online or other media) will be stored in a protected environment for the duration of the Document in line with IWA policy on Data Retention. Computer backup media will be included. Hardcopy of documents will be destroyed by shredding after the required time.

8.4 Data Protection and Privacy

The Data Protection and Privacy Policy (Appendix 63) demonstrates IWA's is committed to ensuring compliance with the data protection requirements as laid out the EU General Data

Protection Regulation (GDPR) and all the systems and processes utilised in the Organisation have been developed and designed to enable compliance with data protection regulation. The policy covers all personal data held by IWA about learners. Any information relating to the specific needs, disability or health of an individual applicant or learner will be retained and shared in accordance with IWA policy and in line with Data Protection legislation. All learners are treated equally under this policy in relation to GDPR. The policy covers both personal and special categories of personal data (sensitive data) which the Organisation has obtained in relation to personal data held in manual and automated ways.

IWA is committed to the protection of all personal and sensitive data for which it holds responsibility as the Data Controller and the handling of such data in line with the data protection principles and the Data Protection Act (DPA). Changes to data protection legislation shall be monitored and implemented to remain compliant with all requirements. The Organisation is also committed to ensuring that its staff are aware of data protection policies, legal requirements and adequate training is provided to them. The requirements of this policy are mandatory for all staff employed by the Organisation and any third party contracted to provide services at the Organisation.

8.5 Password Security

Once a password has been issued to a user, full responsibility for that account and the associated password passes to the user. Under no circumstances are passwords to be revealed to anyone else apart from the authorised user. Users must not logon with another user's password. If a user needs access to documents belonging to another user, the user can submit a request to the IT Department to arrange access on a case-by-case basis.

Computing devices should not be left unattended without enabling a password-protected screensaver or logging off the device. All users should lock devices when the device is out of sight. Users must not attempt to gain administrative rights unless granted by IT Admin. Any attempt to gain inappropriate rights is considered a significant breach of the permitted Conditions for Use

8.6 Password Storage

If passwords must be written down, the user is responsible for making sure that the passwords are stored in a secure location to which only the user has access e.g., locked desk drawer. Users are not to store passwords on pieces of paper on their desktops or written on paper stuck underneath keyboards. Users are not to write passwords down alongside the username and Users must never keep passwords with a laptop.

8.7 Email Usage

IWA has an Email Communications Policy (Appendix 64) which outlines the acceptable use of IWA email communication. Email is an indispensable business tool within the Organisation. This facility is provided purely as a business tool and the same ethical, legal, and commercial standards apply to both internal and external email as to any other form of business correspondence. Standard unencrypted email should never be used to send any data of a personal or confidential nature. Users should secure the information by including it in a password protected document or compressing file or files in a password protected/encrypted zip file; then provide the recipient with the password by means of other communication, for instance by telephone.

8.8 Physical Security of Organisational Laptop/Portable Device

IWA has a Usage if IWA ICT Telecommunications Devices policy (Appendix 65) and an ICT Security Policy (Appendix 66) in place to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding the use if IWA ICT equipment.

The physical security of any Organisation laptop/portable device is the responsibility of the member of staff to whom the laptop/portable device has been issued.

o   All laptop users will take all reasonable precautions to secure the laptop and its data.

   All laptops/portable devices will be in a secure location when not in use.

   Laptops/Portable Devices Outside Organisation Premises

o   Users will take reasonable precautions when using a laptop out of the office.

o   Laptops will not be left unattended whilst logged-on.

o   Users will never leave a laptop visibly unattended in a vehicle or hotel room.

o   Users will carry and store the laptop in a padded laptop computer bag or strong briefcase to reduce the chance of accidental damage.

o   Users will, when using a laptop in a public place e.g., on a train, hotel foyer, etc. be aware that information on the laptop screen may be visible to others in the vicinity.

o   Users will keep a note of the make, model, serial number, and the asset label of the laptop. This will not store this information with the laptop.

9. Public Information and Communication

IWA will seek to establish and maintain effective communication within the organisation, and internally and externally between all stakeholder groups. It will provide learners with timely, relevant, and accurate information relating to all aspects of its programme offering. The organisation employs several different mediums for communicating information related to the organisation's programmes:

- Organisation website

- Social media including Facebook, and other platforms.

- Organisation Prospectus and other printed materials e.g., flyers

- Newspaper and radio advertising

- Organisation Open Days

- Participation in Conferences and Recruitment Fairs

IWA recognises the importance of facilitating efficient and effective communications with learners in all centres to ensure that they have an inclusive and responsive learning experience within the organisation. Ensuring a class representative, who fully appreciates the role and its responsibilities, is elected in every programme is a principal element of good communications. Trainers/Tutors play a vital role in liaising between the organisation and the learners. Learners are strongly encouraged to contact the relevant Trainer/Tutor, either directly or via the class representative, to raise any queries or concerns regarding their course, and are always assured of a prompt response.

The following elements form part of the communication for learners:

- A Learner Handbook is given to each learner commencing on an IWA programme and discussed with the learners on the first day of a new programme. This includes programme specific information such as timetables, academic calendar, assessment schedule and marking guidelines. This ensures consistency and clarity of information across all programmes.

- The class representative system is emphasised during learners Induction and trainers facilitate the election of class representatives in the early weeks of each new course. The function of the class representative is communicated to all learners.

- Trainers/Tutors are briefed on all items that may affect the learners learning experience, recognising trainers' role as the Organisation's primary representative.

On an ongoing basis, the Trainers/Tutors are primarily responsible for day-to-day communication with learner's and are tasked to ensure that all communications are issued to all learners, selecting appropriate methods according to geographic location and programme mode.

9.1 Quality Assurance evaluation reports.

All reports produced by the organisation in relation to the effectiveness of programmes and services are published on the organisation's SharePoint. These include, but are not limited to:

o   The IWA Quality Assurance Manual

o   Programmatic Review Reports (Self Evaluation Report, Peer Review Panel Report and Programme Improvement Plan)

o   Institutional Review Reports (Self Evaluation Report, Peer Review Panel Report and Quality Improvement Plan)

9.2 Public Information Provision

The organisation's SharePoint contains essential information around the activities that the Organisation engages in. IWA publishes accurate and current information about the following.

- Programme offerings

- Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures.

- The Institutional Review report and programme validation reports can be found on the QQI website.

IWA is committed to promoting a clear and consistent message. IWA have procedures which advise on the production of publicity and promotional materials, and which enables the organisation to manage the messages communicated to the public, prospective applicants, enrolled learners, and other stakeholders. The following contains some information on the approval of materials at the organisation.

The implementation of the IWA Communications Policy (Appendix 67) ensures that:

• the consistency of publicity materials using the Organisation's name is maintained.

- the message communicated is consistent.

- the Organisation's corporate image is maintained.

- publicity materials do not compromise, but rather enhance the image of the Organisation.

- messages are complementary and not contradictory.

All communication materials are sent (in hard or electronic copy) to the Head of Communications, for review and approval on behalf of IWA.

9.3 Arrangements with Accrediting Body

Any communications or publicity material that uses the name or logo of QQI must be approved, in accordance with their publicity guidelines.

10. Other Parties Involved in Education & Training

As a provider of QQI accredited training, IWA delivers their programme in line with the criteria set out in the QA. IWA is committed to ensuring that our learners are well prepared to achieve suitable accreditation to support them in the pursuit of the chosen career.

10.1 Peer Relationships with the broader education and training community

IWA provides programmes of education and training which are designed in-line and consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Currently, we provide programmes of education and training leading to awards at NFQ Levels 3 and 5. These programmes are accredited by QQI. In our entry, progression, and transfer arrangements we recognise the standing of the awards of all other training providers operating with the same quality assurance and award level system.

10.2 External Partnerships and second providers

IWA do not currently engage with external providers to deliver their QQI awards. In all cases where IWA enters engagements with external partners or second providers, quality assurance procedures will be in place to ensure our learners receive the appropriate learning opportunities and that our learners are safe and protected.

10.3 Expert panellists, examiners, and authenticators

IWA engage an External Authenticator (EA) to monitor the standards of work on all awards delivered and maintain reports on the EA findings. The L&D Training Team Lead sources suitably qualified external authenticators based on their match to our selection criteria and makes a recommendation to the Academic Committee which approves the appointment.

The L&D Training Team Lead

o   Records evidence of the suitability of the appointment

o   Liaises with the external authenticator and issues guidelines.

o   Let the Trainers/Tutors know about the arrangements for authentication and ask them to make themselves available if the authenticator needs to contact them to discuss results.

- o Makes a copy of the QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for External Authenticators available to the authenticator.

- o Makes arrangements for the site visit.

- o Agrees payment and date for submission of the completed external authentication report.

- o Invites the authenticator to attend the results approval panel meeting to report on the outcomes of authentication and to help us to identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement.

- o Provides an agenda and a copy of the Internal Verification report to the external authenticator by the agreed date prior to the authentication visit.

  Both the authenticator and L&D Training Team Lead sign the external authenticator reports and National QQI Lead stores them securely in hard copy and electronically and maintains them indefinitely.

IWA ensure that no conflict of interest exists to ensure that the authenticator can provide independent service. The External Authenticator visits at the end of each major award. They are given access to all assignments, handbooks, marking sheets and assignment briefs for every learner being presented for an award. They have open access to all assignments that are presented with reference to the provisional results awarded. They are presented with the relevant Internal Verification Report that identifies the internal verifier, the award for which results were internally verified, the number of learners and awards, and confirmation that all required documentation is available. Following the examination of assignments and documents the External Authenticator presents their report. Finally, the results are entered into the QBS system. When parchments are received, these are distributed to the learners with final state.

11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

QQI states (QQI, 2016) that review and monitoring of quality training and education programmes play an important part in the provision of a quality assurance system. QQI recommends a self-evaluation as the correct process as it supports external evaluation and guarantees the delivery and continued successes of a quality training service.

The maintenance of the quality of training and education in IWA is a significant aim of the organisation. The model of quality assurance adopted by IWA recognises the complexity of the organisation and is cognisant that change can only come about through internal acceptance by staff and management of the organisation's strengths and of the need for action in those areas of activity where further development is highlighted. To engage effectively in quality assurance activity, it is necessary that management and staff have access to instruments and methodologies that will assist them through internal review, self-evaluation and planning to achieve those standards of quality to which the organisation aspires.

11.1 Programme Monitoring and Review

The programmes at IWA are monitored, reviewed, and revised in line with QQI Guidelines and with the Programme Monitoring and Review Policy (Appendix 68) on a regular basis to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of learners and society. Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing programmes include learner feedback, Internal Verification reports, External Authentication reports, Results Panel Reports, meetings of the Programme Approval Group and the Programme Development Group and annual programme reports.

The monitoring process allows for the adaptation of programme elements to ensure that programmes remain relevant and effective. Monitoring provides the opportunity to reflect on current practice and, in doing so, propose new changes to improve the delivery systems; thus, enhancing the learning experience. The evidence generated through the monitoring process forms an integral part of the cyclical programmatic review process conducted every five years.

The goal of the monitoring and review process is.

- o   to improve the learner experience

- o   to ensure programs remain relevant and current.

- o   to inform the organisation's decisions on changing and/or improving its learning environment

- o   to assess whether learners are meeting the objectives and learning outcomes of its programs in an efficient and effective manner.

- o   to review the teaching and learning strategies and ensure that they are appropriate and effective for its learners.

- o   to review the assessment workload and procedures for assessment of its learners to ensure their appropriateness and their effectiveness.

- o   to review progression and completion rates

- o   A program monitoring report will be produced by the Head of L&D at the end of each Major Award.

11.2 Programme Monitoring

- o   Trainer/Tutors will consult with Class Representatives and learners throughout the programme to identify, monitor and address issues.

- o   Learners will take part in Individual and Quarterly Group Review meetings where they give 1:1 and group feedback on programmes, with agreed actions noted.

- o   All changes made to the programme because of feedback from Class representatives/learners and Trainers/Tutors are clearly documented and recorded on the CRM system.

- o   Trainer/Tutors take part in monthly staff meetings to discuss programme delivery, resources, assessments and supports for learners and implementation of improvements, with agreed actions noted in meeting minutes and reviewed at the following staff meeting o Feedback forms submitted at the end of each module will be reviewed by the Trainers/Tutors on receipt and any issues arising forwarded to the Training Team Lead/Manager.

o The Training Team Lead/Service Coordinator will review a sample of feedback forms twice a year and record outcomes on CRM.

o Monitoring and review of assessment of learners is conducted via IWA's Internal Verification and External Authentication process and Results Approval Panel meetings and reports from each stage of the process maintained.

o Feedback in these reports is reviewed as part of the annual review process.

o The relevant QQI Lead organises an annual review Meeting, involving the Team Lead/Service Coordinator(s), QQI Lead Person(s), Tutors and relevant Class Representatives

11.3 Programme Review

o All programs offered by IWA are reviewed on completion of the Major Award.

o Feedback is sought from learners and staff on assessment loads, assessment methods, program resource delivery through learner feedback forms; trainer meetings and a formal evaluation of the programmes is conducted.

o A selection of non-accredited training programmes is reviewed annually with all programmes being reviewed a minimum of once over a five-year period.

o QQI accredited programmes are reviewed on completion of a major award or a minimum of once every 3 years.

o As part of the end of program review, the continued relevance of the program module options will be reviewed and may result in changes to the current program.

o A review of the Internal verifier, external authenticator, and results panel reports for QQI accredited training will be conducted by the Training Team Lead/Service Coordinator and relevant feedback included in the final report.

- o A final Programme Review report is compiled with conclusions and recommendations for the Academic Committee to review.

- o On approval of the recommendations by the Academic committee, the Learning & Development Department will develop an action plan to implement the changes.

- o All training materials and documentation will be updated

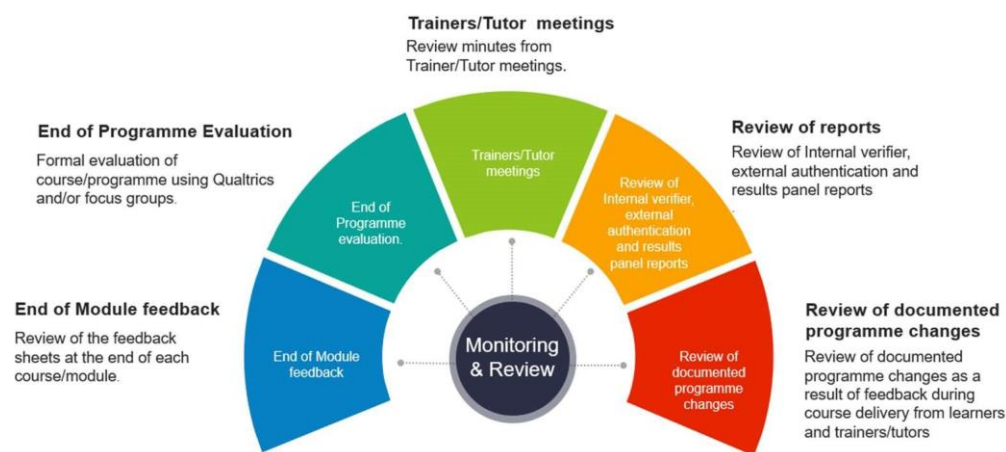- o All old training materials and documentation will be archived.

Fig 15 Programme Review

11.4 Self – Evaluation

All Trainers/Tutors will complete a self-evaluation questionnaire on an annual basis. This allows then to explore, reflect, and report on the effectiveness of a training program. The aim of self-evaluation is to identify good practice /new innovations and areas for improvement to inform future practice.

Learner involvement in self-evaluation happens at a range of levels both formally and informally. All learners are invited to complete anonymised learner Evaluation Form (Appendix 68.A) at Programme completion stage. In addition to this, meetings are held with Class Representatives and learners throughout the programmes.

IWA has primary responsibility for the quality of its programme provision, the implementation and evaluation of its QA procedures and on-going enhancement of its service provision.

Monitoring and Review in this context includes:

- o   Self-monitoring and Self Evaluation activities
- o   Periodic evaluation of programmes by way of Programmatic Review.
- o   Review including periodic evaluation of the organisations quality assurance system

11.6 Self-monitoring and Self Evaluation activities
Self-monitoring and self-evaluation are conducted in each centre on an annual basis using templates designed for this purpose.

11.7 Periodic evaluation of programmes by way of Programmatic Review.
IWA undertakes a major evaluation of their programmes at defined intervals (usually every five-years). The programmatic review process provides the committee with an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation of the programme and all associated supports, and to propose significant amendments, where appropriate.

11.8 Review including periodic evaluation.
L&D Department and the Community Supports Directorate conduct evaluations of the programmes delivered to learners at key stages such as the end of a Major Award and annually for smaller programmes using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. A report is produced, and this is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Steering Group and an action plan is developed to implement agreed changes.

IWA is committed to a process of ongoing self-evaluation, monitoring, and review to ensure quality and ongoing enhancement of its training and services to learners and stakeholders.

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Glossary of Terms

ADDIE: Instructional systems design model. It is composed of five phases: Analysis/ Design/ Development /Implementation / Evaluation

BL: Blended Learning

CEO: Chief Executive Office

COO: Chief Operations Officer

CRM: customer relationship management

CSD: Community Supports Directorate

DB&I: Diversity, Belonging and Inclusion

Develop: IWA is learning management system

DOB: date of birth

DPIA: data protection impact Assessment

EA: external authentication

eLearning: Electronic Learning

GDPR: general data protection regulations

GROW: IWA Performance Development System

H&S: Health & Safety

HR: Human Resources

HSE: Health Services Executive

ICT: Information Communications Technology

IV: internal verification

IWA: Irish Wheelchair Association

L&D: learning and development department

LMS: learning management system

MEC: Moodle Educator Certificate

Mega HR: internal Human Resource system

PAG: program approvals group

PDG: program development group

PEL: Protection of Enrolled Learners

PPS: personal public service number

QQI: Quality Qualifications Ireland

RAP: results approval panel

RT: Rehabilitative Training

SLA: Service Level Agreement

SMT: Senior Management Team

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

VC: Virtual Classroom

Version History			
Version	Date	Changed by	Change Justification
1	20/09/2022	Imelda Gaffney	Release of Document
2	12/05/2023	Imelda Gaffney	Sections duplicated in Policies and supporting documentation removed. Navigation made easier with diagrams and moving relevant sections together and creating better flow
2b	20/09/23	Imelda Gaffney	Addition of English Language requirement Section 6.4 Page 43