A self-evaluation
manual for
work-based learning
providers 2014
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- further education;
- adult community learning;
- youth and community work training;
- local authority education services for children and young people;
- teacher education and training;
- Welsh for adults
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- learning in the justice sector.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the manual for?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this manual do?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Effective self-assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process of self-assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key characteristics of effective self-assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Self-assessment and improvement planning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key characteristics of effective quality development plans</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Self-assessment and the Quality Effectiveness Framework</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Self-assessment and the Common Inspection Framework</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Self-assessment and inspection</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tools to support self-assessment</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estyn self-assessment tools</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce this revised edition of the self-assessment manual for work-based learning providers. Self-assessment has become increasingly embedded across education and training in Wales and has contributed to improving quality and provision raising the attainment and achievement for all learners.

As a reflective professional process, self-assessment enables providers to get to know themselves well, identify their agenda for improvement and promote innovation and sector-leading practice. Crucially, where the self-assessment process focuses on impact and outcomes, self-assessment leads to improvements in the educational experiences and outcomes for learners.

This guidance is designed to support providers’ self-assessment activities, including annual quality development planning. Estyn has promoted the development of self-assessment across all sectors for many years. Self-assessment is also at the core of the Quality and Effectiveness Framework of the Welsh Government for post-16 providers.

While the guidance is comprehensive, it is not intended to be definitive. There are references to other useful tools and sources of information that providers may wish to draw upon.

I am delighted to commend this guidance to you in taking forward our collective commitment to continuous improvement and excellence for all.

Ann Keane
Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
1 Introduction

The prime purpose of self-assessment is to improve the standards achieved by learners. While every aspect of a work-based-learning provider's provision is a legitimate focus for self-assessment, there should be a rationale based upon the impact that aspect has upon standards.

There is no single formula or approach for self-assessment. Providers can be complex organisations and there are many different ways in which they can pursue the achievement of excellence in the various aspects of their work. Providers already use different self-assessment frameworks as well as using Estyn’s Common Inspection Framework (CIF).

Self-assessment is not an exercise that can be carried out by leaders or a task-group working in isolation. It can be influential only when all staff, learners and stakeholders contribute to the process, are aware of the findings and take action based upon them.

The manual provides information on assessing the work of providers in the context of Estyn’s CIF. It includes questions for providers to ask to help improve the quality of their work.

Who is the manual for?

This manual is for everyone who works in work-based learning (WBL providers) to support and to improve the standards and learning experiences of learners. The manual may also be helpful for stakeholders who work in partnership with providers of education and training, including parents/carers, local authorities, agencies, community groups and others.

What does this manual do?

This manual is designed to support the provider’s own self-assessment activities and improvement planning. While the manual is comprehensive, it is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

The manual does not cover all of the things which providers do as part of their self-assessment process. However, it does focus on aspects of self-assessment that inspection and research have shown to be particularly important.

The manual starts by identifying these important aspects of self-assessment, taking account of the Quality Effectiveness Framework. The manual then provides information on evaluating the work of providers in the context of Estyn’s CIF. In this section, there are questions for providers to help them evaluate the quality of their work. The manual concludes with a list of various self-assessment tools that providers may wish to use to support their scrutiny and to focus on areas for development.
2 Effective self-assessment

The process of self-assessment

Self-assessment is a process, not an event. It is the first essential step in a cyclical process of bringing about change and improvement. It is based on professional reflection, challenge and support among practitioners. Effective self-assessment involves taking wide-ranging decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for all learners. Most of all, it is about striving for excellence.

At the heart of self-assessment are three questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we improve things further?

While every aspect of a providers’ provision is a legitimate focus for self-assessment, the emphasis should always be on learner outcomes, ie on an assessment of the impact of each aspect of provision on the standards and wellbeing of learners.

The process of self-assessment should be continuous and a regular part of the provider’s working life. Self-assessment should be based on a wide range of information about strengths and areas for improvement which is collected throughout the year (though it will often be appropriate to conduct some aspects of self-assessment at longer intervals, and not necessarily each year). Providers should use information from self-assessment to plan for improvements, to undertake improvement work and to ensure a regular cyclical process of monitoring and assessment that leads to further improvement.

The diagram below shows the cyclical nature of effective self-assessment:

Good partnerships view self-assessment as an ongoing process and set up an annual cycle of assessment activities. Partnerships and their constituent providers
and partners should undertake a regular cycle of self-assessment activities. This work may include the following regular activities:

- evaluating the standards achieved by learners including an analysis of data from the outcomes from the work of learners. This can include data from accredited courses and qualifications successfully attained, along with outcomes and achievements from non-accredited sessions at the level of individuals, courses, learning area, and across the whole partnership;
- evaluating the quality of learners’ written and practical work, evaluating and moderating individual learning plans and other evidence of learners achievements;
- observations of teaching and training by peers and managers;
- evaluating the quality of teachers curriculum and lesson planning and assessment, recording and reporting;
- sampling the views of learners, staff, employers and other stakeholders;
- auditing practice against policies and procedures, such as those for safeguarding or health and safety;
- reviewing progress against development plans; and
- benchmarking against best or different practice from other partnerships and providers.

Self-assessment is not an exercise that can be carried out by partnership senior managers alone. It is influential only when all staff contribute to the process, are aware of the findings and take action based upon them.

Any self-assessment programme should include observation of teaching/training and learning activities in addition to those done for staff appraisal and/or performance management. These observations provide important evidence of learners’ achievements and progress in learning as well as the quality of teaching/training.

A session observation programme could include:

- observations of staff by senior staff each year as part of the self-assessment process of the partnership;
- observation of a sample of curriculum and/or geographical areas in detail by senior managers as part of a cycle of detailed self-assessment;
- observations by other partnerships and providers; peer observations by staff across the partnership and from other providers as a part of the partnership self-assessment process; and
- evaluation of schemes of work and lesson planning.

Over time, records of this work will build up to provide a profile of session grades, which can be used to come to a view on standards and teaching/training as well as highlight areas for improvement.

**Evidence from learners’ views** is a key source of evidence of achievement, attitudes and wellbeing. It is also likely to be useful in evaluating the quality of teaching, training and assessment. Learners should have opportunities to be involved in self-assessment. This can be done by consulting with and listening to learners through focus groups, and by developing their skills to contribute
to decision-making and improvement planning. Providers should also use the Learner Voice survey that is a key part of the DfES Quality and Effectiveness Framework or other questionnaires. Provider may use their own learner evaluations to build a picture of learner views across the partnership.

Self-assessment should take account of the views of a wide variety of stakeholders, including employers, governors, parents, carers and the wider community served by the provider.

**Key characteristics of effective self-assessment**

Effective self-assessment:

- is open and honest;
- has learners’ achievements and experiences as the principal focus;
- is a continuous process;
- is embedded in strategic planning and draws on regular quality assurance procedures;
- involves staff at all levels in assessing outcomes and their performance;
- seeks the views of learners systematically and consults other stakeholders, such as employers and partners, where appropriate;
- seeks to make judgements in the light of measurable performance data and to identify trends over time;
- leads to development plans which are monitored against clear targets and success criteria; and
- results in improvement in standards and quality for learners.

The judgements made during self-assessment should be:

- **secure** – based on sufficiently robust, reliable and accessible evidence;
- **first-hand** – based on direct observation;
- **reliable** – based on common, well-understood criteria;
- **valid** – accurately reflecting what is achieved and provided;
- **free of bias** – valuing equality of opportunity and diversity; and
- **corporate** – reflecting the collective view of learners, staff, employers and other relevant stakeholders.

**3 Self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Providers should use information from self-assessment to plan for improvement and to ensure a regular, cyclical process of monitoring and assessment.

The information collected from the programmes of provider self-assessment will lead into the provider’s quality development plans and other plans for improving the quality of provision. It is probable that some aspects of quality and standards will be evaluated more frequently than others. The cycle of development planning will need to take account of this.
Key characteristics of effective quality development plans

Effective quality development plans:

- are based on the outcomes of self-assessment and are cross-referenced to evidence;
- contribute to self-assessment;
- are embedded in the provider’s planning cycles;
- have clear priorities, targets, timescales and specific actions;
- identify persons responsible for actions, timescales and resource implications;
- specify clear outcomes against which progress can be measured; and
- give details of how, when and by whom progress will be monitored and evaluated.

4 Self-assessment and the Quality and Effectiveness Framework

The aim of the Quality and Effectiveness Framework for post-16 learning is to improve educational experiences and life-chances for all learners. The aim of it is to make sure that all learning is high quality and responsive to the needs of learners, employers and the communities they serve.

As part of the framework, providers are required to submit an annual self-assessment report (SAR) and Quality Development Plan (QDP) to DfES based on Estyn’s Common Inspection Framework (CIF). In addition, DfES requires providers to incorporate a focus on a number of strategic priorities; additional guidance on this is given in the annexes to the DfES guidance.

Providers are not required to undertake a separate self-assessment report for inspection purposes. The joint self-assessment process should be a normal part of the quality improvement cycle. Estyn will request a copy of the provider’s most recent self-assessment report from the provider themselves four weeks before an inspection.

5 Self-assessment and the Common Inspection Framework

The CIF provides a comprehensive checklist of all the key matters that providers should review when conducting their own self-assessment. Estyn anticipates that all providers will produce an annual self-assessment report that covers the issues in the CIF. In order to help providers evaluate outcomes, provision and leadership, this section of the manual provides questions on each of the quality indicators and aspects of the CIF. The CIF has been developed in association with, and is complementary to, the Quality and Effectiveness Framework.

Our inspection arrangements recognise that most providers have developed comprehensive systems for self-assessment and development planning for
improvement over many years. This progress is reflected through a more proportionate approach to inspection from September 2010. The starting point for all inspections is the provider’s assessment of its own performance. Inspectors do not inspect all aspects of work in depth during a core inspection. They sample evidence to test the provider’s own assessment of its work.

The following sections are written from the perspective of providers themselves and ‘we’ is used to refer to provider staff.

**Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?**

**How do we evaluate standards? (CIF 1.1)**

Strong self-assessment looks first at standards. Monitoring standards helps in evaluating the impact of the quality of provision and of leadership.

Effective self-assessment makes judgements in the light of measurable performance data. Data from LLWR and the Tribal benchmarking tool is increasingly useful as it becomes more complete and accurate, particularly at the level of individual main qualification aims. A rigorous analysis of this data enables providers to identify good features as well as areas for improvement.

**How good are results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment? (CIF 1.1.1)**

In evaluating performance, we need to use a range of different analyses and should not concentrate on one particular indicator or one type of analysis.

The starting point for assessing provider performance is the success rates for the whole provider as analysed by LLWR and the other relevant benchmarking tools. We should analyse performance by programme level and learning area, and consider learners’ timely completion of programmes. We should also assess the performance of learners at all levels of key skills. On work-based learning (WBL) programmes, we will benchmark learners’ attainment of qualification frameworks against those of other providers.

We should assess our performance over a period of time, usually three years, rather than concentrating on performance in a single year. We need to consider whether performance is improving, declining or fluctuating over time.

We should recognise that providers all have their own unique characteristics and we need to take account of factors that influence the learner profile when comparing results to national averages. We should take account of the performance of learners from disadvantaged communities.

**Questions we should consider about results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment**

- Are we doing as well, or even better, than we were three years ago?
- Are we doing as well as we could be or is there any room for improvement?
• Are learners making enough progress from one programme to another?
• In which learning areas do learners do best? In which learning areas do learners do less well? What are the factors that contribute to this variation and do they vary over time?
• In which geographical areas do learners do best? In which geographical areas do learners do less well?
• What are the factors that contribute to these variations and do they vary over time?
• Do learners complete within the given time frame?
• Do learners attain key skills at higher levels than those specified in their learning frameworks?
• Do learners from disadvantaged communities do as well as anticipated?

How good are the standards of groups of learners? (CIF 1.1.2)

We need to analyse the attainment of particular groups of learners, including the performance of learners with additional learning needs (ALN). The full list of groups of learners included under ALN is included in Annex 5 of the Inspection Guidance Handbook.

Judgements about achievement of learners with ALN should take account of their achievements in relation to achieving agreed learning goals in their individual learning plans.

Questions we should consider about standards of groups of learners

• Do more able and talented learners attain programmes at a quicker pace?
• Do learners with ALN achieve their agreed learning goals?
• How well do learners achieve skills for work?

How good are learners’ achievement and progress in learning? (CIF 1.1.3)

Aside from using data, assessment of learners’ achievement and progress should be based on session observations, scrutiny of learners’ work and discussions with learners. We should evaluate how well learners recall previous learning, develop thinking skills, acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills, and apply these to new situations. Where possible, we should evaluate the standards reached by learners and judge whether these are appropriate to learners’ ability. Judgements on achievement should recognise learners’ progress and development from a given starting point, relative to the context in which they learn. For learners with ALN, judgements about achievement will be influenced by the information about their individual needs and abilities.

In order to evaluate achievement and progress in learning, we need to have a programme of session observations in addition to those required for performance management purposes. This could include:

• observation of learners on main programmes each ear by senior managers as part of a cycle of detailed self-assessment of learning areas;
• observation of a sample of learning areas in detail by senior managers as part
of a cycle of detailed self-assessment of learning areas;

- observations by other colleagues; and
- observations by staff from other parts of the provider as a part of self-assessment.

Over time we should build up an ongoing profile of session judgements, which comprise one source of evidence on standards. (At the same time we should build up a profile on the quality of teaching, training and assessment.)

Apart from session observation we can also evaluate standards through scrutiny of learners' work and tutors' plans. Questionnaires for learners, parents/carers and employers are a useful tool for gauging quality of provision. Listening to the views of learners, employers and other stakeholders can also provide some useful information.

**Questions we should consider about learners’ achievement and progress in learning**

- Do learners achieve well in learning sessions?
- Do learners recall previous learning well?
- Do learners acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills?
- Do learners apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to new situations?
- Do outcomes for learners returning to study improve on their past attainment record?

**How good are learners’ skills?** (CIF 1.1.4)

In evaluating skills, we need to focus on whether all learners have the skills in communication, numeracy and information and technology CT needed to access the programme. Overall, we need to give most weight to literacy skills as these are likely to have the greatest impact on improving opportunities for learners.

We need to consider any outcomes in:

- basic/essential skills qualifications;
- initial screening assessments; and
- the achievement of learners entered for key skills qualifications, including those on the Welsh Baccalaureate.

**Questions we should consider about learners’ skills**

- Do all learners have the skills in communication, numeracy and ICT needed to access the whole programme?
- Do learners attain well in basic/essential and key skills qualifications, including those that are part of the Welsh Baccalaureate?
- Do all learners, including those who speak English as a second language, have the skills needed to access the programme?
- Do learners apply their skills without support?
How good are learners’ Welsh language skills? (CIF 1.1.5)

In evaluating learners’ Welsh language skills, we need to take account of the linguistic background and context of our provider and the area we serve.

Questions we should consider about learners’ Welsh language skills

- Do learners who have attended Welsh-medium schools continue to make progress in using Welsh in different contexts, such as in reviews and in social activities?
- Do we offer training bilingually?
- Do learners make progress in acquiring Welsh language skills?
- Do learners have the opportunity to develop their Welsh writing skills?

How do we evaluate wellbeing? (CIF 1.2)

The mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of young people are essential pre-conditions for successful learning. The aspects in this quality indicator are learners’ attitudes to keeping healthy and safe, the extent and quality of learners’ participation and enjoyment in learning, community involvement and decision-making, and their social and life skills.

To evaluate wellbeing, we need to:

- take account of learners’ views;
- consider the extent to which learners participate in learning;
- judge whether learners make decisions about things that affect their experiences with the provider; and
- consider whether learners have the skills needed to improve their own learning, to work with others and to take responsibility for their actions and their work; and
- evaluate the extent to which learners apply their skills and knowledge in different aspects of their lives.

We need to obtain evidence on participation and enjoyment in learning, as well as behaviour and attitudes, through session observations. There are many other ways of gaining an insight into learners’ views through, for example, questionnaires and interviews with focus groups and course representatives. DFES has produced questionnaires for learners called the Learner Voice, which providers can use regularly to identify trends and changes in attitude. This is not the only questionnaire available. As a provider, we can use others, especially if we wish to focus on specific issues in detail.

Regular surveys of learners’ views, as well as listening carefully to what learners have to say in focus groups and in similar situations, can provide good evidence for evaluating wellbeing.

Although some of the evidence for this quality indicator will depend on learners’ perceptions and session observations, there is also some useful outcome data. This includes attendance rates and data on punctuality.
How good are learners’ attitudes to keeping healthy and safe? (CIF 1.2.1)

When considering the extent to which learners feel healthy, we need to consider the extent to which learners have an understanding of how they can become healthy, both through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake.

When considering the extent to which learners feel safe, we may look at the extent to which learners feel free from physical and verbal abuse, and the extent to which they are aware of health and safety issues in the workplace. A systematic and structured review of the incidents of bullying or harassment will help provide some evidence of the extent to which learners feel safe.

Questions we should consider about learners’ attitudes to keeping healthy

- Do learners understand how they can become healthy, both through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake?
- Do learners have a good understanding of health and safety issues in the workplace?

Questions we should consider about learners’ attitudes to keeping safe

- Do learners feel free from physical and verbal abuse?
- Are there incidents of bullying or harassment? Is the number increasing or decreasing over time?

How much do learners participate in and enjoy their learning? (CIF 1.2.2)

When evaluating participation and enjoyment in learning, we need to consider attendance, behaviour and attitudes, and the extent to which learners have a say in what and how they learn.

When evaluating attendance, we need to consider the overall attendance rate, noting any variations between particular groups of learners.

When evaluating behaviour and attitudes, we should consider the extent to which learners demonstrate good behaviour in sessions and their work places. To do this, we need to have a programme of session and work placement observations, and observing behaviour should be a standing item on any observation. We should observe whether learners are considerate and courteous, and relate well to each other, their work colleagues, employers and staff. In addition, we should look at learners’ attitudes to learning, in particular their interest in their work, their ability to sustain concentration and how well they engage in tasks.

When evaluating what input learners have to what and how they learn, we should consider:

- whether learners’ views about what and how they learn are taken seriously;
- how learners discuss the topics to be covered and help to plan schemes of work and activities; and
- whether learners make choices about how and what they learn.
Questions we should consider about learners’ attendance

- Are there significant variations between particular groups of learners?

Questions we should consider about learners’ behaviour and attitudes

- Do learners demonstrate good behaviour in sessions and the work place?
- Do learners demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning?
- Are there variations between groups of learners?
- Is the number of learners who withdraw from programmes decreasing?

Questions we should consider about the input learners have into what and how they learn

- Do learners make choices about how they learn?
- Are learners’ views about how they learn taken seriously?
- Do learners discuss the topics to be taught and help to plan schemes of work and activities?

How good is our learners’ involvement in the community and in decision-making? (CIF 1.2.3)

We should evaluate the extent to which learners engage with the wider community.

We should consider learners’ participation in decision-making, including the effectiveness of any focus groups

Questions we should consider about community involvement and decision making

- Do learners take part in activities in the community outside the provider?
- Do learners participate in fund-raising for charities?
- Do learners volunteer to help with provider events?
- Are learners involved in discussions and decisions about learning and teaching, and what impact does this have?
- Are all learners, including those from different groups, involved in making decisions about their time with the provider?
- Are learners involved in provider self-assessment?

How good are learners’ social and life skills? (CIF 1.2.4)

When evaluating learners’ social and life skills, we need to consider how well learners show respect, care and concern for others, and whether they take on responsibility for their actions and their work. We should also consider the emotional skills of learners, including their self-confidence and self-esteem.

In addition, we should examine whether learners have the skills needed to improve their own learning, to work with others, to solve problems and to develop their thinking to move on to the next stage of learning. We should consider how well they are prepared for life and work outside the provider.
Questions we should consider about learners’ social and life skills

- Are learners prepared for life and work outside the provider?
- Do learners show respect, care and concern for others?
- Do learners take responsibility for their actions and their work?
- Do learners develop emotional skills, including self-confidence and self-esteem?
- Do learners have the skills needed to improve their own learning, work with others, solve problems and develop their thinking to move on to the next stage of learning or into employment?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

This section includes important aspects of provision, including the programme, training and assessment, care, support and guidance, and the learning environment. The focus here should not be on whether we do or do not just do the activities listed below, but instead it should be on what impact our activities have on learners’ standards and wellbeing. The provider has a clear function and that is to help make standards and wellbeing as good as they can be.

How do we evaluate learning experiences? (CIF 2.1)

The main issue in evaluating the programme is on how well the model of delivery meets the needs of learners across the provider.

It is not just the learners’ programmes that we should consider. We should also look at the nature and extent of other learning, including sports, clubs, visits, special events, links with employers, the community and other extra-curricular activities. It is important for us to see how effective the arrangements are for delivering these.

How well do we meet the needs of learners, employers and the community? (CIF 2.1.1)

Questions we should consider about how well we meet the needs of learners, employers and the community

- Does the programme allow learners to follow learning experiences that are engaging, challenging and stimulating?
- Do we consider the type of model of delivery used within sessions?
- Are sessions equally accessible to all, and if there are constraints on learner choice, is it in learners’ best interests?
- Do learners have access to appropriate qualifications that meet their interests, abilities, needs and learning styles?
- Do we provide opportunities and pathways that enable learners to access a range of formal, non-formal and informal elements?
- Does the programme link with the requirements of Learning Pathways 14-19 and the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009)?
- Are we successful in overcoming barriers to learners’ learning?
- Do all learners have good opportunities to undertake systematic, relevant and challenging work experience?
- Do the on-the-job and off-the-job aspects of the programme link cohesively?
- Do out-of-provider learning and extra-curricular activities impact positively on learners’ experiences and learning?
How well do we provide for skills? (CIF 2.1.2)

Questions we should consider about how well we provide for skills

- Do learning activities across the programme meet learners’ needs in gaining and using skills, particularly the literacy skills of reading and writing?
- Do tutors and managers use the results of initial assessment well to plan for differentiation in all sessions across the whole programme?
- Do we make sure learners’ development of skills takes place across the programme?
- Does the provision for skills meet learners’ individual skill needs, engage their interest, develop their confidence and promote successful learning?
- Is the provision for skills properly co-ordinated so that skills are contextualised into learners’ main programmes?
- Is skills provision monitored and evaluated across the programme?

How well do we provide for Welsh language provision and the Welsh dimension? (CIF 2.1.3)

Questions we should consider about how well we provide for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension

- Does the quality of our provision for Welsh language development enable learners to achieve good standards, taking account of the linguistic background and context of the provider?
- Does the provider encourage and support learners to maintain and to develop further their existing Welsh language skills?
- Do we encourage learners to take up and to achieve qualifications in Welsh?
- Do we contribute to the learners’ knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales?
- How well do we maintain and further develop the existing Welsh language skills of learners?

How well do we provide for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC)? (CIF 2.1.4)

Questions we should consider about how well we provide for ESDGC

- Do we ensure that ESDGC occurs, where appropriate, in all programmes?
- Do we give learners the opportunity to develop ESDGC through provider work and projects?
- Do we measure the impact of ESDGC?
- Do we act sustainably?
- Do we enable learners to recognise the importance of taking individual responsibility and action to make the world a better place?
- Do we enable learners to gain an appropriate level of awareness and understanding of sustainable development, and of the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values necessary to become a global citizen?
How do we evaluate teaching, training and assessment? (CIF 2.2)

Monitoring and assessment of the quality of teaching, training and assessment need to focus on observation of teaching, training and assessment practices. Evaluation of the information on standards may lead to judgements about what is going well and not so well, but it is only through observation that we will find out the reasons why.

The key task in judging quality of teaching, training and assessment is the impact it has on learning and the standards achieved. It should not focus on the use of a particular process in isolation from its impact. Similarly, when scrutinising assessment, we should focus on what impact it has on learning.

How well do we evaluate the range and quality of teaching training approaches? (CIF 2.2.1)

Questions we should consider about the range and quality of teaching training and assessment approaches

- Do we have high enough expectations of all learners?
- Do we plan effectively and have clear objectives for learning sessions, assessment and other learning experiences?
- Is a range of teaching, training and assessment methods and resources used to interest learners, and to stimulate and to challenge them to achieve highly?
- Are we successful in providing demanding work to meet the needs of all learners, for example those with additional learning needs and those who are more able and talented?
- Do we communicate effectively with learners?
- Do we establish good working relationships that foster learning?
- Do we manage learners’ behaviour effectively?
- Do we use technical and learning support staff effectively?

How well do we raise learners’ achievement through assessment of and for learning? (CIF 2.2.2)

Questions we should consider about how well we carry out assessment of and for learning

- Do learners regularly review their own learning, understand their progress and become involved in setting their own learning targets?
- Are different types of formative feedback used effectively to inform learners about their learning?
- Do we encourage learners to take note of feedback?
- Does the assessment process inform future planning?
- Do we analyse examination results as well as other assessments?
- Do we provide clear, systematic, manageable, consistent and useful records on each learner?
- Do we use records to effectively track learners’ progress, compare outcomes with benchmarks and intervene in individual cases if necessary?
• Do we involve employers fully in the learners’ review process?
• Do we produce reports and reviews on learners that are clear, consistent and informative, and set out areas for improvement?
• Do we enable learners and employers to contribute to the contents of reports and reviews, where appropriate?
• Do employers understand assessment procedures and have access to records and reports relating to learners?
• Do we encourage employers to respond to reports on progress?

How do we evaluate care, support and guidance? (CIF 2.3)

The main focus here should be on the impact of care, support and guidance on learners’ standards and wellbeing rather than merely on the procedures and arrangements. It is vital that any assessment of care, support and guidance looks at the extent to which the arrangements have a beneficial effect on vulnerable learners. It is also important to keep in mind that there should be a clear link between any judgements made about care, support and guidance and those on standards and wellbeing.

How well do we meet the provision for health and wellbeing? (CIF 2.3.1)

Questions we should consider about how well we provide for health and wellbeing

• Do we have appropriate policies and arrangements for promoting healthy living and learners’ wellbeing, and how well do these support learners to achieve emotional and physical wellbeing?
• Do we consider the views of learners and employers?
• Do we encourage learners to be healthy?
• Do we have suitable arrangements to report health and safety issues?
• Do we have effective arrangements for dealing with harassment and bullying, including our arrangements for helping learners to manage their feelings, and to develop self-awareness and self-respect?
• Do our learners enjoy their time with the provider/employer and do we promote good behaviour and attendance?
• Do all learners know whom to approach if they have a concern?

How well are learners supported with specialist services, information and guidance? (CIF 2.3.2)

Questions we should consider about how well our learners are supported with specialist services, information and guidance

• Do we provide learners with individual support on educational and other issues?
• Do we provide access to a wide range of information for learners?
• Do learners have full access to impartial guidance services?
• Do we enable learners to make use of professional support both from within the provider and from specialist service providers?
Do we liaise effectively with specialist agencies, such as the police, health, psychological, counselling, housing, financial and social services?

Do we ensure that we have effective arrangements to ensure that all learners receive their basic entitlement to impartial guidance and support?

Do we consider the coherence and effectiveness of the provision for personal and specialist support, including the advice given to learners on careers education and guidance?

How good are our safeguarding arrangements?  (CIF 2.3.3)

Questions we should consider about our safeguarding arrangements

- Are our arrangements for safeguarding children and/or vulnerable adults appropriate and do we comply with best practice?

- Does our policy and procedure ensure that all staff are trained, and that they respond and comply with our safeguarding arrangements?

- Does our policy set out:
  - the named senior member of staff’s responsibilities for dealing with safeguarding issues and for providing advice/support to other staff;
  - clear procedures that reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; and
  - arrangements for training?

- Do we have effective recruitment, disciplinary and reporting arrangements to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers and whether our arrangements meet legal requirements?

How well do we meet the needs of learners with ALN?  (CIF 2.3.4)

Questions we should consider about how well we meet the needs of learners with ALN

- How quickly do we identify learners’ additional learning needs and provide appropriate support?

- Do learners with ALN receive the short or long-term support required for their needs?

- Do learners have initial and diagnostic assessments of their additional learning needs?

- Do learners receive appropriate additional support with basic skills to help them to meet their learning goals?

- How regularly do we evaluate the effectiveness of support in helping learners achieved their learning goals?

How do we evaluate the learning environment?  (CIF 2.4)

We need to provide a learning environment that helps learners to succeed as well as they can. To be fully effective, we need to be an inclusive community, where learners receive equal access to all areas of the provider’s provision. In effective providers, there is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.
It is also important that learners have access to resources of good quality that are well-matched to their needs. In addition, learners need accommodation of good quality that is well matched to their needs and is easy for them to access.

**How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our provider? (CIF 2.4.1)**

**Questions we should consider about our ethos and provision for equality and diversity**

- Do we establish a provider ethos that is inclusive?
- Do we take into account and value the diversity of learners’ backgrounds, and act appropriately on this information?
- Do we offer equal access to the programmes and challenge stereotypes in learners’ attitudes, choices, expectations and achievements?
- Do we develop tolerant attitudes and ensure that all learners and staff are free from harassment?
- Do we promote the prevention and elimination of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism, racism, ageism and homophobia?
- Are our policies and procedures effective in dealing with specific instances of discrimination or oppressive behaviour?
- Do we take reasonable steps to ensure that current and prospective learners with disabilities do not suffer less favourable treatment in provider or on employers’ premises?
- Do we have a well-understood equality scheme and action plan that promotes equal opportunities and human rights? Does our policy meet statutory requirements?
- Do we have an action plan that ensures delivery of the policy?
- Do we provide appropriate equality training for staff and employers where appropriate?
- Do we keep employers aware of the provider’s requirements regarding equality and diversity?
- Do we ensure that employers are fully aware of their responsibilities for equality and diversity?
- Do we monitor and effectively address any related issues or complaints that arise?

**How well do we ensure that the physical environment is appropriate for learners’ needs? (CIF 2.4.2)**

**Questions we should consider about whether the physical environment is appropriate for learners’ needs**

- Are resources well matched to learners’ needs in all learning environments?
- Does the accommodation provide a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment to support teaching, training and assessment?
- Is the accommodation sufficient for the number of learners and the activities offered?
- Are the buildings and grounds at all sites maintained appropriately?
- Do our premises conform to Disability Discrimination Audit (DDA) requirements?
Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

The most crucial and central role is played by the principal or chief executive. Any assessment of that role needs to focus on how effectively he or she is in improving provision, quality, standards and learners’ wellbeing.

Effective provider leadership also requires that staff at all levels, with leadership and management roles, make an important contribution, understand, and are committed to their job roles. Staff need to focus on how their work can lead to improvements.

Effective provider leadership also ensures that learners are properly encouraged and supported to become involved in decision-making on issues that affect their learning and wellbeing.

Successful leadership enables staff, boards of directors/governing bodies, managers, staff and learners to be involved in the formulation of aims, values and policies, and the procedures which arise from them. Successful leadership teams work effectively together and have a shared commitment to excellence.

How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our leadership? (CIF 3.1)

When thinking about strategic direction, we need to consider the extent to which we share a common vision of what we want to achieve and where we want to go as a provider.

Plans and processes are only as good as the extent to which they are effective in sustaining high quality and improving provision and standards. Good leadership must have an impact.

We need to consider how well the board of directors/governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and takes full account of relevant legislation and guidance. We will also need to consider how well the board of directors/governing body not only support our organisation, through effective leadership, but also challenge it to do better.

How good is our strategic direction and what is the impact of our leadership? (CIF 3.1.1)

Questions we should consider about strategic direction of leadership

- How effective is our focus is on improving the standards achieved by learners in driving strategic direction of the organisation?
- Are our senior and middle managers working effectively as a team?
- Are there clear lines of communication?
- Do we have clear aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that are focused on meeting learners’ needs?
- Are our plans appropriately focused and are they being implemented, and monitored in a timely way?
- Do our senior managers work well as a team?
• Are lines of communication clear and effective?
• Are roles and responsibilities defined, and are the spans of responsibility in senior and middle management teams viable and balanced?
• Do all staff understand and fulfil their roles in direct relation to specific strategic aims, plans and responsibilities?
• Do leaders manage their own time effectively and prioritise activities responsively?
• Do meetings focus on important issues of performance and core business, and generate clear action points which are carried out as agreed?
• Are our management and structures coherent with the strategic direction of the provider and do they address core issues?
• How well do we use data to monitor performance?
• Do we communicate high expectations to those we manage?
• Do we agree and achieve challenging and realistic targets for ourselves and others?

Questions we should consider about the impact of leadership

• Do we communicate the vision for our provider well, and explore how to achieve it, in collaboration with others?
• Do we model and promote professional behaviours and values that contribute positively to creating a provider ethos where our learners and staff feel valued?
• Do we actively support and challenge everyone to do their best?
• How well do we manage the performance of our staff in order to help them to improve their practice?
• Do we address issues of under-performance robustly and directly where necessary? Does our performance management identify individual and whole-provider training and development needs clearly, and do we prioritise these appropriately and address them fully?
• Do all our staff have targets for improvement that support the delivery of the strategic aims in our provider development plans and other action plans?

How good is the work of our board of directors/governors? (CIF 3.1.2)

Questions we should consider about the work of our board of directors/ governors

Do our board of directors/governors:

• know how well we are doing compared to other providers?
• fulfil their statutory obligations and take full account of relevant legislation and guidance?
• understand their roles?
• have good information about the performance of our organisation and issues that affect it?
• know how well we are performing compared with other providers?
• provide a sense of direction for the work of our organisation?
• support our organisation as a critical friend?
• hold our organisation to account for the standards and quality we achieve?
• take reasonable steps to inform learners, members of staff, employers, parents or any other person of the procedures if they wish to make a complaint or appeal?
• participate in training to help them to do their work?
• listen to the views of learners and take these into account when making decisions?
• make sure that complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly?

How well do we meet national and local priorities? (CIF 3.1.3)

Questions we should consider about national and local priorities

• Are we clear about local and especially national priorities and do we have a consistent, systematic view and strategy of how we will respond to them?
• Are we successful in meeting priorities such as:
  ▲ the Quality and Effectiveness Framework;
  ▲ Learning Pathways 14-19, including meeting the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009);
  ▲ the Transformation agenda;
  ▲ strategies that relate to Welsh-medium education;
  ▲ the Children and Young People’s Partnership plan; and
  ▲ local community partnerships and consortia agreements?
• Do we appreciate the purpose of these priorities and how they can improve learners’ outcomes and wellbeing?
• Do we respond to the educational challenges of the local area by working with other providers, agencies, and the local authorities in the areas served by the organisation?

How do we improve the quality of what we do? (CIF 3.2)

The key purpose of this manual is to improve standards and the quality of provision through effective self-assessment.

The processes of self-assessment and development planning should be a regular and routine part of the work of every teachers’ and trainer’s professional practice. The focus of our provider’s self-assessment should be on identifying priorities for improvement, monitoring provision and assessing outcomes. The process should involve a rigorous review of all aspects of provider life and, most importantly, how these impact on the standards that learners achieve. A key consideration is whether our provider is managed on the basis of an accurate assessment of our strengths and weaknesses. Our leadership and management are unlikely to be good if we do not have effective self-assessment procedures.

Improvement planning should flow naturally from our self-assessment activities. The priorities in any improvement plan should be based on the findings of our self-assessment. The test of good improvement planning is whether the actions have led to clear improvements. If our improvement planning is good, then we should have a well-evidenced track record of improvements.

Where necessary, there will need to be direct intervention and support to improve
performance. It should not be seen as a response to failure, but instead it should be seen as intervention and support that leads to substantive improvements. Intervention and support for some more vulnerable groups of learners are likely to involve working across the provider as whole, as well as with other agencies.

**How well do we carry out self-assessment, including listening to learners and others? (CIF 3.2.1)**

**Questions we should consider about self-assessment**

- Do we use evidence to identify and to confront underperformance or coasting performance, to identify improvement activity and to set high but realistic targets and standards?
- Is self-assessment a regular part of our organisation’s working life and embedded in our strategic planning?
- Is there a thorough assessment and monitoring of data on standards and the quality of education, including consideration of trends and progress over time?
- Do we draw on first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching, training, assessment and learning?
- Do we involve all staff in assessing outcomes and their own performance?
- Do we encourage learners to share their views and raise issues?
- Do we take account of the views of our staff, employers, parents, carers and other stakeholders?
- Where appropriate, do we draw upon reviews by external agencies?
- Does our self-assessment activity lead to the formulation of our development plans and result in improvement in standards and quality?

**How do we plan and secure improvement? (CIF 3.2.2)**

**Questions we should consider about planning and securing improvement**

- Do we use information from self-assessment to set priorities and appropriately challenge targets for improvement?
- Have we prioritised the matters that we wish to improve?
- Are we implementing sound strategies that are likely to bring about the desired improvements?
- Do all staff play their part in implementing the strategies?
- Where necessary, do we take early and direct intervention and support to improve performance?
- Have we defined the actions for improvement in specified and realistic timescales, and allocated responsibility for their delivery?
- Have we made sure that our priorities are supported by the allocation of resources?
- Have the actions we have taken had a positive effect and, where relevant, have led to measurable improvements in standards?
- Do we have a good or excellent track record in making improvements in standards and the quality of provision over recent years?

**How are we involved in networks of professional practice? (CIF 3.2.3)**

A network of professional practice is a group of trainers and/or providers who work together to improve practice in their own organisation as well as driving change
across a network of providers. The National Training Federation of Wales (NTFW) is prominent in the way that it helps providers to network with each other.

These networks work to secure higher standards and wellbeing through teacher and trainer collaboration within and across providers. Tutors and trainers work together to share and develop professional expertise and knowledge that has positive impacts on learner outcomes. They can also give partnerships access to emerging knowledge about leadership, learning, teaching and wellbeing.

Our provider should be developing as a strong learning community and achieving a culture of collaboration within and across providers. This process needs arrangements to support the involvement of all staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

As part of self-assessment in relation to 3.2.3, we also need to scrutinise the effectiveness of the college’s arrangements for Continuous Professional Development.

**Questions we should consider about networks of professional practice**

- Are staff involved in networks within and beyond the provider?
- Does our involvement in networks give us access to emerging knowledge about provider leadership, learning, teaching, training, standards and wellbeing?
- Are we achieving a culture of collaboration within and across providers?
- How good are our arrangements to support the active engagement of all our staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills, including participation in whole-provider professional learning experiences?
- Are all our staff supported well by continuous professional development?
- Are all our staff acquiring new knowledge and skills to develop innovative approaches to learning, teaching and training?
- Are all our staff involved in direct observation of learning?
- Do we reflect on our own practice and evaluate the impact of professional learning on our learners’ learning and wellbeing?

**How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership working? (CIF 3.3)**

We all share the aim of working in partnership to improve provision and improve standards and wellbeing. To be effective at working with others, we need to:

- be relevant to our local community and to the lives of learners outside the provider;
- engage with the broader community, including businesses, other statutory agencies and the voluntary sector; and
- work in a joined-up way with other agencies to improve the standards and wellbeing of individual learners.

**Our partnership working should lead to better quality and standards, and improved quality of provision.** We need to consider how well our organisation collaborates with partners to deliver coherent programmes and choices. To do this, we need to have effective structures and processes which contribute well to joint
working practices. We should consider how our staff work with partners to plan, manage, and quality assure provision, for example through pooling our funding and resources.

When considering the planning and provision of lifelong learning that includes 14-19 education, we need to consider the effectiveness of our partnership with schools, colleges and other WBL providers. These partnerships should provide access to a range of suitable vocational and general education programmes.

We should consider the impact of partnership working on improving outcomes, particularly achievement, for those learners who work with employers as well as learners from schools who attend our organisation for their programmes. A good test of the effectiveness of the organisation’s partnership working is how well leaders monitor and evaluate the standards and provision of their learners on collaborative programmes in other providers.

How strategically do we work with our partners to improve learners’ standards and wellbeing? (CIF 3.3.1)

We need to consider how strategically our organisation works with its partners to improve learners’ standards and wellbeing. Partners include:

- local and regional employers;
- schools and other post-16 providers in the area network;
- other WBL providers;
- the local authority education services for children and young people;
- the community;
- DfES;
- sector skills councils; and
- a range of multi-disciplinary agencies, specialist and voluntary organisations.

Our organisation should be clear about its role and responsibilities within any formal partnerships.

Partnerships will depend on good liaison, trust and clear communication between partners.

Questions we should consider about strategic partnerships

- Do we play a key role in relevant and effective partnerships that benefit our learners?
- Do we work in a joined-up way with other providers and agencies to improve the standards and wellbeing of individual learners?
- Are we clear about our role and responsibilities within our partnerships?
- Do we use strategic partnerships to help us to build our capacity for continuous improvement?
- Do we ensure that there is good liaison, trust and clear communication between our organisation and our partners?
- Do we engage with the broader community, including employers, other statutory and specialist agencies, and the voluntary sector to benefit our learners?
How well do we collaborate with partners to deliver coherent programmes and choices? (CIF 3.3.2)

Questions we should consider about joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance

- Do we have effective structures and processes which contribute well to joint working practices?
- How well do we work with partners to plan, manage and assure the quality of provision?

Questions we should ask ourselves about our work with our partners in education and training

- Do we work with our partners to ensure our learners have access to a range of suitable vocational and general education programmes?
- Do we ensure our learners access the programmes in an efficient and safe way?
- Do we ensure partnership working improves outcomes, particularly achievement?
- Do we monitor and evaluate the standards and provision of collaborative programmes with other providers?
- Do we know what is going on and has action been taken when weaknesses have been discovered?
- Do we work with partners to make best use of our available resources?

How do we evaluate resource management? (CIF 3.4)

Leadership requires that resources, including staff, time and finances, are used effectively to improve provision, standards and wellbeing. When evaluating the management of resources, we should look at how well we plan and implement effective strategies to ensure that we deliver value for money in the way we manage resources.

One important task is to judge how efficiently and effectively we plan and carry out strategies to manage our staff and available resources. We should be aware that there may be some features of our management that contribute to or detract from the efficient management of resources.

When we look at financial matters, we should not focus only on the detail of our financial budgets. Instead, the focus should be on the extent to which our organisation’s spending decisions and broad financial planning are based on priorities for expenditure and on improvement over time.

Another important focus for evaluating value for money is whether our organisation is effective in achieving good or excellent outcomes for learners. It might be useful to try to make an overall assessment of value for money. This means judging whether our organisation offers excellent, good, adequate or unsatisfactory value for money, for the learner, in terms of the use made of the available income. We should also judge how effective our organisation is at generating income from sources other than the Welsh Government.
How well do we manage our staff and resources? (CIF 3.4.1)

Questions we should consider about managing staff and resources

- Do our staff have appropriate levels of knowledge and skills to deliver the programmes?
- Do we deploy our staff to make best use of their time, expertise and experience?
- Do we identify and meet the development needs of all our staff through appraisal and performance management systems?
- Do we manage and deploy our technical and other support staff well?
- Do we identify and meet the development needs of all our staff through appraisal and performance management systems?
- Do we identify and meet the development needs of all our staff through appraisal and performance management systems?
- Do we manage and deploy our technical and other support staff well?
- Do we provide the best standards of accommodation possible?
- Do we work with partners to make effective use of resources?
- Do learners have enough appropriate learning resources?

Questions we should consider about financial matters

- Are our spending decisions and broad financial planning based on priorities for expenditure and on improvement over time?
- Do we know the costs of existing programmes and activities, keep them under review and question whether they are cost-effective, for instance in relation to small group sizes?
- Do we identify priorities and areas for development, and allocate resources appropriately and according to clear criteria to reflect our agreed objectives?
- Do we have systematic and accurate budgeting arrangements?

Do we provide value for money? (CIF 3.4.2)

Questions we should consider about value for money

- Is our provision effective in securing appropriate outcomes for our learners?
- Do we balance the effectiveness of our provision against costs, including staffing costs?
- Do we make good use of the funding we receive?
- How effective are we at generating income from sources other than the Welsh Government?
- Do we make effective use of income generated from other sources?
- Do we manage our resources sustainably?

5 Self-assessment and inspection

Providers should use information from self-assessment to feed into their strategic planning and contribute towards an annual self-assessment update. An annual self-assessment update provides an opportunity to identify strengths, and celebrate and share good practice. This annual self-assessment update should identify areas for provider improvement, which can be prioritised in improvement planning. The Quality and Effectiveness Framework recognises the importance of annual provider self-assessment updates based on the CIF.
Inspections provide an important external assessment of the work of providers over a six-year cycle. Inspection can help providers to focus on what needs to be done, and on how to bring about a step change in the quality and consistency of learning.

The starting point for inspection is the provider’s assessment of its own performance, supported by relevant performance information. Inspectors will not inspect all aspects of work in depth during a core inspection. The provider’s self-assessment report will guide how inspectors sample evidence to test the provider’s assessment of its work.

A good self-assessment report should:

- be analytical, evaluative and concise;
- identify areas for improvement as well as strengths;
- indicate excellent and sector-leading practice, where appropriate;
- give clear judgements on each quality indicator in the CIF;
- ensure that judgements derive from evidence and include cross-references to it;
- comment on statistical data about outcomes over recent years;
- refer to recent assessments or reviews of provision; and
- relate clearly to the quality development plan and targets.

### 6 Tools to support self-assessment

There are a range of existing tools to support self-assessment. A few examples are included here but you will be aware of others as well. This list will be updated at intervals.

#### Estyn self-assessment tools

Providers may find some of Estyn’s publications useful when carrying out self-assessment.

- English for Speakers of Other Languages: The impact of increased demand;
- Listening to Communities: How good are providers as finding out the learning needs of adults in their communities;
- Evaluation of the quality and value of the education and training funded through the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF);
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in adult and community-based learning and youth work in Wales;
- Merging the boundaries in adult community-based learning;
- Listening to Learners;
- Race equality & English as an Additional Language;
- Education for sustainable development and global citizenship;
- Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification;
- Healthy Living;
- Learning Pathways 14-19;
• Leadership and strategic management in further education, work-based learning and adult community learning sectors;
• What makes a good training provider?
• The effectiveness of strategies for learner involvement in post-16 learning -- interim report;
• The effectiveness of learner involvement strategies in further education institutions and Welsh for adults centres;
• The impact of family learning programmes on raising the literacy annuity levels of children and adults; and
• The Chief Inspectors Annual Report