

SQT Training Ltd
Programmatic Review
Report of Peer Review Group
October 2011

Part 1 General Information

Date of visit 29th September 2011

Programmes Evaluated Special Purpose Award, Diploma in Process Engineering, Level 8, 60 credits
Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering (Service and Transaction) Level 8, 20 credits
Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering, Level 7, 10 credits
Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering, Level 6, 10 credits

Programmes Approved Special Purpose Award, Diploma in Process Engineering, Level 8, 60 credits
Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering (Service and Transaction) Level 8, 40 credits
Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering, Level 7, 10 credits
Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering, Level 6, 10 credits

Members of Peer Review Group

Name	Position	Institution/Organisation
Dr. Derek O'Byrne (Chairman)	Registrar	Institute of Technology, Waterford
Ms. Elaine Desmond	Process Champion	Rabobank, Dublin
Mr. Damian Morris	Project Manager - Global Business Services (GBS)	General Electric, Shannon
Dr. John Donovan	Lecturer	Institute of Technology, Sligo
Ms. Annmarie McHugh	Lecturer	Institute of Technology, Dundalk

SQT Training Ltd. Staff Members

Lily Collison Managing Director
Siobhan Cunningham Managing Director
John Ryan Programme Manager
Éamon Ó Béarra Programme Manager
Kim Feehan Course Manager
Eilish Cummins Examinations Secretary
Jean Feehan Marketing Manager

Part II Introduction and context

SQT Training Ltd. is a private training provider based in Limerick. SQT agreed its Quality Assurance with HETAC in 2008 and currently has four HETAC validated, part-time programmes leading to special purpose awards, in the field of Lean Six Sigma, two Black Belt programmes at NFQ Level 8 and two Green Belt programmes, one at NFQ Level 7 and one at NFQ Level 6. The awards range from 10 to 60 ECTS credits.

To date 736 learners have registered on SQT's HETAC Lean Six Sigma programmes and 389 learners have achieved their HETAC awards. The completion rate to date has been 61%. The following is the breakdown by programme:

HETAC Award title	HETAC Programme code	SQT Programme title	Number of Learners
Diploma in Process Engineering	SQ704 and formerly SQ700	Black Belt	33
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ701	Black Belt (Service and Transaction)	14
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ702	Green Belt Level 7	271
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ703	Green Belt Level 6	71
			389

SQT agreed Terms of Reference for its Programmatic Review with HETAC as follows:

The objective of a programmatic review is to review the development of programmes over the previous five years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality. The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes' responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria (Section 3 of HETAC's Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010) and relevant awards standards.

The specific objectives of a programmatic review are to:

- Analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of each validated programme, including detail of learner numbers, retention rates and success rates*
- Review the development of the programmes in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments*
- Evaluate the response of the provider/school/department to market requirements and educational developments*
- Evaluate the feedback mechanisms for learners and the processes for acting on this feedback*

- *Evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme(s)*
- *Evaluate the formal links which have been established with industry, business and the wider community in order to maintain the relevance of its programmes*
- *Evaluate feedback from employers of the programmes' graduates and from those graduates*
- *Review any research activities in the field of learning under review and their impact on teaching and learning*
- *Evaluate projections for the following five years in the programme(s)/field of learning under review*
- *Make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules; proposals in relation to the discontinuation of programmes/modules and the development of new programmes.*

Special considerations for SQT

1. *Include a review of Six Sigma programmes available at other higher education institutions.*
2. *Review the implementation of Assessment & Standards (2009).*

The programmes under review should comply with Assessment & Standards, e.g. there should be a programme and module assessment strategy for each programme and these should enable the learning outcomes to be assessed. The review of the assessment strategies for each programme should ensure validity, reliability, consistency and fairness of the assessment methods employed.

In consultation with HETAC, SQT appointed a panel of experts for its Programmatic Review. SQT then conducted an in-depth Self-Evaluation and issued a report to the panel. Documentation was made available to the panel in advance of the site-visit and during the review process. A full list of documents is available in appendix 1.

The site-visit took place at SQT's office at the Callan Centre on Thursday 29th September 2011. The panel met with management, academic and administrative staff involved in the provision of SQT's HETAC validated programmes. The panel conducted telephone interviews with learners/companies. At the end of the visit, the panel presented its finding.

The schedule for the site-visit and the involvement of SQT staff are presented in appendix 2.

The following table summarises SQT's four programmes validated with HETAC.

HETAC Award title	HETAC Programme code	SQT Programme title	NFQ	ECTS credits	Validation date
Diploma in Process Engineering	SQ704 and formerly SQ700	Black Belt	8	60	SQ704 June 2010 (SQ700 June 2008)
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ701	Back Belt (Service and Transaction)	8	20	June 2008
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ702	Green Belt	7	10	June 2008
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ703	Green Belt	6	10	April 2009

SQT specifically asked that the panel respect the confidentiality of the information presented and indicated that all information was given on trust for the purposes of programmatic review alone.

Part III Findings of the Peer review group

The panel considered the review objectives as falling within the following broad categories of activities:

1. Strategic positioning, market and future planning
2. Programme management, review process and programmes of study
3. Learner experience

General Findings

SQT are to be commended on their general engagement with the panel and the review process. An open and engaging process was evident and the panel was facilitated in accessing information as necessary. It should be noted that this was the first experience for SQT in completing a HETAC programme validation process.

The construction of the panel proved complex due to late withdrawals of panel members, leaving SQT management with the difficult task of finding replacements at short notice. A consequence of this, and perhaps wider panel design considerations, resulted in a number of panel members who had prior interactions with the company. Notably, one member of the panel had previously validated two of the programmes, one member had previously validated one programme and had procured services from SQT and a third member had previously procured services from the SQT. Potential conflict of interest issues were discussed by the panel prior to engaging with the site-visit. While different reviewers are normal in validation and programme review process given

the circumstances of the SQT review, the specialist nature of their programmes and the open disclosures the panel were confident that no conflicts of interest arose.

Strategic positioning, market and future planning

The position of SQT as a commercial provider of specialized training and education was noted. A clear vision of working with corporate entities to deliver company relevant programmes was evident. Substantial evidence was presented in terms of the capacity of SQT to satisfy the needs of employers and it was clear that the principal focus of activity was on the client company. An unintended consequence of this is that completion rates may be impacted upon by the commitment the client company has to the individual's capacity to complete. For instance when changes in work roles or investment decisions occur the learner may not be in a position to complete their project work. There is a substantial tension in terms of learner protection between the learner's needs and the client company's needs in these circumstances. In that respect greater articulation is needed for issues of learner protection and programme completion.

It is recommended that a clear **articulation of how SQT support learner completion** is undertaken and specifically that **policy be drawn up to formalise exit pathways** for learners who through no fault of their own are frustrated in completing the programme. A risk analysis should be completed for all programmes to enhance completion possibilities for learners.

The documentation presented while comprehensive potentially undersold the dynamics of the relationships with client companies and the unique characteristics of the project work completed by the learners. In that regard it is also recommended that **greater articulation is given to the nature and management of the relationships between SQT, its clients and its learners.**

An important aspect of SQT's engagement with learners is the importance of the front end relationship. There has been a clear and planned development of that engagement over the period of review and SQT are to be commended on those initiatives. SQT's recognition that companies may be at different levels of maturity in respect of these types of programme training requirements and may require assistance in preparing learners for the programme is to be welcomed. It is recommended that **SQT continue to strengthen pre-training preparation and information provided to learners.**

Programme management, review process and programmes of study

SQT operate a traditional programme board structure with a defined programme leader. It is clear that committed staff run the programmes and the discussions clearly indicated that a meaningful review process had been completed.

Notwithstanding the above the programme documentation did not clearly articulate the changes to the original validation that were being proposed. For instance the trends in the development of the field toward more transactional methods had not been explained.

The panel requires that the **course documentation, specifically detailed indicative syllabi, be produced for each programme and be included in programme handbooks. An articulation**

of these changes should include a clear statement of the differences between the originally validated programme contents and the programme validated under this review.

Staff teaching on programmes is contracted by SQT. These are drawn from consultants and practice specialists. It is recognized that learner feedback in terms of end of module questionnaires is extensive and all teaching is assessed. SQT are to be commended on this aspect of quality assurance. However, it is not readily evident how the academic development, in terms of changes in the academic as opposed to practice field, is captured by SQT programme teams. SQT might benefit from building more direct links to academic institutions or academic specialists in relevant fields that might assist in development and quality assurance issues.

Given the nature and background of contracted staff it is recommended that SQT **develop and implement a continuous academic development plan for staff** teaching on their programmes.

SQT have an effective engagement with the external examiner and clear evidence of acting on recommendations.

The effort hours and learning outcomes required on the certificate in process engineering (level 8) reflects a greater credit weighting than previously allocated. In that respect the award is better represented with a 40 credit weighting. The effort hours of the level 7 award should be reviewed in light of the 10 credit weighting.

SQT should **review the course schedules to reflect the actual delivery and assessment process** of the programmes.

Learner experience

While it was not possible to gather individual learners centrally during the site-visit, telephone interviews were conducted with 3 learners and 1 client company.

The feedback from learners was extremely positive and their training and education had clear and positive impacts on their work. Particularly noted was their value on the formal award that they received.

Part IV Conclusions for the panel

The peer review panel are satisfied that SQT have met the requirements set out in Part 2 Programmatic Review Guidelines of HETAC's *Provider Monitoring Policy and Procedures* 2010

The Peer Review Group recommended that the four programmes be approved for a further five years subject to condition stated below, and with due consideration to the commendations and recommendations outlined above.

Condition

The approval is conditional on course documentation, specifically detailed indicative syllabi, be produced for each programme and be included in programme handbooks. An articulation of these changes should include a clear statement of the differences between the originally validated programme contents and the programme validated under this review.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a clear articulation of how SQT support learner completion is undertaken and specifically that policy be drawn up to formalise exit pathways for learners who through no fault of their own are frustrated in completing the programme.

It is recommended that greater articulation is given to the nature and management of the relationships between SQT, its clients and its learners.

It is recommended that SQT continue to strengthen pre-training preparation and information provided to learners.

Given the nature and background of contracted staff it is recommended that SQT develop and implement a continuous academic development plan for staff teaching on their programmes.

SQT should review the course schedules to reflect the actual delivery and assessment process of the programmes.

It is recommended that the Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Process Engineering (Service and Transaction) Level 8 be increased to 40 credits.

Specific Considerations

SQT presented development plans for consideration specifically:

- Demand for a Master Black Belt was identified and SQT will investigate the provision of this programme and submit to HETAC for validation.
- SQT has just been awarded an Enterprise Ireland grant to *investigate* the delivery of training overseas. SQT will first investigate, then test markets with non accredited Lean Six Sigma training. If all works well and there is demand, SQT will discuss with HETAC the delivery of accredited Lean Six Sigma programmes overseas.

The review highlights strong strategic and market focused thinking from SQT and subject to the comments made above, especially in relation to the academic connectivity of programme, SQT should be encouraged to continue on its development plans at postgraduate level and in the international markets subject to the national regulatory requirements in international provision.

The proposed programme schedules for the four programmes are attached in Appendix 3.

Signed and Dated

Chair

Appendix 1 Documentation available to panel

1. Documentation provided in Appendices folder supplied to panel in advance of site-visit

1	Terms of Reference for SQT's Programmatic Review
2	Feedback from Learners: Course Assessment Forms summary
3	Feedback from Learners: Learner Surveys summary
4	Programme Booklet
5	Compliance with Assessment and Standards 2009
6	SQT administration process flow
7	Access, Transfer and Progression
8	Tutor CVs
9	Programmatic Review Project Schedule
10	References

2. Documentation available to panel on day of site-visit

1	Minutes Examination Board Meetings
2	Minutes Academic Board Meetings
3	Learner assessment records
4	FETAC reports
5	NEBOSH reports
6	Tutor, administration and management staff CPD records

Appendix 2 Schedule for site-visit and involvement of SQT staff

Time	Details & Activities	SQT Team Attending
8.30	Private Meeting of Panel Members	
9.45	Welcome and Opening of Meeting with SQT Training Ltd Introduction by Panel Chairperson. Short presentation by SQT Training Ltd	Lily Collison, Siobhan Cunningham
10.00	Strategic positioning, market and future planning Areas for discussion might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and management structure • Development plans • Market positioning and sustainability • Programme portfolio choices • Strategic issues 	Siobhan Cunningham, Lily Collison
10.45	Programme Management and Review Process Areas for discussion might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning Strategy • Programme structure • Student profile • QA processes • Programme review process • Resources and facilities • Completion rates 	John Ryan, Éamon Ó Béarra, Kim Feehan, Siobhan Cunningham
11.15	Coffee Break	(Panel on its own)
11.30	Programme Reviews Areas for discussion might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme content • Assessment strategy • Learning outcomes • Programme changes/improvements 	John Ryan, Éamon Ó Béarra, Kim Feehan, Eilish Cummins, Jean Feehan

13.15	Lunch and private meeting of panel Panel to discuss work to date and draw preliminary view	
14.00	Viewing of documentary evidence Panel to review supporting documentary evidence in light of the discussions and panel deliberations.	
14.30	Telephone meetings with students Areas for discussion might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of students • Application of QA framework 	List of students to be provided
15.00	Panel deliberations and coffee	
15.45	Follow up dialogue with SQT management (if necessary).	
16.00	Further panel deliberations (if necessary)	
16.15	Final Feedback Informal feedback from Chairperson to SQT management on behalf of the panel.	

Appendix 3

The following are the programme schedules for the four programmes.

HETAC Award title	HETAC Programme code	SQT Programme title
Diploma in Process Engineering	SQ704	Black Belt
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ701	Black Belt (Service and Transaction)
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ702	Green Belt Level 7
Certificate in Process Engineering	SQ703	Green Belt Level 6

Note SQS01 is HETAC's programme code for SQ703 delivered under the Springboard initiative. SQS01 is exactly the same as SQ703.

PROVIDER : SQT Training Ltd
AWARD TITLE : Diploma in Process Engineering
PROGRAMME TITLE : Diploma in Process Engineering
AWARD CLASS : Special Purpose Award
LEVEL : Level 8 in the National Framework of Qualifications
LEARNING MODES OFFERED : PT
STAGE : Award
SEMESTER (if applicable) : N/A
DATE EFFECTIVE :

PROPOSED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

MODULE DETAILS				MARKS ALLOCATION					ECTS CREDIT
TITLE	NUMBER	STATUS	HOURS	CONTINUOUS	PROJECT	PRACTICAL	FINAL	MAXIMUM	LEVEL
Process Engineering	1	Mandatory	176	20%	80%	0	0	100	8

Total

NOTE

SPECIAL REGULATIONS 1 Integrative assessment of 5 elements – Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control – through Project and Written Ex
 2
 3

PROVIDER : SQT Training Ltd
AWARD TITLE : Certificate in Process Engineering
PROGRAMME TITLE : Certificate in Process Engineering (Service and Transaction)
AWARD CLASS : Special Purpose Award
LEVEL : Level 8 in the National Framework of Qualifications
LEARNING MODES OFFERED : PT
STAGE : Award
SEMESTER (if applicable) : N/A
DATE EFFECTIVE :

PROPOSED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

MODULE DETAILS				MARKS ALLOCATION					ECTS CREDIT
TITLE	NUMBER	STATUS	HOURS	CONTINUOUS	PROJECT	PRACTICAL	FINAL	MAXIMUM	LEVEL
Process Engineering	1	Mandatory	96	20%	80%	0	0	100	8

Total

NOTE

SPECIAL REGULATIONS 1 Integrative assessment of 5 elements – Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control – through Project and Written Ex
 2
 3

PROVIDER : SQT Training Ltd
AWARD TITLE : Certificate in Process Engineering
PROGRAMME TITLE : Certificate in Process Engineering
AWARD CLASS : Special Purpose Award
LEVEL : Level 7 in the National Framework of Qualifications
LEARNING MODES OFFERED : PT
STAGE : Award
SEMESTER (if applicable) : N/A
DATE EFFECTIVE :

PROPOSED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

MODULE DETAILS				MARKS ALLOCATION					ECTS CRI
TITLE	NUMBER	STATUS	HOURS	CONTINUOUS	PROJECT	PRACTICAL	FINAL	MAXIMUM	LEVEL
Process Engineering	1	Mandatory	48	0	100%	0	0	100	7

Total

NOTE

SPECIAL REGULATIONS 1 Integrative assessment of 5 elements – Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control – through Project
 2
 3

PROVIDER : SQT Training Ltd
AWARD TITLE : Certificate in Process Engineering
PROGRAMME TITLE : Certificate in Process Engineering
AWARD CLASS : Special Purpose Award
LEVEL : Level 6 in the National Framework of Qualifications
LEARNING MODES OFFERED : PT
STAGE : Award
SEMESTER (if applicable) : N/A
DATE EFFECTIVE :

PROPOSED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

MODULE DETAILS				MARKS ALLOCATION					ECTS CRI
TITLE	NUMBER	STATUS	HOURS	CONTINUOUS	PROJECT	PRACTICAL	FINAL	MAXIMUM	LEVEL
Process Engineering	1	Mandatory	50	40%	60%	0	0	100	6

Total

NOTE

SPECIAL REGULATIONS 1 Integrative assessment of 5 elements – Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control – through Case-Study and Written Examination
 2
 3

