

The background of the cover features a stack of books and a graduation cap (mortarboard) on top. A dotted line of green dots curves across the image, starting from the bottom left and ending at the top right.

Quality Assurance Manual

Appendices:

- A. Irish Medtech Skillnet Tutor Handbook
- B. Irish Medtech Skillnet Learner Handbook
- C. Terms of Reference – Steering Committee
- D. Terms of Reference – Academic Council
- E. Irish Medtech Skillnet Org Chart

Ref: IMS-QAM-Quality Assurance Manual
Updated: 13/03/2025

Version: 1.7

March 2025

1	Governance and management of quality	13
	1.1 Revision Control	
	1.2 Policy	
	1.2.1 Procedure Purpose	
	1.2.2 Procedure Objectives	
	1.2.3 Procedure implementation	
	1.2.4 Procedure Monitoring	
2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance	19
	2.1 Revision Control	
	2.2 Policy	
	2.3 Procedure	
	2.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	2.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	2.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	2.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
3	Programmes of Education and Training	23
	3.1 Revision Control	
	3.2 Policy	
	3.3 Procedure	
	3.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	3.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	3.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	3.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	32
	4.1 Revision Control	
	4.2 Policy	
	4.3 Procedure	
	4.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	4.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	4.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	4.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
5	Teaching and Learning.....	39
	5.1 Revision Control	
	5.2 Policy	
	5.3 Procedure	
	5.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	5.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	5.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	5.3.4. Procedure Monitoring	
6	Assessment of Learners	43
	6.1 Revision Control	
	6.2 Policy	
	5.3 Procedure	
	6.3.1. Procedure Purpose	
	6.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	6.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	6.3.4. Procedure Monitoring	

Content

7	Supports for Learners.....	54
	7.1 Revision Control	
	7.2 Policy	
	7.3 Procedure	
	7.3.1. Procedure Purpose	
	7.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	7.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	7.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
8	Information and Data Management	59
	8.1 Revision Control	
	8.2 Policy	
	8.3 Procedure	
	8.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	8.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	8.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	8.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
9	Public Information and Communication.....	63
	9.1 Revision Control	
	9.2 Policy	
	9.3 Procedure	
	9.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	9.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	9.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	9.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
10	OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING.....	67
	10.1 Revision Control	
	10.2 Policy	
	10.3 Procedure	
	10.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	10.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	10.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	10.3.4 Procedure Monitoring	
11	SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW	72
	11.1 Revision Control	
	11.2 Policy	
	11.3 Procedure	
	11.3.1 Procedure Purpose	
	11.3.2 Procedure Objectives	
	11.3.3 Procedure implementation	
	11.3.4. Procedure Monitoring	
Appendices	TUTOR HANDBOOK.....	77
	Appendix A	
	LEARNER HANDBOOK.....	104
	Appendix B	
	Terms of Reference for Network Steering Committee.....	116
	Appendix C	
	Terms of Reference for Network Academic Council.....	128
	Appendix D	
	Organisation Chart.....	133
	Appendix E	

Acronyms

- IMS – Irish Medtech Skillnet
- IM – Irish Medtech
- GMP – Good Manufacturing Processes
- QAS – Quality Assurance System
- RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning



Introduction to Irish Medtech Skillnet

About Irish Medtech Skillnet

Irish Medtech Skillnet (IMS), founded in 2008, is a not-for-profit learning network for companies in the medical technology, life sciences, and engineering sector. The mission of IMS is to deliver training, upskilling and professional development programmes, and to provide enterprise-led workforce training. The Irish Medtech Skillnet works in partnership with Skillnet Ireland and its contracting organisation, the Irish Medtech (IM). IM is the trade association within Ibec representing the medical device and medical diagnostic industry in Ireland. IMS as a learning network contracted to Ibec, is subject to both Ibec and Skillnet Ireland governance, rules and regulations.

IMS is co-funded by member companies and Skillnet Ireland through the National Training Fund from the Department of Education and Skills. Skillnet Ireland is a national business support agency of the Government of Ireland. IMS provides subsidised training programmes across a diverse range of key business areas to enable talent development and maintain Ireland's competitiveness as a leading global medtech hub. IMS offers a spectrum of training programmes, across key business areas, with a range of programme options. These programmes are offered in direct response to identified needs of member companies and to address gaps in talent. IMS is governed by a network steering committee and academic council. The network steering committee is comprised of a diverse range of industry and human resources personnel to provide guidance and expertise on the IMS education strategy.

Irish Medtech Skillnet delivers value to its network members today by providing quality training support and programs with a core strength and focus on Quality & Regulatory and Management & Leadership skills training.

In 2021 The Skillnet undertook a Strategic review process to explore how the network could take the Skillnet from where we are today to reach its potential as the preferred talent partner and adviser to the Medtech sector by 2025.

The Project plan involved a Consultation and Research process, where the actions undertaken were to:

- Carry out detail group and individual Customer Conversation Series, this included trainers and trainees.
- Interviews with Steering Committee and Academic Council members.
- Internal Assessment of the current Operating Model

Following the 3-month long Consultation and Research process, the following Focus areas were identified for the Network



Pillars of our Success



Strategic Training Categories



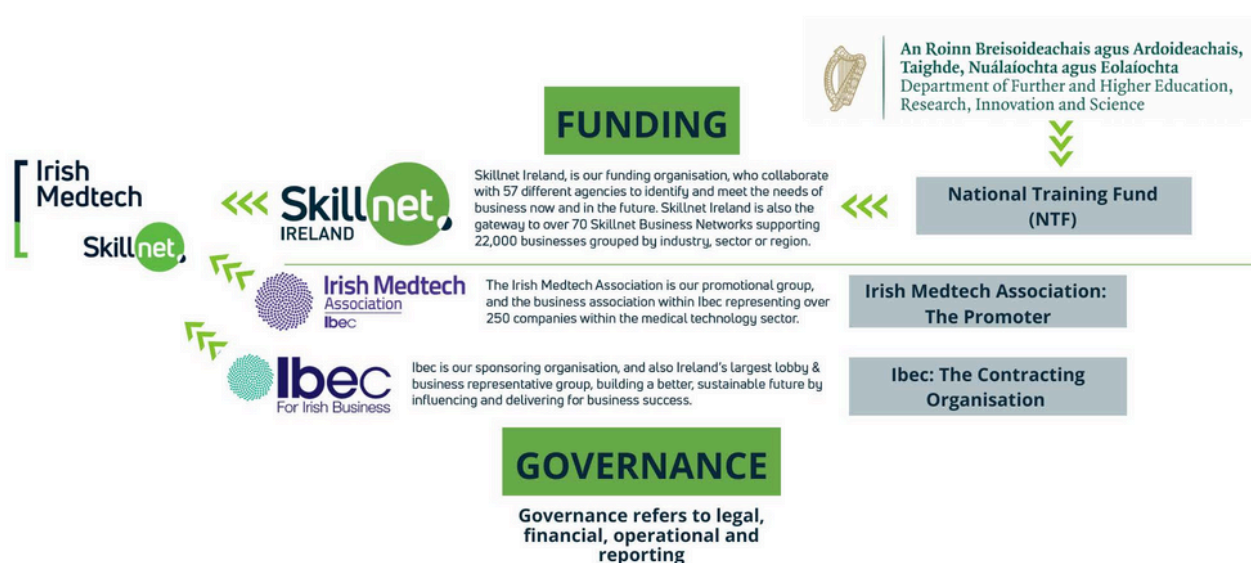
The Operational Transformation, Medtech Engagement Model and Flexible Delivery Model are strategic pillars and are key to ensuring that the academic direction of the network will remain focused on the Core Areas which Include Advanced Manufacturing and Digitalisation and Quality and Regulatory. A key aspect of the core areas is for the network to embed lifelong learning options to ensure that learners can continue their education within their areas of choice.

It has been identified through the consultation and research process that the Network needs to grow the team to deliver the strategy and as such the network operations manager role is to be added to the Team. Key to the role of the Operations Manager is to ensure the continued drive to embed and drive quality culture across the organisation. With the addition of this role it will enable the team to ensure that the structures to embed the a quality structure are in place.

The Skillnet Network Model

Terms

- **‘Contracting Organisation’** - the body corporate to contract with Skillnet Ireland under a Funding Agreement and Terms and identified in the Funding Agreement.
- **‘Funding Agreement’** means the Funding Agreement together with all documents referred to therein or attached thereto entered into between Skillnet Ireland and the Contracting Organisation.
- **‘Network’** - means the group of Network Members together with the Contracting Organisation
- **‘Network Manager’** means the primary executive appointed by the Contracting Organisation for the purposes of managing Network activities.
- **‘Network Plan’** means the proposals of the Network submitted by the Applicant to Skillnet Ireland.
- **‘Skillnet Ireland’** - a company limited by guarantee having its registered office at 5th Floor, Q House, 76 Furze Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.
- **‘Promoter’** means the person appointed by the Contracting Organisation to represent and promote the ideals of the Network and to receive correspondence from Skillnet Ireland.



1. Irish Medtech Skillnet – the ‘Network’

A Skillnet Network is a collection of private-sector businesses that collaborate to address skills needs within their sector or region. There are over 70 Skillnet Networks in Ireland, of which the Irish Medtech Skillnet is one.

The Skillnet Network operating model is complex arrangement of relationships between 4 key stakeholders – the Skillnet Network itself, Skillnet Ireland, the Promoter, and the Contracting organisation. Networks comprise of Network Member companies and the Contracting Organisation. Networks are non-legal, not-for-profit entities. Networks receive public funding from Skillnet Ireland and match funding from member companies (private sector contribution) to conduct training activities.

2. ‘Skillnet Ireland’

Skillnet Ireland is a Business Support Agency of the Government of Ireland. Skillnet Ireland was incorporated to facilitate and encourage an enterprise-led approach to training, through the development of enterprise Networks. Skillnet Ireland is responsible for the Business Networks Programme, an enterprise-led initiative that is funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science from the National Training Fund. Networks submit proposals to Skillnet Ireland to receive funding under the Business Networks Programme to deliver enterprise and industry specific training, upskilling and reskilling programmes.

3. Ibec – the ‘Contracting Organisation’

The Contracting Organisation is a corporate body and is responsible for the implementation of the Network Plan (proposals submitted by the Network to Skillnet Ireland in application to receive funding) and compliance with all of the conditions of the Funding required by Skillnet Ireland. The Contracting Organisation is responsible to Skillnet Ireland for all legal, financial, operational and reporting aspects of the Funding Agreement. The Contracting Organisation is the Legal Entity responsible for managing risk related to the Skillnet. While it is understood that a Network Manager

may be appointed to assist in the performance of these obligations, the Contracting Organisation and its agents hold final accountability in relation to all aspects of the Funding Agreement and the appointment of the Network Manager is without prejudice to this responsibility. The Contracting Organisation shall ensure that the activities of the Network are compliant at all times with all applicable legislation and all guidelines issued from time to time by Skillnet Ireland. A Network Manager is the person appointed by the Contracting Organisation to manage the implementation of the Network Plan.

4. Irish Medtech - the 'Promoter'

The promoter means the person appointed by the Contracting Organisation to represent and promote the ideals of the Network and to receive correspondence from Skillnet Ireland. In the case of Irish Medtech Skillnet, the Network Promoter is Eoghan Ó Faoláin, Director of the Irish Medtech, Ibec.

Accreditation

IMS provide two programmes under QQI, and have accredited over 200 learners over the past 3 years, leading to QQI awards at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

1. Quality and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) (Award code 5N1959). The target group for this programme is personnel who are working in the life sciences sector, to provide a strong foundational knowledge, skills and competencies to work in a manufacturing environment in compliance with quality standards and good manufacturing practice.
2. Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing (Award code 5N1915). This programme is aimed at learners who seek to increase their operational excellence capabilities.

MISSION STATEMENT

Vision Irish Medtech Skillnet aims to be a premier provider of education and training that promotes learner employability, facilitates progression, and allows individuals fulfil their potential.

Mission

Irish Medtech Skillnet aims to:

- provide student centric learning opportunities that are accessible, flexible, inclusive, lifelong and of the highest quality.
- maintain an environment that encourages and supports participation in the learning process.
- promote a culture of scholarship and opportunity that equips learners with appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies to enable them to compete, with advantage, at all levels within the economy.
- provide an educational and training service that meets the needs of the local community, national and international bodies.

Values

Irish Medtech Skillnet gives a commitment to:

- equality, fairness, accountability, transparency and widening participation.
- quality assurance systems that promote continual improvement.
- the development of independent learners.
- staff development and wellbeing.

About this manual

This quality assurance manual is designed to be accessible for staff, students, tutors, stakeholders and other interested parties. The manual contains IMS's policies and procedures constituting the quality assurance system for education and training. The quality assurance system (QAS) is comprised of internal IMS policies and procedures, and external assurance elements to ensure a comprehensive, effective and efficient approach to delivery of quality education. The policies and procedures are developed and implemented in line QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, and with the Qualifications and Quality

Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The quality management system is comprised of

1. Policies, which embed IMS's commitment to the quality delivery of programmes
2. Procedures, which outline how IMS adhere to and implement our policies
3. Monitoring activities, which demonstrate how IMS are committed to continuous improvement of our quality management system.

The quality management system addresses the following areas:

1. Governance and Management of Quality Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
2. Programmes of Education and Training
3. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
4. Teaching and Learning
5. Assessment of Learners
6. Support for Learners
7. Information and Data Management
8. Public Information and Communication
9. Other Parties involved in Education and Training
10. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

1.1 Revision Control

Policy	GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF
Version	QUALITY 1.6
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	
Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

1.2 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to provide effective governance structures for the responsible oversight of the programmes of education and training activities that we offer. This oversight extends to programme development, validation, delivery, results approval and self-evaluation procedures that are aligned with our mission and our strategy.

Our policy is to ensure that our internal quality assurance system is inclusive and intrinsic to the way we manage and deliver our programmes and reflects our strong commitment to our learners, their employers and to our own staff.

Our policy will also ensure a clear separation between academic and corporate governance and decision making. IMS will take all reasonable measures to ensure the integrity of the training process to protect the national standard that our programmes are designed to reflect. We will implement internal and external monitoring and evaluation systems and will use the findings of the reports from these systems to develop and implement plans for continual improvement and the avoidance of future risk.

IMS continues to ensure availability of excellent programme resources through public and private funding under the Skillnet initiative. IMS attains this goal by consistently meeting or surpassing key performance metrics set down by Skillnet Ireland and our membership.

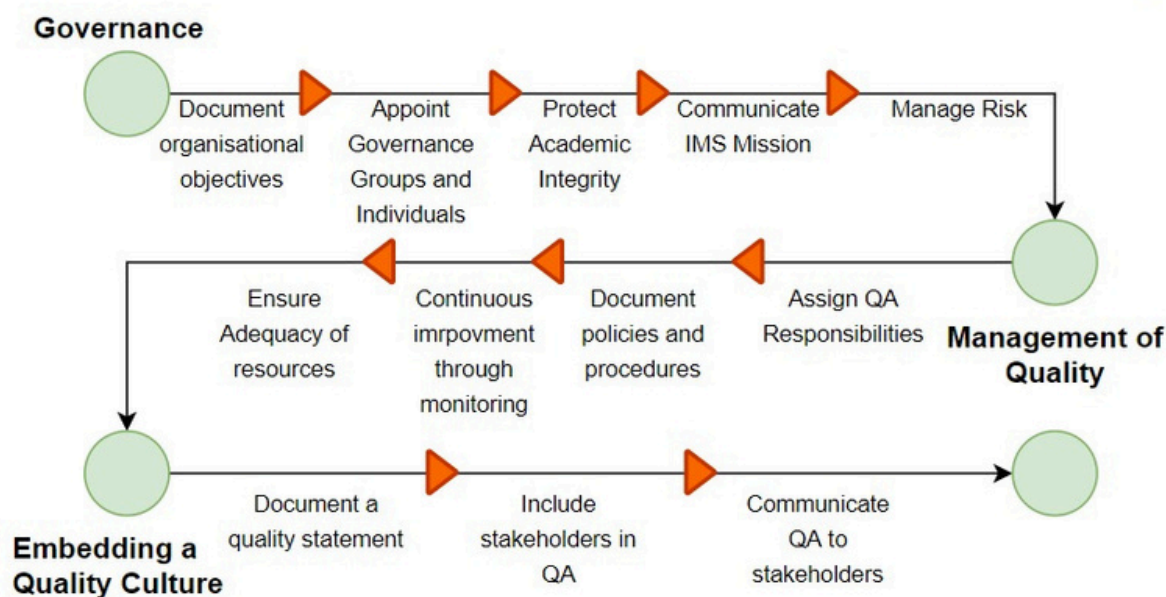


Figure 1: Governance procedure process diagram

Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure a governance system is implemented to assure quality of education, training, and related activity provided by IMS. The governance system procedure ensures that there is a separation of responsibilities between individuals who produce material and between individuals who approve the learning material. The system will also ensure a separation of academic and commercial decision making.

Procedure Objectives

- Implement a governance system to support and monitor the quality of training provision by IMS
- Document policies and procedures to underpin the quality assurance of IMS' provision of training
- Ensure all governance groups and individuals understand their role within the governance system

Procedure implementation

Who's involved in this procedure?

IMS has described the stakeholders involved in this procedure under the heading 'Governance' below.

Governance Structure and Terms of Reference

IMS has a governance structure in place for oversight of all activities and decision making in respect of programmes of education and training, comprising:

- *An Academic Council* – a unit with independent responsibility for academic governance and implementation and monitoring of the Quality Assurance System. It also has responsibility for the separation of academic and corporate decision making, and the separation of programme approval from programme development. (IMS-TOR-AC-001)

- *A Skillnet Steering committee* – the unit with responsibility for guidance and corporate direction of the IMS. The Steering Committee represents the needs of industry and ensures the programmes are aligned to meet these needs. (IMS-TOR-SG-001) *Skillnet Ireland*
- *Network contracting organisation* – Ibec is the IMS contracting organization. A Contracting Organisation has a remit to address business needs at an industry or regional level, and is typically a sectoral association, regional association, industry body or professional body.
- *Network Promoter* - Eoghan Ó Faoláin is the Network Promoter for IMS. The Network Promoter is an individual appointed by the Contracting Organisation whose role is to champion the aims of the Network. Network Promoters are keenly aware of enterprise requirements and typically represent the broad needs of enterprises within their sector/region. They play a vital role in ensuring congruence between Network provision, and strategic challenges and opportunities facing the sector/region.
- *Skillnet Network Manager* – Operating under the guidance of the Steering Group, the Network Manager's role is to oversee the implementation of the Network.
- *Tutors* – Tutors deliver the approved training programmes.
- *A Skillnet Network Team that includes the Network Manager and Network Support Staff* - the Unit responsible for the day-to-day operations and training activities of the IMS.
- *Development Advisor*- Appointed by Skillnet Ireland, they ensure that the Training Network Programme Guidelines are complied with. The Guidelines are imperative for continued public funding (SI-TNPG-001)
- *External QA Monitoring*- External Authenticators, external Evaluators, and Subject Matter experts are involved in the quality assurance system.
- *Results Approval Panel* – a unit with overall responsibility for approving results before they're submitted to QQI for certification.

The governance structure is graphically described in (IMS-ORG-002) and outlines the interrelations between governance, academic and operational groups. Terms of references are also provided for these groups. Separation of academic and commercial decision making is achieved through the aforementioned governance structure. Governance is achieved through the following implementation steps

Setting and meeting of IMS operational objectives

- The Skillnet Network Team adhere to the operating guidelines set out by Skillnet Ireland in Training Network Programme Operational Guidelines. (SI-TNPG-001)
- The Skillnet Network Team adhere to Ibec's organisational rules and requirements as our contracting organisation.
- The Skillnet Network Team ensure that the annual key performance indicators (KPI's) set by Skillnet Ireland are met, and are recorded via an activity management system, Sonraí. The KPI's include; number of delegates trained, training days, and number of companies trained.
- The Skillnet Network Team facilitate external audits by Skillnet Ireland appointed Auditors to ensure operational objectives are met on an annual basis.
- The Skillnet Network Team hold regular steering committee meetings to ensure that the IMS are delivering on projects, and records are kept through minutes and agendas for the activity

management system, Sonraí. The steering committee advise, inform and review the IMS on operational objectives that should be achieved quarterly, annually and longer. The Skillnet Network Team updates the Academic Council on KPI relevant matters. The Skillnet Network Team inputs this information to the Network Risk Register.

Create a quality assurance system involving relevant groups to ensure that internal and external quality assurance is upheld. This includes all staff involved in the provision of IMS training and education, including the Skillnet Network Team, tutors, learners, external evaluators, academic council, and steering committee.

The Skillnet Network Team has created organisational charts to visually demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of all units within IMS quality assurance management system (SI-TNPG-001) The Skillnet Network Team develop fit for purpose terms of references which clearly explain the roles and responsibilities for each unit of IMS quality management system, which are reviewed periodically. The Skillnet Network Team hold meetings with each unit/group and are documented and recorded through minutes and agendas, as evidenced through the terms of references to ensure that staff are fully aware for the contents of the Quality Assurance Manual and their roles in the quality management system. (IMS-TOR-TUT-001, IMS-TOR-AC-001, IMS-TOR-SG-001, IMS-TOR-NM-001)

Management of organisational sustainability, continuous improvement, and risk minimization.

The Skillnet Network Team regularly review and contribute to the IMS Risk Register (IMS-RR-001). This is reviewed by the Network Manager and senior Ibec Management, at regular meetings, which are minuted. The Skillnet Network Team hold meetings with steering committee to continuously review the operations of the Skillnet to ensure key performance indicators are met, the performance of IMS is reviewed, and future opportunities for innovation are identified and explored.

Management of Quality Assurance

IMS is fully committed to ensuring that the quality assurance processes, methodology and procedures implemented by IMS are robust and fit-for-purpose, and are managed in a sustainable manner.

Documentation

The Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) is the document developed by IMS which is central to the IMS quality assurance system. The QAM contains IMS's quality assurance policies and procedures which have been developed in line with QQI's core guidelines and reflect the mission of the IMS. The Skillnet Network Team regularly review the IMS quality assurance manual (this document) to ensure it is fit-for-purpose.

Other supporting documents include, but are not limited to:

- Learner induction handbook
- Tutor handbook
- Data protection statement

Identification of roles and responsibilities

To implement the IMS quality assurance system effectively, The Skillnet Network Team assigns individual and group responsibilities and ensures each unit understands their responsibility and role in the overall IMS quality assurance system to ensure implementation of the IMS policies and procedures. This is implemented by employment contracts, terms of references, and organizational charts. It is also described under the heading 'Governance' in this QAM.

- The Skillnet Network Team assures continuous improvement through internal monitoring and self-evaluation. This is evidenced by feedback gathered by IMS from learners and tutors, training needs analyses, and documenting the revision history for IMS quality assurance manual. This data is reviewed and evaluated, and appropriate actions and decisions are made to continuously drive improvements in the delivery of educational training by IMS.
- The Skillnet Network Team, led by the Network Manager, provide the appropriate resources in sufficiency to ensure the quality management system is developed and maintained. This is achieved through financial planning and review, IMS personnel strategy planning, which includes role profiles, terms of references and contracts, stakeholder feedback, and IMS programme reviews.

Self-Monitoring

IMS implement a self-monitoring system to identify areas for improvement in the IMS quality assurance system. This is fully described in section 11 'Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review' of this QAM.

Embedding a quality culture

The Skillnet Network Team develop a quality assurance system that is integrated into the routine operations of the organization. This quality assurance system is clearly documented, and publicly available to Skillnet staff and the public via the IMS website, which embeds a quality culture throughout the Network. The QAM is available on the IMS website and details all of the IMS's policies and procedures concerning quality assurance.

The Skillnet Network Manager communicates to the IMS staff, groups and learners about the IMS quality assurance mechanisms to generate and maintain an awareness of quality and quality assurance. The Skillnet Network Team seek feedback from tutors and students and take on board any recommendations to improve the quality delivery, through the Documented Approach to Quality System, and feedback forms. Principles of quality are included as part of onboarding, terms and conditions of employment.

Procedure Monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Ensure the implementation of the key governance groups including the Academic Council and Steering Committee	Network Manager	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms of Reference - ToR Revision control - Meeting minutes
Review the Quality Assurance Manual and associated quality documents annually or as required	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision control information documented within QA Manual
Review terms of reference for each unit	Network Manager	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ToR revision control
	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision control on Terms of Reference

DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.3 Revision Control

Policy Version	Documented approach to Quality Assurance 1.6
Effective Date	
Next Review	
Date Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

2.4 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to ensure that the embedded documented quality assurance system is robust, comprehensive, effective and fit for purpose as outlined in the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016).

IMS will ensure that the Skillnet training team are involved with the development, management, regular review, and updating of the quality assurance documents and quality assurance processes. The quality assurance documentation process will be reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure alignment with the IMS objectives and mission.

IMS will ensure that the policies and procedures are closely aligned to the QQI quality assurance guidelines, are consistent with relevant legislation, and reflect the diverse requirements of learners and stakeholders. The policies and procedures will be documented and accessible to the public to demonstrate the Skillnet's accountability whilst ensuring a dedication to the continuous improvement of the Skillnet's commitment to quality assurance.

2.5 Procedure

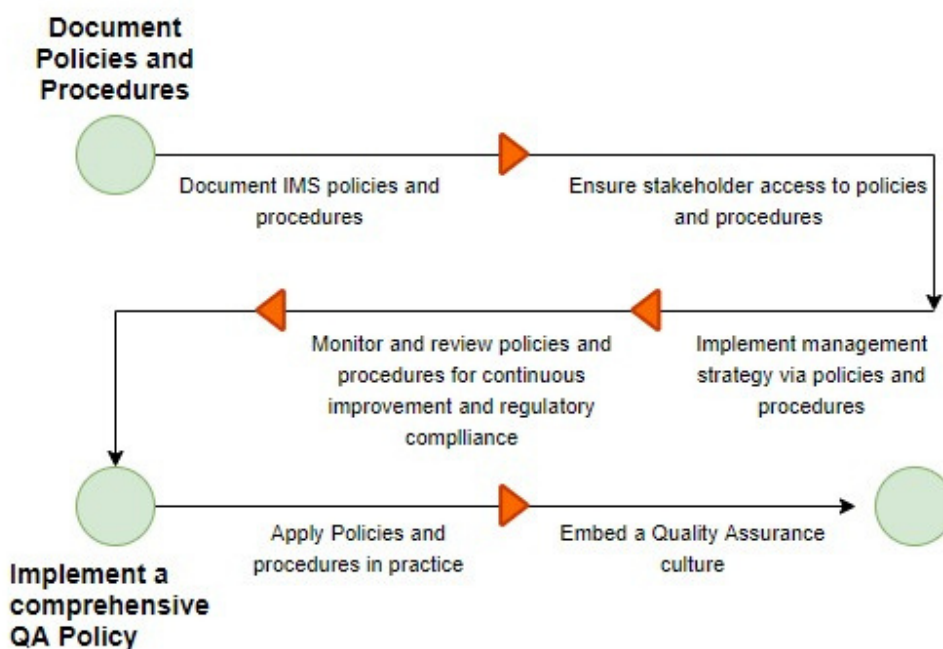


Figure 2: Documented approach to quality assurance process diagram

Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure comprehensive and thorough documentation of quality assurance methodologies, policies, and procedures implemented by IMS to assure the quality of education, training, and related activity provided by IMS. The documented approach to quality assurance procedure ensures that there is clear and accessible information available. The documented element of IMS' quality assurance management system will also ensure that a culture and pervasive awareness of quality is permeated in the daily operations of IMS.

Procedure Objectives

- Implement a documentation system to support and monitor the quality of training provision by IMS
- Document policies and procedures to underpin the quality assurance of Irish Medtech
- Skillnet's provision of training
- Ensure all governance groups and individuals understand their role within the governance
- Review the compliance of the policies and procedures with QQI guidelines and regulations for
- self-monitoring purposes

Procedure implementation

Who's involved in the procedure?

- Skillnet Network Management Team

Documented Policies and Procedures

IMS has fully documented its quality assurance system in the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) which describes the quality assurance policies and procedure.

The QAM has been developed to reflect the mission and values of the IMS, is also closely aligned to the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, and in line with regulatory requirements. The guidelines specify 11 categories which are reflected in the policies and procedures in this QAM:

1. Governance and Management of Quality
2. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
3. Programmes of Education and Training
4. Staff Recruitment, Management, and Development
5. Teaching and Learning
6. Assessment of Learners
7. Support for Learners
8. Information and Data Management
9. Public Information and Communication
10. Other Parties Involved in Education and Training
11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, and Review

Each category has been thoroughly reviewed by the IMS Management team, and are implemented in the policies and procedures in the QAM. The QAM has been written in the same order as the categories above, and follows the same format for each category:

- Revision control
- Policy
- Graphic description of procedure
- Procedure purpose
- Procedure method
- Monitoring of procedures

The QAM is the central reference document in the IMS quality assurance system. Version control is in place to support monitoring of the IMS quality assurance system. The Skillnet Network Team engage in internal reviews to ensure the effectiveness of quality assurance documents.

Other Quality Assurance Documents

The IMS Management Team ensure that all other related quality assurance documents are integrated into the quality assurance system and are monitored to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and up-to-date. Other quality assurance documents include:

- Learner handbook
- Tutor handbook
- Data protection document
- Privacy policy
- Website
- Programme brochures and marketing material

Comprehensive Quality Management System

IMS is committed to ensuring that the quality management system is comprehensive a

The Skillnet Network Team implement and maintain a comprehensive quality system, as is documented in the QAM. The IMS Quality statement is included in all terms of reference and published on IMS' website, induction packs for new staff are provided, as are Learner and tutor handbooks (IMS-THB-001) (IMS-LHB-001). The Skillnet Network Team ensure that quality assurance is implemented through all learning activities delivered by IMS and in the routine daily operations of IMS, by developing quality system improvement plans and through self-assessments and reviews. A quality culture is pervasive through-out the IMS operations and training activities, and IMS staff are regularly reminded of the IMS quality statement and commitment to quality by the Network Manager.

The Skillnet Network Management Team engage in self-monitoring and self-evaluation activities of the documented approach to quality assurance to ensure continuous improvement.

Procedure monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence Revision control
Review the Quality Assurance Manual annually or as the occasion arises	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document findings in minutes Invite input from staff, tutors and learners on effectiveness of QAM Action as appropriate
Review other quality assurance documentation on a periodic basis or annually	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of References, learner handbook, tutor handbook, QA reports Revision control
Embed a quality culture	Network Manager	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication, generate awareness of quality Meeting minutes
Ensure governance groups and individuals are aware of responsibilities and terms of reference	Governance groups	Governance groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of personnel Terms of Reference

PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3.1 Revision Control

Policy Version	Programmes of education and
Effective Date	training 1.6
Next Review	
Date Owner	The Skillnet Network Management Team

3.2 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to develop and deliver programmes of education to a high standard of quality, which incorporate and reflect the needs of the learners and employers, and the IMS's mission to be a premier provider of education to the Medtech Sector.

The IMS's programme development and management processes will take into consideration the needs, capacity, and induction requirements for learners. Programmes will be developed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, such as subject matter experts, to ensure the programmes are fit-for-purpose and addresses the needs of learners.

The programme design will incorporate clear learning outcomes, and that the training and material methodologies, training environment, and assessments are effective for students.

Our policy is to ensure that the programmes are developed and aligned with regulatory requirements, including the National Framework of Qualification requirements, and that learner pathway, including admission, progression, and recognition, fully comply with the National Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) policies and are fit-for-purpose for the learner. Where recognition of prior learning (RPL) opportunities exist, we will make learners aware of such opportunities.

IMS will take measures to monitor the delivery of programmes for continuous improvement through data and feedback gathered from learners, tutors, staff and other stakeholders to ensure continued effectiveness of the programme.

3.3 Procedure

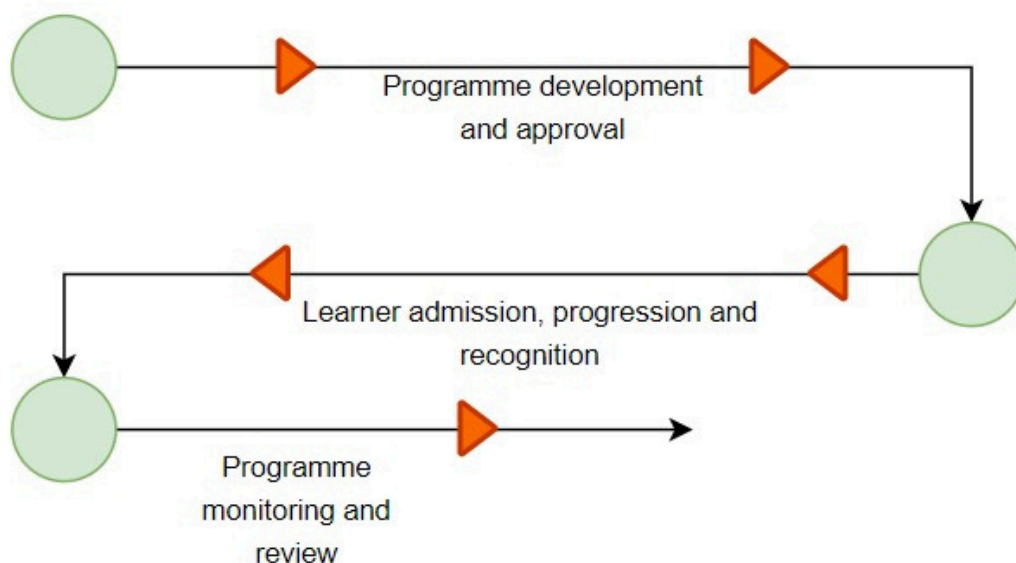


Figure 3: New programme development process diagram

Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that new and existing programmes are systematically developed and managed for quality assurance. The procedure for new programmes of education and training ensures there are clear and effective processes in place for programme development, validation, and management with internal and external stakeholders. The procedure also will assist IMS to maintain regulatory compliance.

Procedure Objectives

- Implement a systematic approach to developing new programmes of education that are of a high standard and meet the requirements of learners, regulatory agencies, and IMS.
- Provide programmes that meet the needs of learners and employers, and provide support to learners for admission, progression, and recognition of prior learning.
- Gather and analyse data for continuous improvement, review, and monitoring of programmes.

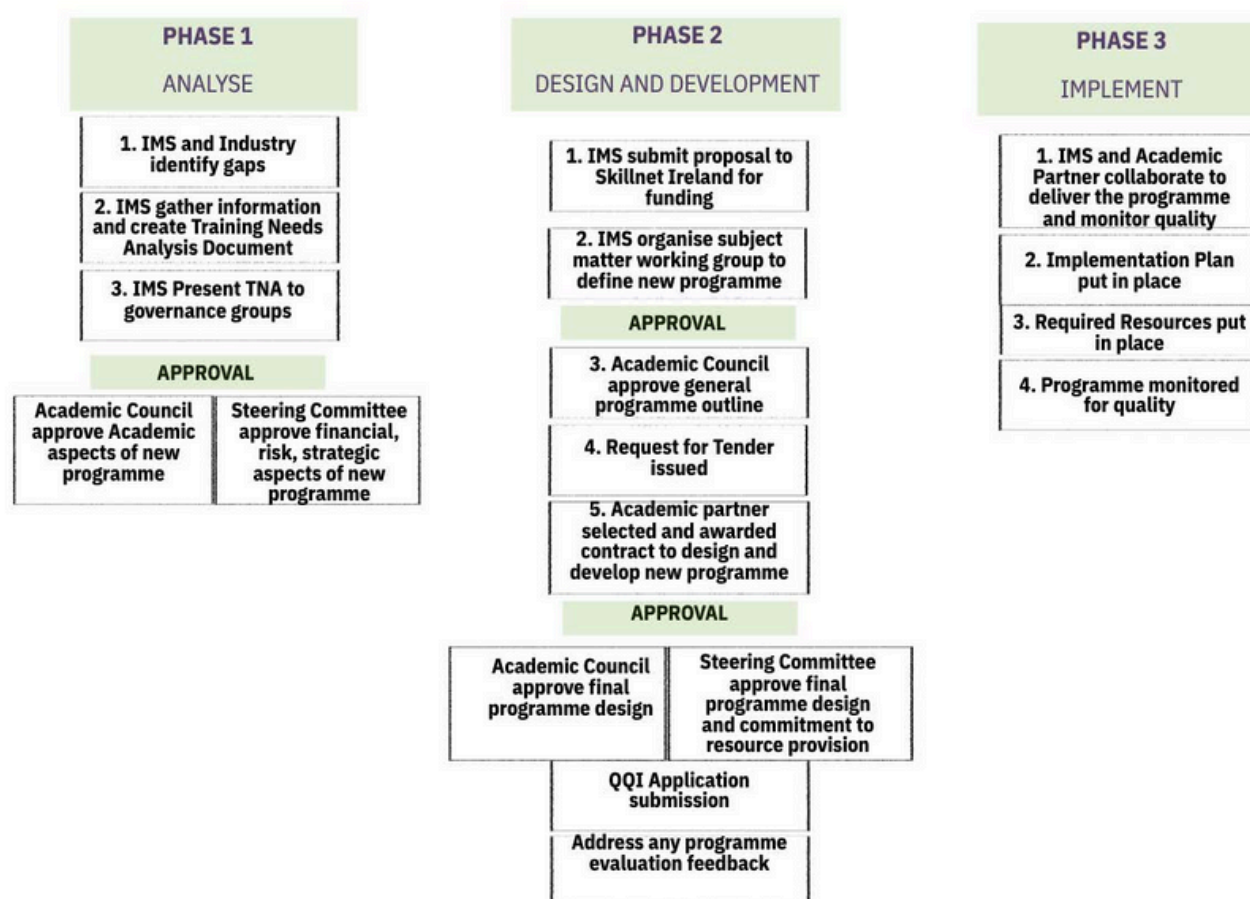
Procedure implementation

Who is involved in this procedure?

- The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team,
- Internal and external stakeholders, including subject matter experts.
- the Irish Medtech Steering Committee
- The Academic Council

Programme Development and Approval

Programme development in IMS occurs in 3 phases (see graphic below): **Analysis, Design & Development, and Implementation.**



In the **Analysis phase**, training need is discussed with relevant stakeholders including member organisations (industry), Governance Groups (the Academic Council, the Steering Committee), potential tutors, *Ibec inter alia*. Programme proposals will be assessed for alignment with organisational objectives, national accreditation, and industry need. The outcome is a documented Training Needs Analysis (TNA). The TNA is presented to governance groups for approval; the Academic Council approves the academic aspects of the new programme; the Steering Committee approve financial, risk and strategic aspects of the new programme design and development. When approval is achieved by both governance group, the programme proceeds to the next step of development.

In the **Design & Development** Phase, the IMS submit a proposal for funding to Skillnet Ireland for the new programme design and development. When Skillnet Ireland award funding, IMS

commence the design of the programme. The overall programme design is documented including draft learning outcomes and assessments, delivery methodologies (instructor led/, scheduling, ATP etc. This draft is developed in conjunction with subject matter experts. The outcome is a draft programme design for consideration by the Academic Council.

When approval is received by the Academic Council, the programme outline is included as part of the Request for Tenders. Also included in the Request for Tenders is a Form of Tender which seeks the information from Tenderers regarding the quality of resources (i.e personnel proposed such as trainers to deliver, academic experts to develop the programme, programme coordinators to coordinate the programme) to design and deliver the services, and method statement (i.e. the providers approach to designing, developing and delivering the programme). IMS issue a Request for Tenders on eTenders, the Irish Government Public Procurement e-platform.

Once Tenders are received, IMS create an evaluation team which is comprised of Irish Medtech Skillnet Representatives, a representative from industry such as a subject matter expert, and a member of the Academic Council. The Evaluation Team follow a strict evaluation process based on the principles of public procurement.

When the evaluation process is completed, a Tenderer is selected as the successful Academic Partner and is awarded the Contract to design and develop the new programme. The Academic Partner and IMS agree a Terms of Reference and procedure for how the programme will be developed. The Academic Partner will be responsible for leading the development aspects as an academic expert on the following aspects of the programme development:

1. Award Level (if any)
2. Delivery Methodology (blended, virtual, traditional classroom)
3. Learning outcomes
4. Module development
5. Assessment methodology
6. Identify any resources
7. Design programme structure and teaching methodology
8. Project management and execution
9. Programme validation

Before the programme is goes for final validation with the academic partner, the final programme design will be brought before the Academic Council for approval. The Steering Committee also approve the final commitment to resource provision for the programme. For QQI programmes, the **Approval Phase** involves completing the QQI programme validation application process is required to be completed (in accordance with QQI's 2016 '[Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training](#)').

This involves completing the required application form which demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Award Specification, paying the required application fee and addressing any feedback that QQI provide.

The **Implementation Phase** involves putting the necessary resources in place: appointing programme coordinator with the academic partner to deliver the programme and monitor quality, ensuring adequate funding, planning for any required equipment or consumables etc. The outcome is a Resource Plan. It also involves marketing the programme, recruiting learners, delivering training, assessing feedback, internal verification, external authentication, results submission to QQI, and monitoring and evaluation..

Learner admission, progression, and recognition

Learners are always the main priority of the IMS, and therefore, IMS is committed to ensuring that learners understand the options available to them in the context of admission, progression and recognition on IMS programmes of training and education. Before learners enrol in a course, the information around the IMS courses is fully available and accessible via the IMS website.

Learner Recruitment

The Skillnet Network Team admit learners from member companies or unemployed individuals on programmes of education. Information pertaining to IMS, our programmes and admission procedures, such as access requirements, recognition of prior learning, registration details, eligibility criteria, are published on the IMS website, and are provided in the learner handbook, ensuring ease of access.

Learner Induction

The Skillnet Network Team develop an induction pack and provide this to learners as part of their induction. The pack includes the Learner Handbook (see appendix IMS-LHB-001) and information about IMS, the programme in question, and IMS' quality statement. Learners are briefed on programme learning outcomes, expected learner work-load, assessment, delivery model and additional course resources. Learners who require special accommodation are consulted with.

Monitoring Progress

The Skillnet Network Team monitor and gather data on the statistics on learner progression and programme completion rates, which is stored on Sonrai (Skillnet Ireland's online reporting system). The Skillnet Network Team gather feedback from learners, staff, tutors, and employers to continually monitor and track new and existing programmes to ensure an acceptable threshold of quality and for continuous improvement purposes. Feedback is gathered via surveys and direct engagement throughout the delivery of the programme and upon completion of the programme. During new programme development, feedback is sought from tutors to assist with the design and development. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Recognition of prior learning refers to the possibility of gaining **entry** to a programme in circumstances where compliance with the entry requirements may not be evidenced in the usual way. This may arise for example, in the case of a non-Irish citizen who may not have taken the Junior or Leaving Certificate examinations. It may also refer to the possibility of gaining **advanced entry** to a programme (whereby modules or assessments may be exempted).

There is also the possibility of obtaining a **full award** without having to undertake the modules or the assessments. All of the above are predicated on the learner's ability to furnish a verifiable portfolio of evidence to IMS which will clearly demonstrate that the learner meets the requirements for entry, advanced entry or exemption.

The RPL process for applicants with prior formal, non-formal, or experiential learning is as follows:

RPL for Access

Recognition of Prior Learning for access to a programme leading to an award, is a process which may be initiated when a learner cannot provide evidence that they meet programme access requirements.

Access requirements may, for example, state a prior level of knowledge in a specific discipline such as English Language proficiency. IMS programmes require a minimum of Level 4 standard in numeracy and literacy. English language competence and numeracy proficiency may be evidenced by Junior or Leaving Certificate results, or in the case of English Language proficiency, evidence of the achievement of the CEFR B2+ standard will also be accepted. If there is reason to suspect that these minimum criteria are not met or can't be evidenced by the conventional means above, the learner may request that their own evidence be considered. Such evidence may be a letter of assurance from their employer that their level of numeracy and literacy are sufficient for successful participation in the programme.

The learner may discuss this with the relevant programme tutor who will make a judgement. If the learner does not accept the judgement, the learner may appeal to the IMS Network Manager in writing who will bring the appeal to the standing committee of the Academic Council. The decision of the the standing committee of the Academic Council is final.

RPL for advanced entry

If a learner considers that they should be exempted from a module or from an assessment based on their prior experiences of the learning outcomes of the programme, they may request such exemptions through the Network Management Team.

1. A student must advise IMS in writing of their intention to seek Recognition of Prior Learning. This may be done by e-mailing IMS at IrishMedtechSkillnet@ibec.ie. The applicant should identify the programme, and the nature of the application (credit or exemption).
2. Evidence of prior learning is provided by the applicant during the application process. The Applicant must authorise IMS to verify the authenticity of the evidence submitted. Evidence is likely to take the form of a Portfolio which may include certificates, awards, testimonials, employer references *inter alia*.
3. The evidence is evaluated by IMS (typically by the Network Manager in consultation with the programme tutor). Evaluation will be based on a comparison of learning outcomes for the areas where recognition is sought, and the description of prior learning offered by the learner. IMS may verify the authenticity of any associated documentation.
4. A recommendation will be made with respect to the applicant's RPL request.
5. Possible outcomes include Credit Granted/Denied, Exemption Granted/Denied
6. Unsuccessful applications for RPL exemptions can be formally appealed through the Network Management Team.

RPL for a full award

IMS offers only component awards, and consequently cannot offer learners RPL for full awards.

RPL Appeals

All appeals by learners shall be submitted to a standing committee of the Academic Counsel, to which delegated authority to deal with such appeals shall be given. If a Learner wishes to appeal an RPL decision, they must do so in writing to the IMS team. When submitting their appeal, they shall also submit in writing the basis or grounds on which they are appealing. The decision of the Standing

Committee of the Academic Council will be final and will be advised to the learner in writing. Learners may request an oral hearing, but this must be indicated before the Academic Council convenes to consider the appeal. Please contact any member of the Network Management Team for full details of the Recognition of Prior Learning process.

Access, transfer and progression

Access, transfer and progression refers to the conditions under which a learner may:

- enter our programmes
- transfer to other programmes offered by IMS (or any other training provider), or
- progress to a higher-level programme.

Access

To access programmes provided by IMS candidates will be expected to meet the following criteria:

- Candidates must be 18 years or older at the commencement of the programme.
- Have achieved a minimum of a Level 4 qualification (or equivalent).
- In the absence of a minimum of a Pass Grade at Ordinary Level in Leaving Certificate English the candidate must provide evidence of competence in written and spoken English (e.g., B2+ CEFR).

Learners who may not be able to demonstrate compliance with the entry criteria may request access by means of Recognition of Prior Learning.

Transfer

Transfer normally means transfer from a major award programme at one level, to another major award programme at the same level. IMS does not currently offer any major awards, so there are no internal transfer options. However, all of our programmes are components of major awards which may be offered by other providers. IMS will assist Learners to identify programmes with other providers offering a major award to which your credit is applicable. Learners contact the Network Management Team for advice.

Progression

Progression normally means progression from an award programme at one level, to another award programme at a higher level. IMS currently only offers programmes at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, so there is no opportunity to progress to higher level programmes with IMS. However, all of our programmes are component of major awards which may be offered by other providers. Depending on the programme in question, there may be an opportunity to progress to a higher-level award. IMS will assist learners to identify programmes with other providers offering applicable programmes to which you may progress. Learners can contact the Network Management Team for advice.

Programme Review

Reviewing programmes helps to ensure the programmes of education and training offered by Irish Medtech Skillnet are delivered to a high standard of quality, meets the needs of learners, and creates a mechanism for continuous identification of areas for improvement.

IMS reviews programmes after completion. This is done through gathering feedback from learners, and tutors. The Skillnet Network Management Team engage with tutors to discuss and review the programmes they deliver to identify any areas for improvement. The Skillnet Network Management Team gather feedback forms from learners after they complete the course to take into consideration any perspectives from the learners about how the programme can be improved.

IMS incorporates the views of internal and external stakeholders as part of the programme review process, and continuous improvement action plans are implemented as required. The Skillnet Network Management Team monitor the performance of programmes against their objectives and address any issues.

Procedure monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Review training needs analyses as required	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training needs analyses surveys - Steering committee meeting minutes - Academic council meeting minutes
Review programme design, resourcing, and delivery per programme on a per programme basis	Network Management Team	Academic council in collaboration with steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme improvement plans - Meeting minutes
Review QA Documents, including reports, and handbooks	Network Management Team	Academic council in collaboration with steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme improvement plans - Meeting minutes
Review programme feedback forms	Network management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collated feedback uploaded to Sonrai

Review public information on IMS website	Network Management Team	Network Manager	- Revision control
Review RPL applications (as received)	Network Management Team	Network Manager	- Documented review - Correspondence with learners

STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Revision Control

Policy Version	Staff Recruitment, management and development 1.6
Effective Date Next	
Review Date Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

4.2 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to recruit, manage and develop quality staff using fair and transparent procedures, and provide a supportive environment for staff to be able to deliver programmes of education and training. This includes the Skillnet Network Team, Network Manager, and tutors, and ensures that each member of staff has appropriate expertise and experience, a strong awareness of IMS' mission and have clear responsibilities in their role.

It is the policy of IMS to ensure programmes have adequate human resources to deliver training and fulfil their roles. IMS will provide staff with access to support and development opportunities, and will provide opportunities to gather feedback from staff in relation to self-monitoring and programme improvement plans.

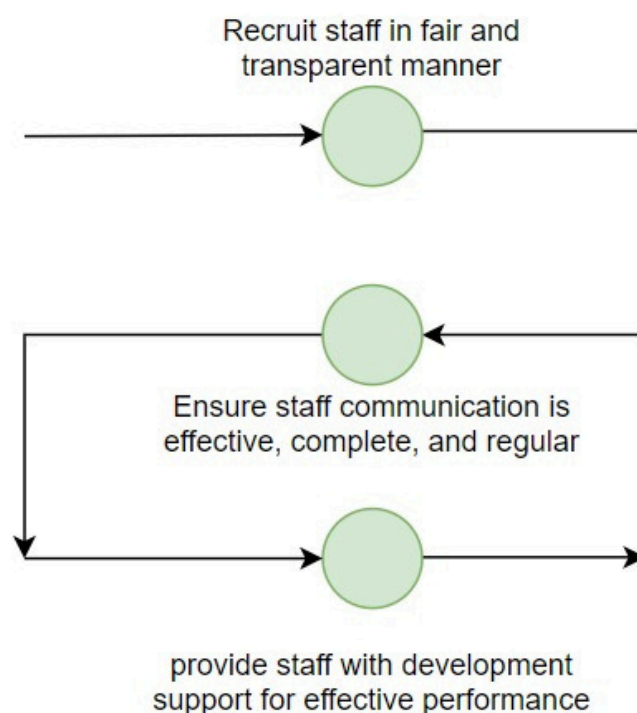


Figure 4 : Staff development and recruitment process diagram

4.3 Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all staff recruited and managed by IMS are suitably qualified and competent to fulfil their roles. IMS will recruit and manage staff through documented, transparent, equitable and ethical selection processes and shall ensure staff development is supported and staff performance managed.

Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure all staff recruited by IMS have the necessary skills and competencies to successfully undertake their duties. All staff recruited by the IMS will have the appropriate tools and expertise to deal with learners. Continuous professional development and support will be available to all staff in order to fulfill their role.

Procedure Objectives

To ensure all staff, tutors and contractors are suitably experienced, competent and supported to

- deliver quality education to learners.
- Ensure staff are recruited in fair and transparent processes,
- and that staff performance and development is monitored and developed.

Procedure implementation

Who is involved in this procedure?

- The Skillnet Network Manager and the Skillnet Network administration team
- The Ibec HR team
- Governance groups
- Tutors

Staff Recruitment

Staff are an important component of IMS' quality assurance system, as they must be suitably experienced and qualified to carry out their duties. Due to their learner-facing duties, staff must be professional, competent, and empathetic to learners. IMS recruits new staff in a fair and transparent manner. The Skillnet Network Manager, Ibec HR department and the Network Steering Committee define the recruitment needs for IMS and ensures compliance with relevant employment and equality legislation.

The Network Manager manages the staff recruitment process and collaborates with the governance groups in developing role profiles, advertising for staff, interviewing, selecting and inducting successful candidates. The Skillnet Network Manager reviews the staffing requirements of the IMS at the beginning of each year and staff resourcing is a standing agenda item at IMS governance meetings. The IMS employ staff directly or uses the services of third-party individuals for specific identified tasks (e.g. the services of tutors will be contracted through framework agreements or contracts, as and when, their services are required). A suitable contract is put in place to address these employment needs.

Tutors

When selecting tutors, they are assessed by IMS and a representative from the industry steering committee based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications relevant to the specific programme in question
- Experience in industry
- Experience and qualifications in training and education
- Experience delivering training specific to the programme in question

If successful, the Skillnet Network Manager clearly outlines to the tutors their role and responsibilities which includes:

- Programme delivery
- Programme Assessment.
- Grade Re-checks
- The IMS Quality Assurance System – policies and procedures
- Resources and supports available to tutors
- Learner Supports

The IMS provides all tutors with a copy of the Tutor Handbook.

The Tutor Handbook provides information about IMS to Tutors. It describes the context of the organisation within the skillnet Ireland family, our facility, the programmes we offer, our quality assurance system, the role of the tutor and supports available to our tutoring staff. At the end of each induction, all tutors need to confirm that they have read the Tutor Handbook. Where contract staff are used such as tutors, and in the unlikely event of the trainer being unavailable, the Network Manager will contact the other prospective trainers who applied to deliver the training, assess their suitability to deliver the training. Should that not be a viable solution, the Network Manager will arrange an alternative date to deliver the training.

Staff

Once the Skillnet Network Manager identifies the recruitment needs of the Skillnet, the Network Manager and the Ibec HR Department create a job role profile and person specification guide. The role is then advertised appropriately, through web and press advertisements, as well as engagement with existing training delivery team.

The Skillnet Network Manager and Ibec HR Department document and maintain role profiles and responsibilities, codes of conduct, and academic and pedagogical standards. This includes Terms of Reference (IMS-TOR-TUT-001) contracts for staff, and codes of conduct. Once the closing date has passed for applications, the Network Manager and the Ibec HR team review and assess the candidates applications. A candidates suitability for the relevant position will be measured against the job role profile and person specification guide already created. The Skillnet Network Manager and Ibec HR Department communicate effectively with candidates, through correspondence with candidates, job application forms and framework agreements. The Skillnet Network Manager and the Ibec HR department create a shortlist of suitable candidates for interview. Only candidates who satisfy the minimum criteria are called for interview.

The Skillnet Network Manager and Ibec HR Department conduct fair and transparent interviews, by stating IMS' commitment to equitable selection processes, role profiles, interviewer brief for interviews and interview notes.

The first round of interviews are completed jointly by the Network Manager and the Ibec HR Department. A further shortlist of candidates is created from these first round interviews. Candidates on this short list are then invited for a second interview. An appropriate interview panel is then created for the second round interviews which will usually include the Skillnet Network Manager, Ibec HR department and as well as a member of the IMS Governance group.

If a suitable candidate is identified from these second round interviews, an offer of employment will be made. This offer of employment will be subject to the candidate providing and meeting appropriate reference criteria, the approval of the IMS Steering Committee. The Skillnet Network Manager and the Ibec HR Department provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates, by keeping records of responses to candidates. The Skillnet Network Manager and Ibec HR Department issue Contracts of Employment/ Framework Agreements stating Terms and Conditions including tenure, responsibilities, performance metrics, and feedback mechanisms, through contracts of Employment, and Terms of Reference.

Induction

A comprehensive induction is provided by the IMS Network Manager and IMS team with support from the Ibec HR Department. Induction for the new staff member includes:

- Introduction to the IMS structure, mission, purpose and strategies
- Introduction to services and training programmes available
- The IMS Quality Assurance System (Policies and Procedures)
- Ibec Probation Policy
- Ibec Data Protection policies
- Health and Safety policies
- Ibec Grievance and Disciplinary procedure policies
- Ibec Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Ibec IT policies
- Opportunities for training and development
- Skillnet Ireland's privacy statement

The Skillnet Network Manager shall conduct periodic performance evaluations, by documenting staff performance reviews and learner feedback forms.

Communication

Communication is a key part of the IMS culture and plays a vital role in the successful delivery of our training programmes. Effective communication with all staff members is crucial. This will ensure all employees and stakeholders fully understand what we offer and deliver, improve morale, learner satisfaction and helps the IMS improve as a whole.

Communication with Staff and tutors

The Skillnet Network Manager is in regular contact with staff and tutors to ensure that all aspects of the programme are running effectively and that any learner issues are addressed. This is achieved through meetings, and informal communications.

- Tutors receive a framework agreement or contract, Tutor Handbook and copy of the QAM.
- Staff receive a contract of employment, an Employee Handbook, and a copy of the QAM.

The Skillnet Network Manager analyses feedback provided by staff and tutors. If any changes or improvements are made these changes are communicated back to the staff and tutors. The Skillnet Network Manager is also responsible for ensuring staff members are kept informed of relevant updates related to programmes and other services. This includes but is not limited to; formal and informal correspondence with staff, including email, phone, face-to-face, induction packs and briefing information for new staff, meeting minutes, programme review meetings, and the tutor handbook (IMS-THB-001). IMS is a small Network, therefore providing ample opportunity for informal and formal communication flow between employees and management. Frequent virtual meetings are held to update on any inputs from governance groups, changes to programmes, updates from Ibec or Skillnet Ireland, and/or notifications from QQI (or other regulatory/legislative bodies).

Communication with Stakeholders

The IMS team use a wide variety of media channels when communicating with stakeholders. A variety of different tools are used to communicate with our different stakeholders. These include; social media platforms, print media, brochures, IMS website and face-to-face meetings, when required.

Communication with Learners

The IMS team is open and transparent. The IMS team encourages its learners to communicate freely with the tutors and the IMS team throughout their training programmes. Topics that learners may need to discuss with the IMS team and tutors include illness, timetables, appeals and programme feedback. Contact details of the IMS Team and tutor are provided to the learners at the beginning of the programme. All communication is welcomed from the learners and every query by email or phone is dealt with as swiftly as possible by the tutor and or the IMS team.

Staff development, training and Continuous Professional Development:

The Skillnet Network Manager and Ibec HR Team ensures that the appropriate supports and opportunities are available to staff to ensure continuous professional and personal development, so that all staff are competent in the delivery of training. This is achieved through biannual performance reviews and appraisals to identify training needs, and Ibec's internal and external learning and development opportunities. The supports in place for staff for training and CPD include full or partial funding for ongoing training, depending on the nature of the programme. Mentorship is encouraged within the IMS team. Also, individual staff and tutors are encouraged to discuss individual training needs and CPD as, and when, they arise with the Skillnet Network Manager.

Training that IMS staff undertake include CPD, GDPR training, time management, personal effectiveness and leadership, QQI re-engagement briefings, industry events, Skillnet Ireland monthly webinars, Ibec events.

Procedure monitoring

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approval	Monitoring Evidence
Review the procedure for staff recruitment annually or on as needs basis	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision control • Document findings in minutes • Action as appropriate
Review supporting documentation; QAM, handbooks, contracts of employment, framework agreements, terms of references	Network Manager	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision control
Review the procedure for staff communication annually	Network Management Team	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing tutor documentation, including feedback forms and Terms of Reference annually or in the event of personnel change • informal communication and feedback from staff • Revision control • Document findings in minutes • Action as appropriate
Review tutor and employee feedback forms	Network Manager	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate

Review procedure for staff development	Network Manager	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence with staff • reviewing staff requests for CPD, • annual performance reviews
--	-----------------	-----------------	--

TEACHING AND LEARNING

5.1 Revision Control

Policy Version	Teaching and Learning 1.6
Effective Date Next	
Review Date Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

5.2 Policy

It is the policy of the IMS constantly to monitor the learning experience that we provide and deliver, with a view to enhancing that provision and creating an open positive environment that promotes and respects the diverse needs of both learners and staff. This environment also fosters openness and IMS will advise learners about the appeals and complaints procedures, which are simple to use and effective.

The IMS will continually review the quality of learning, programme content and delivery of the programmes so that they are all monitored, reviewed and improved upon on an ongoing basis. The IMS will engage with all relevant stakeholders including learners, employers, tutors, Skillnet Ireland,

Ibec and QQI in the provision of training programmes which are fit for purpose and reflect good pedagogical practice. The IMS will ensure that the training facilities that are utilised to deliver our training programmes are suitable and appropriate for the purpose, and that best practice in teaching and learning is continually attained and improved upon.

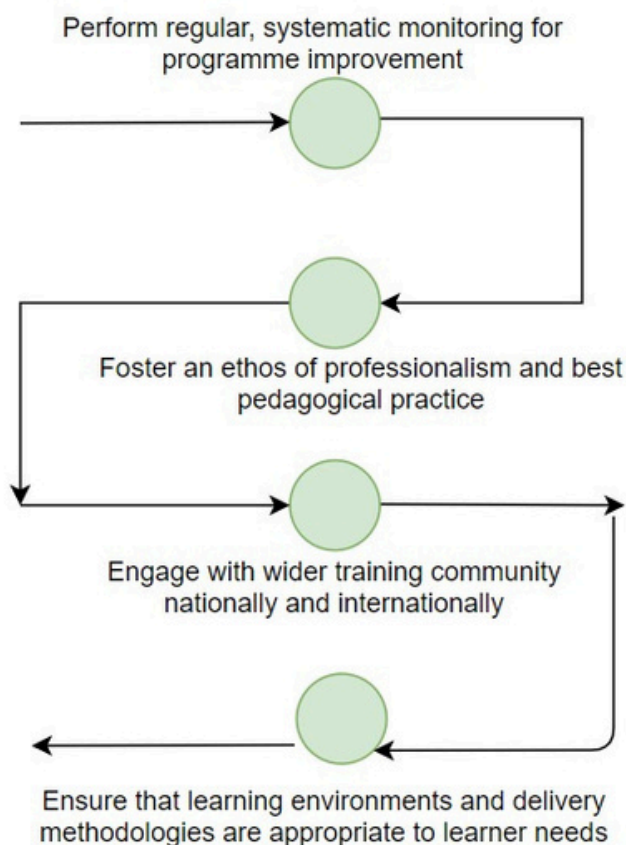


Figure 5.2.1: Teaching and Learning Process Diagram

5.2.1 Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the best courses possible are delivered with the quality of the learning experience and teaching of the programmes continually monitored and kept under review.

5.2.2. Procedure Objectives

The objective of this procedure is to have an internal evaluation system that ensures we create an environment of inclusivity and respect for learners, tutors and staff to enable them to achieve personal and professional development. The IMS will implement a quality assurance system that will continually review all programme content.

The IMS will also ensure that programme feedback is continually reviewed and the appropriate action is taken.

A quality assurance process will be in place to ensure the learning environments and facilities used in the delivery of the IMS Programmes will be suitable for both the learner and tutor.

Procedure implementation

Who's involved in this procedure?

- Skillnet Network Management Team

Teaching and Learning

Programme, teaching, learning, and monitoring

The IMS Network Team monitors programme delivery to ensure that the programmes are fit-for-purpose, have continued relevance, and also it provides a mechanism for identification of areas for improvement of programme delivery. Monitoring is achieved through the gathering of learner and tutor feedback, and the review of feedback with Network Team, Tutors, and steering committee. Monitoring seeks to continuously evaluate the programme delivery, the tutor performance, programme assessment, learning outcomes, workload, and facilities. Industry training needs analysis surveys and industry research are conducted to ensure the continued relevancy of programme.

The IMS Network Team will also ensure that programme delivery can reasonably accommodate special needs for learners. Learners are encouraged to notify the Skillnet Network Team about any special needs before or during registration.

Foster an ethos that promotes learning

IMS is committed to ensuring that all of the training related activities delivered by IMS serve to enhance learners through the delivery of relevant and practical courses. The Skillnet Network Team and Tutors ensure that a variety of delivery methods suitable to the learner requirements are provided, such as face to face training, workplace learning, virtual training, and practical/self-directed learning. Small class sizes of approximately 15 learners maximum the learning experience for students. The Skillnet Network Team and Tutors promote an ethos of learning between the provider and learners.

National and International effective practice

The Skillnet Network team ensure that best practice in teaching and learning is applied to programmes delivered by IMS, by keeping up to date with national and international pedagogical developments. In a national context, IMS engages in national effective practice with national organisations such as Ibec, our industry comprised steering Committee, and Skillnet Ireland. IMS is engaged with international best practice through our diverse membership of indigenous and multi-national organisations. This diverse range of companies are also represented on our steering committee. IMS is also involved in a network of over 70 Networks which connect through networking and best practice events.

Learning environments

The Skillnet Network Team ensure that the learning environment is effective and fit-for-purpose for delivery of programmes across various modes of delivery. IMS currently does not deliver training through blended learning. If training is delivered on-site in member companies, the Network

vis a vis the venue checklist. There is an obligation of the tutor to inform IMS if any challenges with the learning environment.

5.2.4 Procedure monitoring

The key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table. The table shows the persons or group identified as holding responsibility for the monitoring activity and the evidence that will support the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Review programme improvement plans. Review learner and tutor feedback. Appropriate action taken on findings.	Network Management Team Steering Committee.	Network Manager	Document findings. Implement programme improvement plans
Review documentation and procedures related to complaints and appeals	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Revision control
Programme delivery review	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Document findings in meeting minutes. Improvement plans and necessary actions taken.
Review national publications in relation to changes in legislation, training strategy, or quality assurance as published	Network Manager	N/A	Implement changes as required
The learning environment and facilities will be continually monitored and reviewed by IMS	Network Management Team	Network manager	Venue checklist

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

6.1 Revision Control

Policy Version	Assessment of
Effective Date	Learners 1.6
Next Review	
Date Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

6.2 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to assess learners in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner, to monitor the provision of learning and assessments and to respect the diverse needs of learners.

IMS is committed to providing learners with feedback on their progress and information around assessments and ensuring learners are aware of their responsibilities in relation to demonstrating achievement of learning outcomes. IMS will ensure that programme content, assessments and training facilities are reviewed frequently with staff and reflect the best pedagogical practice for adult learning. IMS will ensure that assessment material storage facilities and access control to assessment materials are managed in a secure manner to protect the integrity of the assessment process.

6.3 Procedure

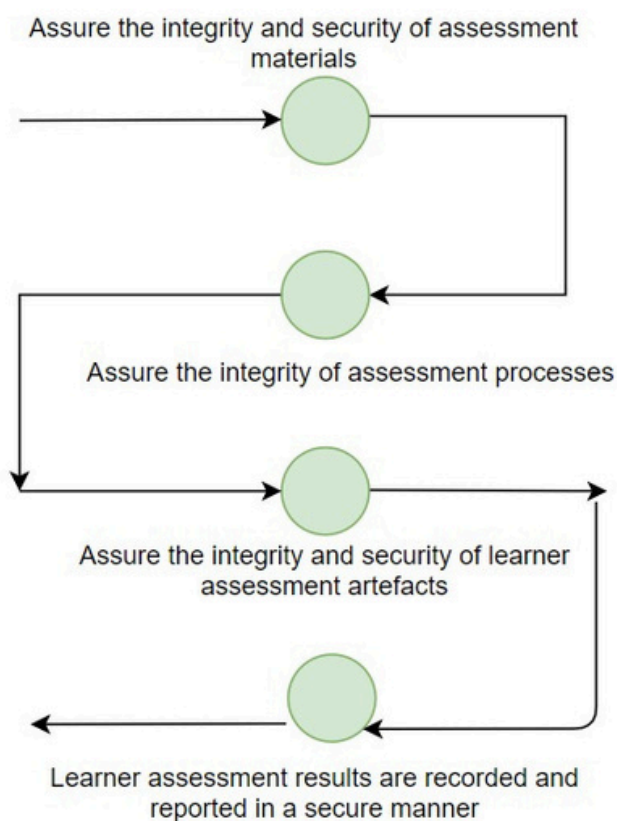


Figure 6: Assessment of learners process diagram

5.3.2 Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all assessment of learner achievement is conducted in a fair and consistent manner, by trained and qualified staff, in accordance with the validated programme specification.

6.2.2 Procedure Objectives

- The IMS ensures assessment of learners is carried out professionally and, in a fair, consistent and impartial manner. All assessments carried out by the IMS team are relevant to the programmes delivered and learner requirements.
- All programmes, assessments and training facilities are kept under review to ensure that they comply with best practice and meet set standards.
- All assessments and tests are stored securely and managed to ensure the integrity of the assessment process.

6.2.3 Procedure implementation

Who is involved in this procedure?

- The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team
- Tutors

- The Academic Council
- The Steering Committee
- Internal verifier
- External authenticator
- QQI Results Approval Panel
- Students

Integrity and Security of Assessment Materials

Assessment materials storage

All assessment related materials (exam papers, marking schemes, grades, results approval panel results) are stored securely on the Irish Medtech Skillnet cloud network (OneDrive, MS Teams) and are password protected. Only members of the IMS Network Management Team have access to these systems. Learner records management and reporting are stored on Sonrai, a secure data management system which is secured by Skillnet Ireland.

Additionally, there is physical storage systems in place in the Irish Medtech Skillnet office for hardcopy records and materials. There is access control in place whereby physical keys and locked storage units house these hardcopy assessment related materials. Materials are then shredded as per the retention policy. Once the certification process has been completed, the assessment materials are deleted.

Security and integrity of assessment processes

It is the policy of IMS to ensure that the principles of fairness, consistency and transparency are applied to the assessment of learners. The assessments of IMS programmes are carefully developed by experienced and competent tutors, taking into consideration employer, learner and QQI requirements. Measures are taken by IMS to ensure that security and integrity of the assessment process to mitigate any threat to the assessment process. These measures include

- Tutor terms of reference to ensure their assessment capability and suitability
- Assessment plans
- Marking schemes
- Signed confirmations of authentic work
- Signed attendance sheet (sign in and sign out)
- Invigilation procedures
- Learner feedback forms
- Results approval procedure
- Secure record keeping

Internal monitoring of the security and integrity of assessment processes are assured by factors including feedback forms, internal verification, programme reviews, etc. External monitoring is achieved by means of an external evaluator.

Recruitment

IMS has developed terms of reference for tutors to assist in the recruitment of staff who will have the responsibility and involvement in the design and conduct of assessments.

Assessment plans

The approval of assessment plans and instruments are an integral part of programme development process described in section 3 “Programmes of Education and Training” (above). Assessment methodologies used by the IMS are linked to the module and programme learning outcomes. As the IMS QQI-approved programmes are ran in-company, assessment plans are developed in consultation with the company and programme tutor. The IMS has a depositary of exam questions which are available to them and these questions are selected by the programme administrator. The depositary of exam questions are provided to the IMS by the programme tutor.

The Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing (Award code 5N1915) assessment is in the form of a one-and half-hour exam which equates to 40% of the total marks. A project portfolio is also required to be submitted and this equates to 60% of the programme total marks.

The Quality and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) (Award code 5N1959) assessment is in the format of a one-and -half-hour exam which equates to 50% of the marks. A project portfolio is also required to be submitted and this also equates to 50% of the total marks.

Dates are selected and approved as suitable for IMS, the tutors, invigilators, and the company for agreed assessment. This includes dates for exams and project submission, the location in which the exam will take place, who will invigilate, and the process for transport of assessment artefacts.

Marking Schemes

Marking schemes are developed and documented during programme development, and these schemes are used by the tutors to ensure fair and consistent assessment.

Signed confirmations

Learners are required to submit signed Confirmations of Authorship for all submitted assignments.

Assessment invigilation

IMS tutors are briefed on their responsibilities in relation to assessment invigilation, and these responsibilities are also documented in the Tutor Handbook as well as the Quality Assurance Manual (this document). Invigilators will ensure:

- For classroom-based assessments an attendance form is signed by all candidates
- For assessments completed outside the classroom, a Confirmation of Authorship is signed by each candidate
- The classroom has the necessary physical resources and assessment materials in place prior to the commencement of the assessment
- They and the candidates are in place in a timely fashion to ensure punctual commencement of the assessment
- They advise the Network Management Team of any potential conflict of interest in their role as invigilator
- They provide clear instructions to the candidates regarding the conduct of the assessment

- Completion of the End of Training report to record any information pertinent to the assessment
- They diligently monitor candidates during the assessment and avoid engaging in any activity that might detract from their ability to properly observe the candidates (e.g. use mobile 'phone, browse the internet etc.)
- They do not represent a distraction to the candidates – this might include unnecessary noise (e.g. conversation likely to be overheard, footwear/jewellery likely to generate noise), or actions/activities that are likely to draw attention away from the assessment
- They are present in the assessment environment for the full duration of the assessment – if they need to leave the environment, they must arrange replacement invigilation
- Ensure that all learners behave in a manner that does not distract or impede on the performance of others – learners violating this obligation will be cautioned, reported, or removed from the assessment. Ensure that in answering any candidate question, that no advantage will be gained by the questioner over other candidates
- Ensure that all candidates remain in the assessment environment for the duration of their assessment – toilet breaks are permitted – a second invigilator should accompany the candidate where possible

Academic Misconduct (including plagiarism) The protection of the integrity of assessment is essential to good training quality assurance. Tutors play a critical role in implementing measures to prevent academic misconduct. This may include plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, or any other form of academic cheating (e.g. impersonation, collusion, illicit use of third-party services *inter alia*.). Plagiarism is a serious offence and consists of submitting work which includes parts from other sources which are not acknowledged. To mitigate the risk of any form of academic misconduct IMS ensures that:

- Candidates are aware of what constitutes academic misconduct
- Robust invigilation procedures are in place
- Tutors exercise good judgement, and
- Technological aids are used where appropriate.

Specific actions to prevent academic misconduct at IMS ensure:

- Induction briefings are given to all learners at which academic integrity and the IMS measures to ensure this, are discussed.
- All learners are provided with a Learner Handbook which discusses academic integrity and the censure for deliberate cheating.
- Assessment invigilation processes are in place.
- Tutors and the Network Manager are advised through their ToR of their responsibility to protect academic integrity.

Where academic misconduct by a candidate is suspected, the following applies:

The candidate may be required to participate in an oral (viva voce) defence of their assessment. The Tutor will decide whether an infringement has been detected and the level (minor or major). For minor infringements, the Tutor may caution the candidate or require them to resubmit a complete or partial assessment, alternatively, they may apply a penalty mark appropriate to the perceived level of infringement. In the case of major infringement, they will refer the matter to the Network Manager for judgement. The Network Manager may decide to allow a reassessment,

endorse the proposed penalty mark, or remove the learner from the programme without recourse, and without certification for the programme. The Tutor (or Network Manager) will provide the candidate with a written description of the infringement detected and the censure to be applied. If the candidate wishes to appeal the decision of the Network Manager, the Academic Council will hear the appeal and make a judgement. The decision of the Academic Council is final.

Results approval

The Results Approval Panel (RAP) consists of a sub-group which is chaired by an independent member from the Academic Council and the RAP report to the Academic Council on its findings. The RAP, with delegated authority from the Academic Council, has responsibility to deal with escalated academic appeals, complaints, RPL.

To ensure diversity, the RAP is comprised of an independent academic expert, and two others.

Results approvals are fed upwards to a representative from the Academic Council.

As described in figure 7, the assessment scripts/artefacts are marked by tutors or assessors in accordance with the marking schemes, and the results are returned to the IMS Network Management Team.

The Internal Verifier checks the results and produces an Internal Verifier report for consideration by the External Authenticator who checks and moderates the results to comply with validation criteria and for comparison with national norms.

The RAP receive and review:

- The External Evaluator Report
- the Internal Verifier Report
- the learner and tutor feedback forms are reviewed by the Results Approval Panel (RAP)
- Attendance/sign-in/sign-out sheets
- Confirmation of authorship

Upon completion of the review, the RAP then sign-off on submission of the marks to QQI.

If there is a concern over authenticity of learners work, this is garnered through the tutor feedback form. Any irregularities are brought to the attention of the Network Manager for resolution prior to submission to QQI. Findings of the RAP are documented and summarised and provided to the Network Manager for management information purposes.

Process flow for results

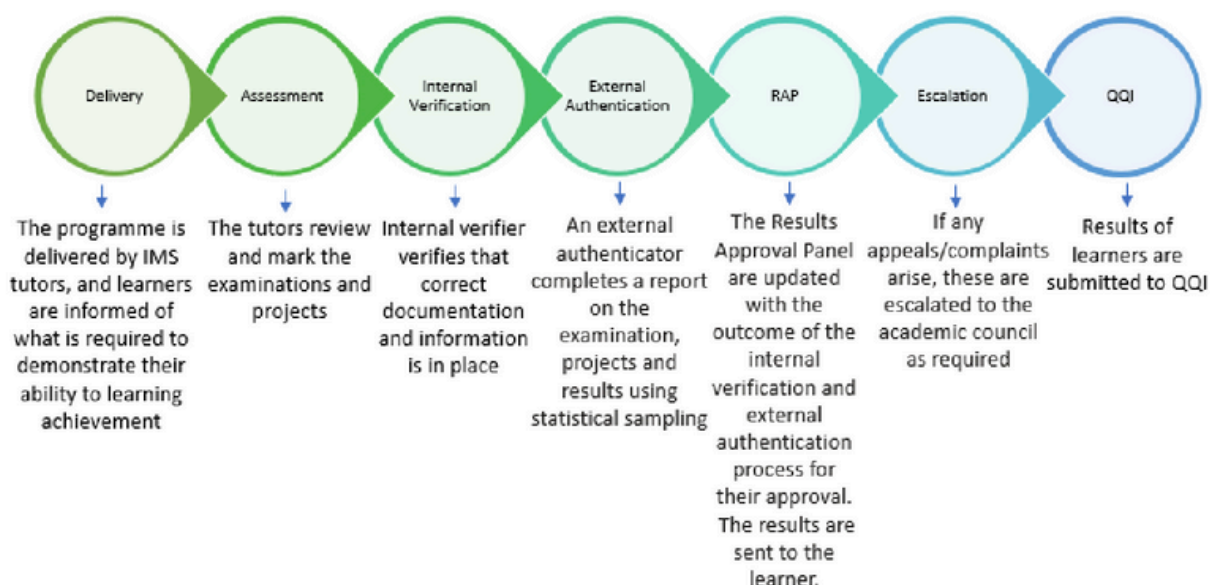


Figure 7: process flow for results in IMS

Self-monitoring activities relating to assessment of learner achievement

As described in Section 11 of this QAM, programme and assessment of learner achievement is monitored and reviewed for continuous improvement purposes, which is central to IMS's quality management system. This is achieved through review of data from tutor and learner feedback forms and quality assurance reports.

Learner work (assessment techniques)

Learner Obligations

All learners receive a Learner Handbook during induction in which information about learner responsibilities and the conduct of assessment is described.

Re-sit and Repeats:

If a learner does not achieve the 50% pass standard in the exam and or the project portfolio an opportunity will be afforded to the learner to repeat. IMS will only allow a learner to repeat an exam once. A learner repeating an exam or re-submitting the project portfolio can only achieve a maximum award of 50%. An honours grade will not be awarded on a repeat exam or project portfolio, regardless of the marks obtained. A learner repeating an exam or re-submitting a project portfolio is subject to timetabling and operational restrictions. A repeat exam or repeating an assignment is arranged with the programme administrator. If a learner cannot complete a programme for reasons of illness (or other extenuating circumstance), IMS will make every effort to enable the learner to repeat the programme (within the constraints of the

availability of the learner, and the availability of the programme). The learner may provide reasonable evidence of the extenuating circumstance.

Complaints and Appeals:

The Skillnet Network Team ensure that learners are aware of how to seek a resolution to a grievance through complaints and appeals. IMS has documented complaint and appeal procedures in place to facilitate learners who wish to make formal complaints or appeals. These can be found in tutor and learner handbooks (IMS-THB-001) (IMS-LHB-001). Complaints and Appeals procedures are also readily available on IMS website (IMS-CPL-001) (IMS-APL-001).

The Learner is informed about complaints and appeals procedure at induction and is also provided with a copy of the Learner Handbook. The Learner Handbook includes information about complaints and appeals, certification, and how to make contact with tutors and the IMS Team about any concerns.

Complaints

The QQI Assessments and Standards 2013 document defines a complaint as “an expression of a concern that a particular assessment procedure is unfair or inconsistent or not fit for purpose”, or “the expression of a specific concern about the provision of a course/module, or a programme of study, or a related academic service”. A complaint may not specifically relate to an assessment but may relate to any aspect of our programme and services and/or supports.

The IMS supports a person’s right to make a complaint relating to any aspect of our programme. Complaints Resolution Process: A complaint can be made to the Tutor, IMS Network Manager or IMS team. A complaint can be made orally or in writing. All efforts will be made by the Tutor, IMS Network Manager and IMS team to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is not resolved orally at this stage, it will be necessary for a formal written complaint to be made. A formal complaint needs to be made in writing. Complaint forms can be requested from the IMS office.

Receipt of a formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the IMS Network Manager within 10 days of receiving the complaint. A written response will be furnished to the complainant within 5 working days of confirming receipt of the complaint. If the investigation of the complaint takes longer than 5 working days, the IMS team will let the complainant know of the reason for the delay in writing. To establish the facts of the complaint, the IMS Network Manager will hold an interview with the person who made the complaint and anyone who is pertinent to the investigation. A recording of these meetings will be made.

A written report will then be sent to the complainant regarding the investigation and a proposed solution will be provided to the complainant. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the report findings, they are entitled to appeal the outcome of the report findings.

An appeal needs to be submitted in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal, within 5 working days from the receipt of the decision from the IMS Network Manager.

The network manager will bring the complaint to the next meeting of the Academic Council for review. The decision of the Standing Committee of the Academic Council is final unless the issue is governed by specific national legislation. If this is the case a suitably qualified independent arbiter will review the complaint and come to a final decision.

Appeals

A learner can use the IMS appeals procedure if they wish to change an assessment decision.

The QQI Assessments and Standards 2013 document states that an appeal is “ a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on student progression, assessments and awards” Appeals Resolution Process: If a learner is unhappy with the result of an exam or project portfolio, they may request an appeal. An appeal can be made to the Tutor, IMS Network Manager or IMS team. An appeal can be made orally or in writing. If the appeal is not resolved orally, it will be necessary for a formal written appeal to be made. A formal appeal needs to be made in writing. Appeals forms can be requested from the IMS office. A formal appeal should be made in writing by the learner to the IMS Network Manager within a 14 -day period of receiving their results. Only approved results can be formally appealed by the learner.

A written response will be furnished to the learner within 5 working days of confirming receipt of the appeal. If the appeal takes longer than 5 working days, the IMS team will let the learner know of the reason for the delay in writing. To establish all the details of the appeal the IMS Network Manager will include the involvement of another assessor (to be agreed with the academic council) in reviewing the assessor in question will conduct an interview with the learner who made the appeal.

A written response will be sent to the learner advising of the outcome. Possible outcomes include:

- The original results received by the learner will be upheld.
- The original results received by the learner will be overturned.

If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome of the written response findings, they are entitled to appeal the outcome of the findings.

An appeal needs to be submitted in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal, within 5 working days from the receipt of the decision from the IMS Network Manager. The network manager will bring the complaint to a special sitting of the Academic Council for review.

The Learner will be notified of the standing committee Academic Councils findings in writing by the IMS Network Manager. The decision of the standing committee of the Academic Council is final. All other relevant parties will be advised of the decision of the appeal by the Academic Council. No fee is charged for a student to make an appeal.

Re-check and Review Procedures

Re-checks:

A learner can request a re-check if they believe that there is an arithmetical or clerical errors, that the marks awarded to the learner are incorrect and that all the marks to which the student is entitled have not been included in the final total. A request for a re-check is free to the learner. The request for a re-check needs to be submitted in writing within 5 working days of receiving results to the IMS team. The IMS Network Manager and (or relevant independent delegate) will undertake the re-check. The outcome of the re-check will be issued to the learner in writing.

Review:

A review is a re-consideration of an assessment decision in the light of additional information provided by the learner or other expert persons.

The review request needs to be submitted in writing to the IMS team.

The learner needs to clearly state his/her reasons for requesting a review.

The review should be submitted by the learner within 10 days of receiving their results.

The Academic review is conducted by the standing committee of the Academic Council.

The Learner will be notified of the standing committee Academic Councils findings in writing by the IMS Network Manager. The decision of the Academic Council is final.

Learner Feedback

To foster an ethos of learning, tutors are instructed to provide formative feedback to learners throughout the duration of the programme, in both instructor-led classes and self-directed sessions. Feedback is provided by means of verbal/informal feedback.

6.2.4 Procedure monitoring

The key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table. The table shows the persons or group identified as holding responsibility for the monitoring activity and the evidence that will support the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approval	Monitoring Evidence
Ensure passwords are only accessible to the current Network Management Team and they are changed periodically	The Network Management Team	Network Manager	Changed upon personnel change
Review internal and external evaluations annually	Network Management team	Academic Council	Academic council meeting
Review role profiles for assessment staff and terms of reference for tutors to ensure all units understand their role in maintaining the security and integrity of the assessment process Review the assessment	Network Manager	Network Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review role profiles and terms of reference Revision control
process and artefacts, including marking schemes and training facilities, with assessors annually	Network Management Team, Tutors	Network Manager	Take any necessary actions
Review the assessment invigilation process and the tutor handbook annually Review programme	Network Manager	Academic council	Meeting minutes Revision control
improvement plans	Network Management Team and Academic Council	Network Manager	Meeting minutes
Review assessment locations and storage mechanisms	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Implement continuous improvement

SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

1.1 Revision Control

Policy Version	Supports for Learners
Effective Date	
Next Review	
Date Owner	1.0 Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

1.19 Policy

It is the policy of the IMS to provide coherent and integrated supports for learners so that resources provided to the learners are benchmarked, accessible, effective and fit-for-purpose.

The supports for learners will be promoted and monitored on a regular basis so that the learners are kept informed of the range of supports and services available to them on an ongoing basis. The IMS will make special efforts to support the needs of learners with disabilities and other special requirements.

The IMS will provide far reaching learner support services in areas such as administration and guidance and it will seek and monitor learner feedback in relation to these services and implement all learning outcomes therefrom.

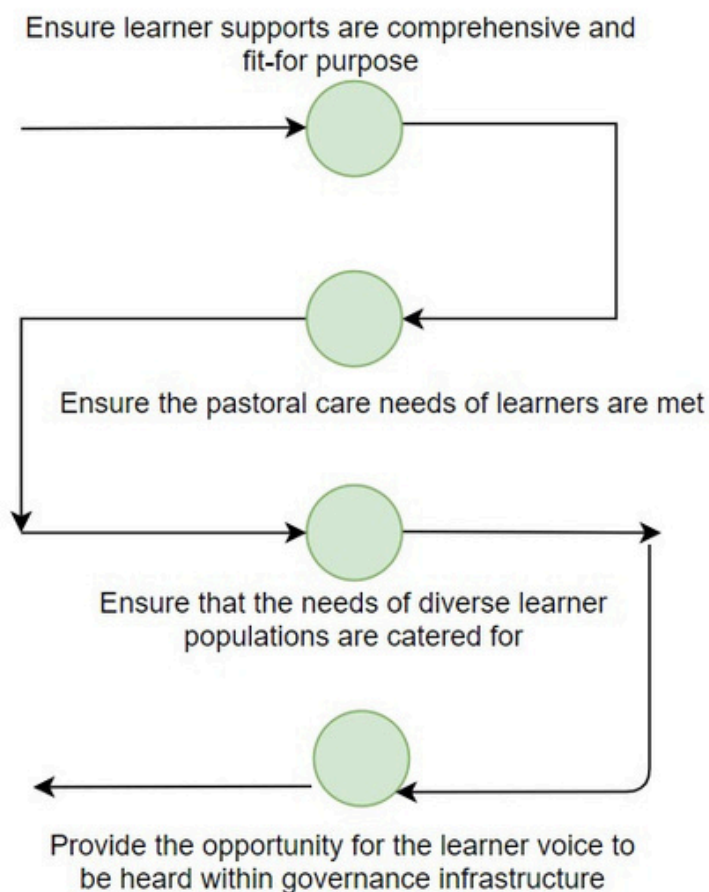


Figure 8: Supports for learners process diagram

1.20 Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that IMS provides supports that are appropriate to the diverse needs of all our learners, and that we regularly monitor and improve these supports where possible.

Procedure Objectives

- To ensure IMS **provide all necessary learner supports**, advise learners accordingly, and ensure the provision of pastoral care (within the constraints of the short-duration programmes that IMS run).
- To ensure that **learner supports are consistent with equality of opportunity** and ensure learner feedback on supports is captured and addressed.

Procedure implementation

Who is involved in this procedure?

- The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team
- The programme tutors

Learner Resources and support

The IMS Network team ensure that resources and supports for learners are fit for purpose, accessible, and that they meet the needs of all learners.

Resources include:

- Learner induction packs
- Course brochures
- Course materials
- Data protection statement
- Learner handbooks
- IMS website

Supports include:

- Correspondence with learners
- Ongoing support from IMS team
- Tutor engagement
- Student and learner feedback
- Equality training records such as training with AHEAD
- Programme improvement plans

Communication about the available supports and resources are provided to the learners at the programme induction and throughout the programme delivery.

Should learners have any queries about any of the supports available to them, they are free to contact any member of the IMS Management team via phone or email at any time Programme resources will be consistent with programme standards. Supports for Learners with additional needs If a learner has special needs requirements this is identified at the registration point of the programme.

Learners are requested to make the Network Management Team aware of any additional requirements. This is detailed in the learner handbook. The Network Manager and the Skillnet Network Team, in collaboration with the learner and tutor (where appropriate) will put the necessary supports in place for the learner through-out the programme delivery. Student confidentiality is a key consideration for the Network Manager and Skillnet Network team once a special requirement has been brought to their attention. If any further special requirements are notified to the tutor, Network Manager and or Skillnet Network team throughout the programme delivery, all reasonable accommodation will be made to support the learner. The Terms of Reference for the Network Manager require that all supports are communicated to the learners. Staff Training The Network Management Team undergo CPD on a regular basis, including equality training with AHEAD.ie, an independent non-profit organisation working to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. All existing and newly appointed staff of the IMS are made familiar with the induction materials provided to learners.

Pastoral Care

The IMS Network team and tutors take all reasonable measures to ensure that the learning environment provided includes appropriate pastoral care supports for learners, to focus on the learners personal, social, and academic needs. This is limited in the context of IMS programmes, as they are typically short programmes, however, information is available to learners in the learner induction pack. The staff are aware of their responsibilities to ensure pastoral care which are detailed in the Tutor Terms of Reference and Network Manager Terms of Reference.

Staff undergo CPD on a regular basis, which is appraised through annual performance reviews. Equality training is attended by IMS staff at AHEAD. The IMS team also perform regular review of services to ensure the diverse needs of learners are considered when planning resources and supports. Learner Representation The IMS Network team ensures there are mechanisms in place for learner feedback to be taken on board in relation to programmes or other concerns, which include gathering information through learner feedback forms, informally learners contacting the IMS team by phone or email and a formal mechanism by ensuring there is a learner representative on the academic council.

Any actions and improvements identified are implemented by the Network Manager and IMS administrative team as soon as possible. All actions completed or in process are noted on our plans for programme development and improvement by the IMS Network Team. These plans for programme development and improvement are reviewed by the IMS team on a quarterly basis.

Guidance, programme support, and career pathways

The IMS Network team ensure that there is reasonable information available about programme support and career pathways, by providing contact details for Network Team on all material, and also ensuring information is available on the IMS website. Learner induction will also highlight the supports and resources available to learners.

1.21 Procedure monitoring

The key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table. The table shows the persons or group identified as holding responsibility for the monitoring activity and the evidence that will support the monitoring activity.

Activity	Responsibility	Approval	Monitoring Evidence
Review student and tutor feedback on a per programme basis	Network Management Team Programme Tutors.	Network Manager	Document findings and implement improvement plans as required

Review resources and resolve network requirement list, Management Team including learner induction pack, IMS website		Network Manager	Document findings and implement improvement plans as required
Review equality training material annually	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Revision Control.
Review provisions for compassionate accommodations annually	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Engage IMS staff in equality training (Ahead) Document findings and implement improvement plans as required

8. INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

8.1 Revision Control

Policy	Information and data management
Version	1.0
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	
Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

8.2 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to gather, analyse, and use reliable data and information for supported and informed decision making, which is aligned with IMS's mission.

Learner and programme data is gathered via robust procedures in a manner that is compliant with applicable regulatory requirements including GDPR legislation. This policy ensures that IMS operates effectively, addresses potential risks/areas for improvement, and supports IMS's self-monitoring and planning activities for the delivery of quality programmes of education and related activities.

Learner information systems, management information systems, and data are secured and protected, and data retention procedures are implemented.

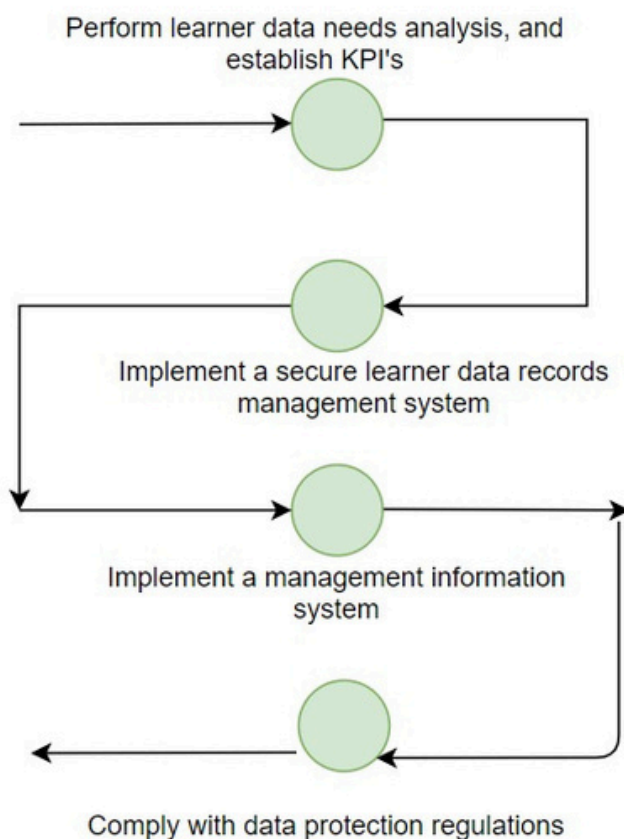


Figure 8: Information and data management process diagram

8. Procedure

Procedure Purpose

To implement and maintain secure and robust information and data management systems.

The procedure also details how IMS gather, store, analyse and report data for the continuous improvement and self-monitoring of IMS.

Procedure Objectives

- To map out the **learner data that is required for effective management, establish KPIs**, and use the data gathered by IMS to inform programme development plans.
- To implement **secure data management and information management systems** and comply with GDPR legislation, including retention periods.

Procedure implementation

Data and KPI's The IMS is committed to gathering and using data for strategic planning and improvement of any training related activities.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are set by Skillnet Ireland and are a method of measuring progress. includes learner-related and financial KPI's, which are tracked and measured through Sonrai (Skillnet Ireland's activity tracker). KPI's tracked includes; unique trainees, trainee days, member company numbers, non-formal events, overall expenditure, fund matching.

Learner data gathered by IMS is stored in a secure manner and is GDPR compliant, this data may include; personal learner information, employer details, payment information, enrolment information and grades. Data is gathered through email communications and through registration when the learner and or the employer are making the booking.

Reports are generated by the Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team from the data stored on the learner and management information systems such as Sonrai in relation to learner completion rates and are available for external quality review.

Information systems

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network team and Ibec's IT Team are responsible for maintaining and securing data on learner and management information systems. The information systems used by IMS are Navision, Sonrai, and the Microsoft suite of apps. Navision is used for bookings, while Microsoft apps including OneDrive and Teams are used for storage of all other information on a secure cloud based system. Sonrai is implemented and maintained by Skillnet Ireland. It

is an information management system for capturing learner data records. Skillnet Ireland monitor these KPI's. Only members of the IMS team have access to the Sonrai system and it is password protected. Metrics such as KPI's are used to monitor

IMS activities and are tracked through systems, such as Sonrai, Microsoft applications, and Ibec's CRM and online booking system. Data that can be stored on IMS's information systems include self-monitoring reports, learner profile forms, feedback forms, IMS Risk register, programme attendance, registration of interest, training needs analyses, fee payments, grades, audit reports, and meeting minutes. [Information for further planning](#) The Irish Medtech Skillnet

Network Team conduct periodic review of the information stored on the [management information systems](#) for continuous improvement and data analytics. The information is used for strategic planning to ensure that the programme delivery is effective and relevant. This information is discussed at steering committee and academic council meetings, identified through feedback from tutors and learners, through periodic programme reviews and the Skillnet Ireland annual review.

IMS is undergoing a digital transformation and will be incorporating more of Navision features into its Information system strategy in 2022.

Record Maintenance and retention

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team ensure information management systems utilised enable compliance and adhere to data protection legislation, with retention policies in place.

IMS commit to secure data and have security measures in place, such as a disaster recover plan, Ibec IT support, and back ups.

All information and data are maintained on a secure server.

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team store all paper records securely and are subject to retention policies also. IMS staff will have limited access to paper records.

Data protection and freedom of information

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team and the Ibec IT Team ensure that Data Protection legislation is adhered to on all information systems through Internal annual GDPR Training
The Skillnet Network Manager embeds an awareness of GDPR amongst staff and contracted tutors by promoting best practice and IT security bulletins. The Skillnet Network Manager will take all reasonable measures to provide information that may be requested under the Freedom of information Act.

Procedure monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Review achievement of KPI's annually	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Sonrai
Review information system safety and processes	Network Management Team and Ibec IT Team	Network Manager	System security improvement plans
Review strategic process for information for further planning and achievement of programme improvement	Network Management Team	Steering Committee, Academic council	Meeting minutes, programme improvement plans
Review data protection and freedom of information processes	Network Manager	Network Manager	Process improvement plans, annual GDPR Training for the team
Review record maintenance process and retention periods	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Process improvement plans

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

9.1 Revision Control

Policy	Public Information and Communication
Version	1.0
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	
Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

9.2 Policy

It is the policy of IMS to provide clear, concise and up to date public information in relation to activities, including education and training programmes, research, and related services.

IMS will ensure a fully documented approach to quality. This documented approach is comprised of the Quality Assurance Manual, and quality assurance evaluation reports will be readily and easily accessible on IMS's website.

It is the policy of IMS to provide the learner with information, including; award path, award title, awarding body name. IMS will also provide learners with the details and information on access, transfer and progression.

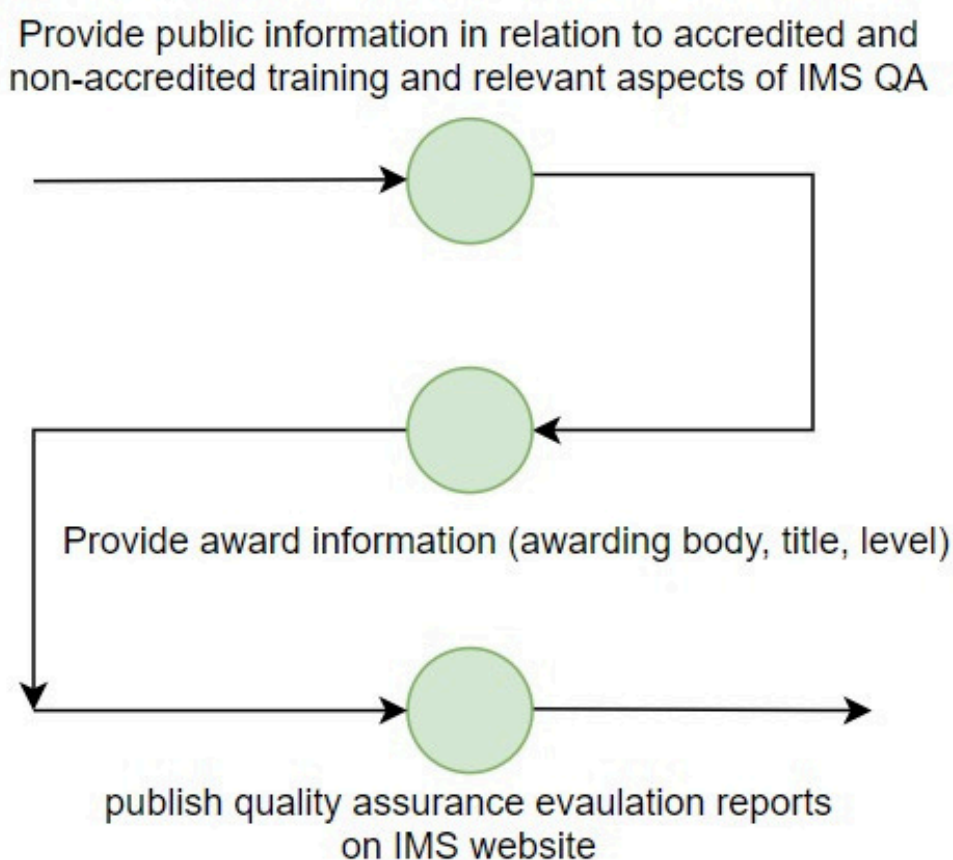


Figure 9.3: Process for public information and communication diagram

Procedure

Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure IMS maintain effective, clear and informative communication channels with learners, tutors, staff, member companies, and other relevant stakeholders. It also ensures compliance with the Qualification and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, relating to information provided to enroller learners, the preparation of quality assurance procedures, and the publication of self-evaluation reports.

Procedure Objectives

- Implement a systematic approach to maintaining communications internally and externally
- Provide public information that is clear, up-to-date, and relevant
- Publish Quality Assurance reports on our website

Procedure implementation

Who's involved in this procedure?

- The Skillnet Network Management Team, including the Network Manager, are wholly responsible for the dissemination and publication of all information related to IMS programmes of education and training and all related activity,

Public information

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network team, including the Network Manager ensure that all information provided to the public is clear, accessible, up-to-date, and accurate. **Website** The primary communication

channel is the Irish Medtech Skillnet website. The IMS website includes information on; 'about' the Skillnet, upcoming programme schedule and booking information, programme descriptions, GDPR privacy statements, FAQ's, a news section, and more. The website is updated when required, and is frequently reviewed for relevancy. The website is also updated to reflect requirements from stakeholders such as QQI (i.e. quality assurance manual). **Information** Information is

provided by IMS through the QAM, through self-evaluation reports, research activities, information for enrolled learners, prospective learners, and other ad-hoc information in relation to courses. These publications and sources of information are developed, managed and published by the IMS Network Management team, and are publicly accessible on the IMA website.

Learner information

Programme information

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team provide all relevant programme information to prospective and current learners. This includes if programme leads to an award or not, name of awarding body, title of award, award level, award type, ATP and RPL arrangements. This information is provided to learners via the IMS website, downloads from our website, programme promotional material, ATP documents, and through correspondence with learners. Learners receive all information related to the programme additionally when they are inducted. Should any changes arise through-out the learner journey, they

will be made aware of the changes by the IMS Network Management Team. All information is reviewed by the IMS Network Management Team for accuracy and relevancy before publication.

Learner Handbook

All learners receive a Learner Handbook during induction. The Learner Handbook includes information about assessment, appeals, certifications, and how to contact with tutors and the Network Management Team about any concerns.

Learner Feedback

Learner Feedback data gathered from feedback forms are reviewed by the Network Management Team after the completion of all courses. Any feedback related to information or public information will be reviewed and views will be taken on board by the Network Management Team.

Publication of quality assurance evaluation reports

The Irish Medtech Skillnet are subject to quality assurance evaluations which include; Skillnet Ireland reviews and QQI evaluations (re-engagement process). IMS publish report findings on the website, action evaluation reports, action quality improvement plans, and implement quality assurance procedures. In addition to report findings, quality assurance documents are also published. This includes; Quality Assurance Manual, privacy policy, and data protection.

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team comply with the requirements of the Qualifications And Quality Assurance (Education And Training) Act 2012 including the requirements for preparing and reporting on quality assurance.

Procedure monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Review and report on all public information published on the IMS website annually or on an as needs basis. Report on accuracy, completeness and currency of information	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Meeting minutes
Review all programme-related information on website, learner handbook, or programme	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Revision/document control
promotional materials as changed.			
Ensure the QA report findings are published on IMS website as required.	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Website updates

OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

10.1 Revision Control

Policy	Other parties involved in education and training
Version	1.0
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	
Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

10.2 Policy

It is the policy of the IMS to ensure the delivery of effective, relevant and high-quality training programmes through strategic relationships with the Network Management team, IMS internal /contract trainers, subject matter experts, educational bodies, certification bodies, and authenticators.

The IMS, in the delivery of its programmes and courses, will engage with professional providers at all times. The policy of the IMS is to ensure that recruitment and engagement of expert panellists, examiners and authenticators, both nationally and internationally, are clearly specified.

Ethical guidelines are furnished to all the providers and any actual or potential conflict of interest identified by them is addressed and the necessary action taken by the IMS team. IMS does not have direct links with international training providers or accreditation bodies for programmes. The IMS continues to monitor and review training providers on an ongoing basis to ensure all training is delivered to a consistently high standard and appropriate action is taken on programme feedback.

Currently the IMS does not sub-contract its training or utilise second providers for the delivery of its QQI accredited programmes. The IMS has the necessary written quality assurance policies and procedures to cover such areas as legal status, financial sustainability and confirmation of expertise and resources available to the providers, including external partners and second providers, as applicable.

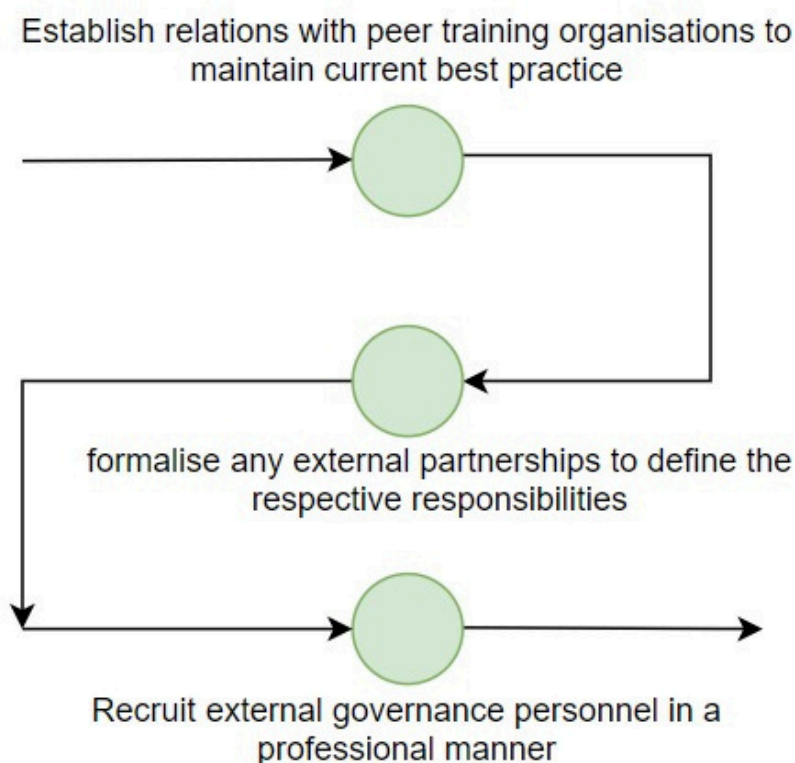


Figure 10.3: other parties involved in information and training process diagram

10.4 Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to clearly describe how we manage relationships with other parties involved in education and training both nationally and internationally. The procedure also defines how these relationships are subject to internal and external quality assurance.

10.5 Procedure Objectives

- have a clearly defined selection and recruitment process of expert panellists, examiners and authenticators. ensure any relationship with other awards, accreditations, collaborations, partnerships and
- second providers (if applicable), expert panellists, examiners and authenticators follow the
- clearly defined quality assurance process.
- ensure that training is delivered to a consistently high standard and national and in international best practices are adhered to.

10.6 Procedure implementation

Who's involved in this procedure?

The Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team, which includes the Network Manager

- QQI
- Skillnet Ireland
- Ibec

- Authenticators
- Academic council
- IMS Steering Committee

Peer relationships with the broader education and training community

The IMS ensure that the IMS programmes are delivered in the context of reputable national and international education providers and certification bodies listed above.

Skillnet Ireland

Skillnet Ireland is a business support agency of the Government of Ireland. Their mandate is to advance the competitiveness, productivity and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led workforce development. Maintaining a highly skilled workforce is essential to Ireland's national competitiveness. There are over 70 Skillnet Networks, of which IMS is one.

A Skillnet Network is a collection of private sector businesses that collaborate to address skills needs within their sector or region. Each Skillnet is governed by Skillnet Ireland Guidelines (TNP guidelines). The Skillnet community is a shared practice network. IMS staff frequently attend Skillnet Ireland events to share best practice in teaching and learning, hear the latest insights around skills and talent development. IMS has been a Skillnet Network since 2008. IMS delivers sector specific training for medical device companies nationwide.

Ibec

Ibec is the Network Promoter appointed by Skillnet Ireland for IMS. Each Skillnet must have a Network Promoter as per the TNP Guidelines. Ibec is also the Network Promoter for several other Skillnets. IMS delivers training to industry and is supported by Ibec in achieving this. Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby and business representative group.

QQI

QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) is an independent state agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. QQI's role is to promote, maintain and develop the Irish National Framework of Qualifications; approve programmes offered at a variety of educational institutions; regulate and promote the quality of programmes offered, and more. IMS has been delivering programmes leading to QQI awards since 2008. IMS staff frequently attend events organised by QQI.

International Context

IMS does not have direct links with international training providers or accreditation bodies for IMS programmes, however some IMS member companies have European/global operations who provide the international perspective through the Steering Committee. Suitably qualified trainers and service providers are selected, so that mutual recognition of our courses is promoted and both learners and employers can have confidence in the learning outcomes and quality of programmes. IMS achieves this by ensuring all collaborations and arrangements both in Ireland and abroad are clearly communicated and published on the IMS website, by implementing a Quality Assurance Manual, through continuous self-assessment and review of programme providers

and delivery, through Network Manager oversight of all relationships and by obtaining a QQI provider approval.

External partnerships and second providers

Currently, the IMS has no formal relationship with an external partnership or second provider to deliver our programmes. If applicable, due diligence will be carried out on all external partnerships and second providers to ensure that only those who are suitably qualified and appropriate are selected. In such circumstances, IMS will collect signed agreements and memoranda of understanding with all external partnerships and second providers and IMS will publish all arrangements with other education and training providers is on the IMS website.

The IMS ensure that all of our quality assurance policies and procedures will have explicit criteria and procedures governing the recruitment of, and engagement with, external partnerships and second providers. This will be clearly communicated to all potential external partnerships and second providers.

Expert panellists, examiners, and authenticators

~~The IMS ensure that there are clear criteria and~~ processes governing the selection, recruitment, and engagement with all experts. IMS establish and publish criteria and ethical guidelines governing the formal relationships with external parties. IMS ensure that external expert panellists, examiners and authenticators provide CV's.

Panellists

Terms of reference are in place for the Academic Council and Steering Committee members. These documents outline terms of membership of such bodies, including composition, quorum and tenure. Members are required to disclose any conflict of interest. Consideration of possible conflict of interest is a standing agenda item at all meetings. All meeting discussions and decisions are recorded. Membership of the Academic Council and Steering Committee is by invitation only.

Authenticators The IMS has been delivering QQI accredited programmes since 2008. The IMS has

engaged Michael

O'Rourke and Camillus Woolhead, two independent external authenticators. These two independent External Authenticators were selected from the QQI-published panel of external authenticators to ensure all standards are adhered to.

Evaluators

Due to the conditions under which funding is provided to IMS by Skillnet Ireland, IMS is subject to independent evaluation and audit. These independent evaluators are assigned by Skillnet Ireland. The evaluation, review and audit encompass all areas of the network including financial management, training numbers, programme feedback and GDPR.

Procedure monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Attend and contribute in QQI- arranged events	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Best practice implementation
Attend and contribute in Skillnet Ireland and Ibec- arranged events	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Best practice implementation
Review Terms of Reference for Governance Groups	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Revision Control.
Review minutes of governance groups	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Meeting minutes
Ensure the policy and procedures are applied to all recruitments and engagements and duly recorded.	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Activities recorded and retained.
All courses are independently benchmarked against national and international standards.	Network Management team	Network Manager	Document Control

11. SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

11.1 Revision Control

Policy	Self-evaluation, monitoring and review
Version	1.0
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	
Owner	Irish Medtech Skillnet Network Team

11.2 Policy

It is the policy of the Irish Medtech Skillnet to review, self-evaluate and report on our provision of training services, so that our training services and practices are continually monitored, areas of improvement are addressed, and a culture of continuous improvement is promoted.

The Irish Medtech Skillnet will use key performance markers to assess our performance over time.

The Irish Medtech Skillnet will use the information and feedback collected from all the various stakeholders to identify where improvements are needed and take steps to implement improvement

plans. This will support the experience of the learners, tutors and staff and to deliver an optimum training experience and support service.

The Irish Medtech Skillnet's Quality Assurance System will follow the QA Guidelines set out by QQI. Additionally, the IMS is also subject to independent external audit and evaluations conducted by Skillnet Ireland.

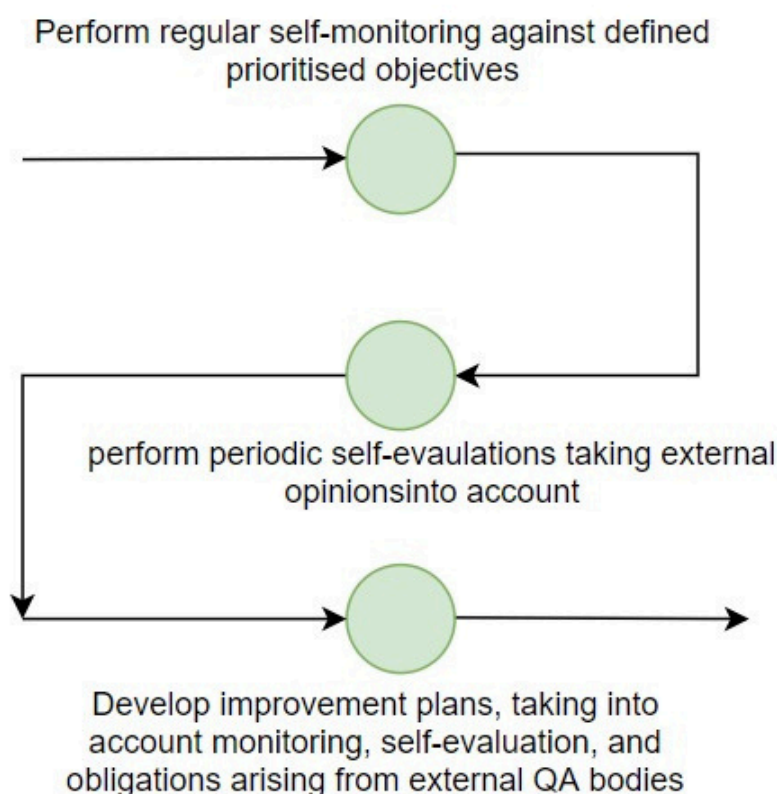


Figure 11.3: self-evaluation, monitoring, and review process diagram

11.31 Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that there is ongoing review, self-evaluation and reporting of programmes and training services, and related activities with a view to continuous improvement of training services, including inputs from all key stakeholders.

11.3.2 Procedure Objectives

- **Establish clear quality objectives** and ensure that these are clearly defined, circulated and understood by all stakeholders.
- **Implement, at regular intervals, an internal evaluation system** with the input of learners and tutors and monitor the quality of the training provision by IMS and to measure the feedback and performance against the established standards.
- **Ensure action on findings** within definitive time periods and review implementation.
- Document policies and procedures to demonstrate quality assurance

Self-monitoring process flow

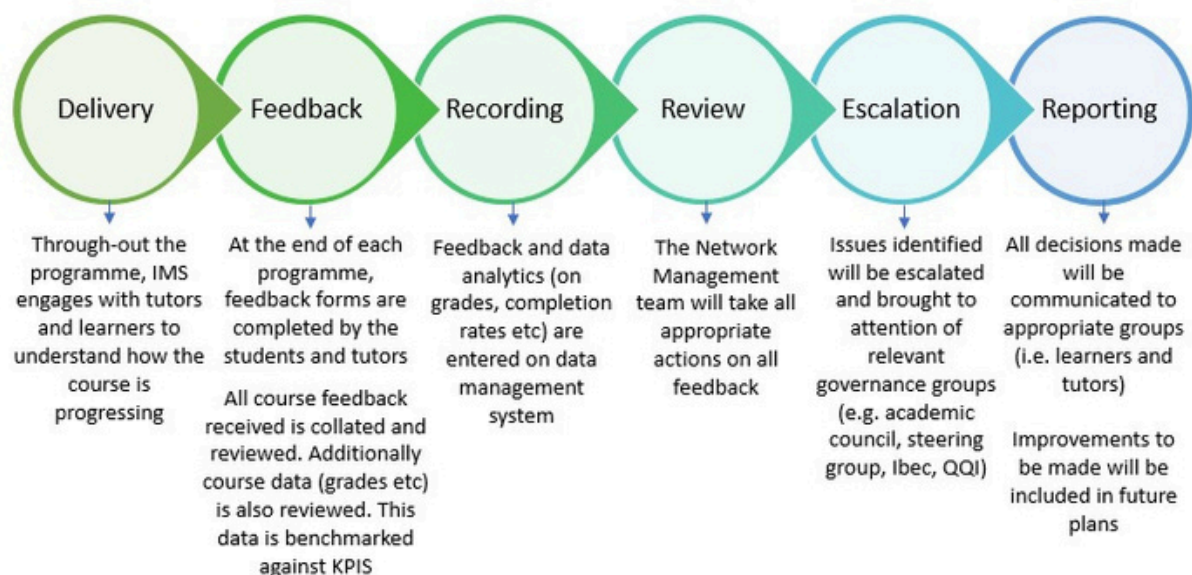


Figure 11.3.2 process flow for self-monitoring

Procedure implementation

Who's involved in this procedure?

- The IMS Network Team

Internal self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and reviews

IMS's quality assurance system is fundamentally constructed and upheld by internal self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and reviews.

Establish clear quality objectives

IMS determines quality objectives which IMS's performance is measured against, to ensure the delivery of quality education. Quality objectives include and arise from quality assurance checkpoints such as internal verification reports, external authenticator reports, the Skillnet Ireland Annual Compliance report, and reports from QQI. IMS discusses the outcomes of these reports with the Steering Committee and Academic Council as required, and continuous improvement in quality is maintained.

Internal self-monitoring

IMS ensure that internal self-monitoring is undertaken and reviewed across all programmes and services. By conducting self-monitoring activities, areas of improvement are identified, and the necessary steps are taken to implement these improvements. Self-monitoring activities occur through quality metrics including; learner and tutor feedback, attendance records, marks and grades of learners,

programmes and services KPI's, self-assessments and reviews, QQI monitoring reports, and continuous improvement plans.

Self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement

IMS is committed to creating a culture that focuses on the learner experience. Through self-evaluation, IMS reviews the efficacy of our QMS and identify areas for improvement. The IMS engages with stakeholders to ensure that the self-evaluation process is on-going, via self-evaluation reports, self-evaluation audit schedule, improvement action plans, learner, tutor and employer feedback and steering committee meeting minutes.

Provider-owned quality assurance engages with external quality assurance

The QQI guidelines are central to the IMS developing and delivering a quality assurance system that assures quality in the delivery of education and training. IMS develops, manages and implements its quality assurance system in line with the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. Additionally, IMS has used the QQI gap analysis to support the development and implementation of our quality assurance system.

Procedure monitoring

Key monitoring activities relating to this procedure are described in the following table which also shows the person/group responsible for the monitoring activity and the resources that will assist the monitoring activity.

Activity	Owner Responsibility	Approver	Monitoring Evidence
Review Internal self-monitoring processes and quality objectives and internal and external quality reports	Network Management Team	Network Manager	Document findings, measure objectives against reports, action any required
Review internal self-monitoring processes	Network Management team.	Network Manager	Document findings, continuous improvement plans
Review self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement processes	Network Management team.	Network Manager	Continuous Improvement plans
Review processes for engagement with external quality assurance	Network Management team.	Network Manager	Continuous Improvement plans

The background of the page features a blue graduation cap (mortarboard) with a tassel, resting on a stack of several blue books. A dotted green line curves across the upper part of the image.

Appendices:

- A. Irish Medtech Skillnet Tutor Handbook**
- B. Irish Medtech Skillnet Learner Handbook**
- C. Terms of Reference – Steering Committee**
- D. Terms of Reference – Academic Council**
- E. Irish Medtech Skillnet Org Chart**

Quality Assurance Manual

Appendix A TUTOR HANDBOOK

Document Reference:
IMS-THB-Tutor Handbook
Updated: 13/03/2025

Tutor Handbook

Irish Medtech Skillnet

Date: March 2025

Document Reference: IMS_Quality Assurance Manual_0325

Revision History

- V2. Updated Document

Purpose of this document

This purpose of this document is to provide information about IMS to Tutors. It describes the context of the organisation within the Skillnet Ireland family, our facility, the programmes we offer, our Quality Assurance system, the role of the Tutor, and supports available to our tutoring staff inter alia.

Contents

1	Introduction	80
	1.1 Welcome	
	1.2 Commitment to Quality	
	1.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	
	1.4 IMS Staff	
	1.5 Training Facility	
	1.6 Onsite training	
	1.7 Availability of support	
2	Teaching and Learning at IMS	84
	2.1 Introduction	
	2.2 Strategy and Governance	
	2.3 National Standards	
	2.4 New programme development at IMS	
3	The IMS Training Team.....	89
	3.1 Management and administration.	
	3.2 Tutors	
	3.3 Academic Council	
	3.4 Steering Committee	
	3.5 Verifiers and Authenticators	
4	Role of the Tutor	94
	4.1 Programme delivery	
	4.2 Programme assessment	
	4.2.1 .Grade re-checks	
	4.2.2. Resits	
	4.2.3 Reviews	
	4.3 Academic Invigilation	
	4.4 Academic Misconduct including Plagiarism	
	4.5 Quality Assurance at IMS	
	4.5.1 Documented policies and procedures	
	4.6 Learner Feedback forms	
	4.7 Tutor Feedback forms	
	5.8 Internal verification procedures	
	5.5 External authentication procedures	
	5.6 Results approval procedures .	
	5.7 Complaints	
	5.8 Appeals procedures	
	4.9 Reasonable Accommodation	
	4.10 Compassionate Consideration	
	4.11 Access Transfer and Progression	
5	Responsibilities of the Tutor.....	102

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome.

Welcome to Irish Medtech Skillnet (IMS). This Tutor Handbook will provide you with essential information about IMS as an organisation, the programmes and assessments and much more besides. We strongly encourage you to contact any staff member if you have any questions or concerns.

1.2 Commitment to Quality

Quality Statement.

Irish Medtech Skillnet is committed to the provision of quality-assured training to enhance the competence and career opportunities of learners in the Medical Technology (Medtech) sector. Our staff recruitment, selection, and monitoring systems are designed to ensure consistently high standards of training provision. Our internal systems and independent oversight by industry professionals will ensure continuing alignment of our programmes with industry need and best practice.

1.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The tutor information held by IMS is governed by GDPR legislation and full details of the nature of the information that we store, the reason for storing it, the legal basis for storing it, and the duration for which it is held, is all published in the [Privacy Statement](#) section of the IMS website. If you have any questions about data protection please contact any member of the IMS Network Management Team.

1.4 IMS Staff

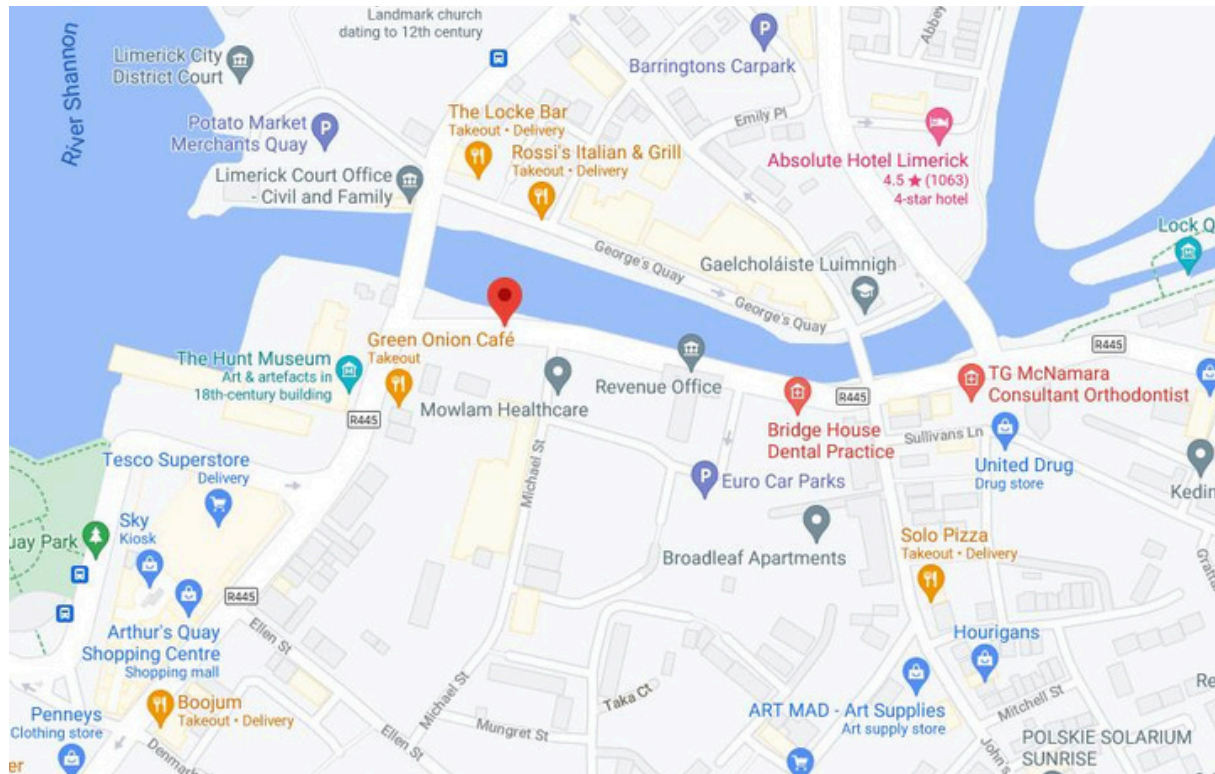
IMS is a small community comprising of a Network Management Team headed by Network Manager, Ann O'Connell, Head of Funded Projects for Engineering and Medtech, Ibec, and a team of experienced tutors and programme developers. The management team is supported by Skillnet Ireland, Ibec, a Steering Committee and an Academic Council for purposes of funding, industry support, and governance.

The team structure and current team members can be seen on our organisation chart.

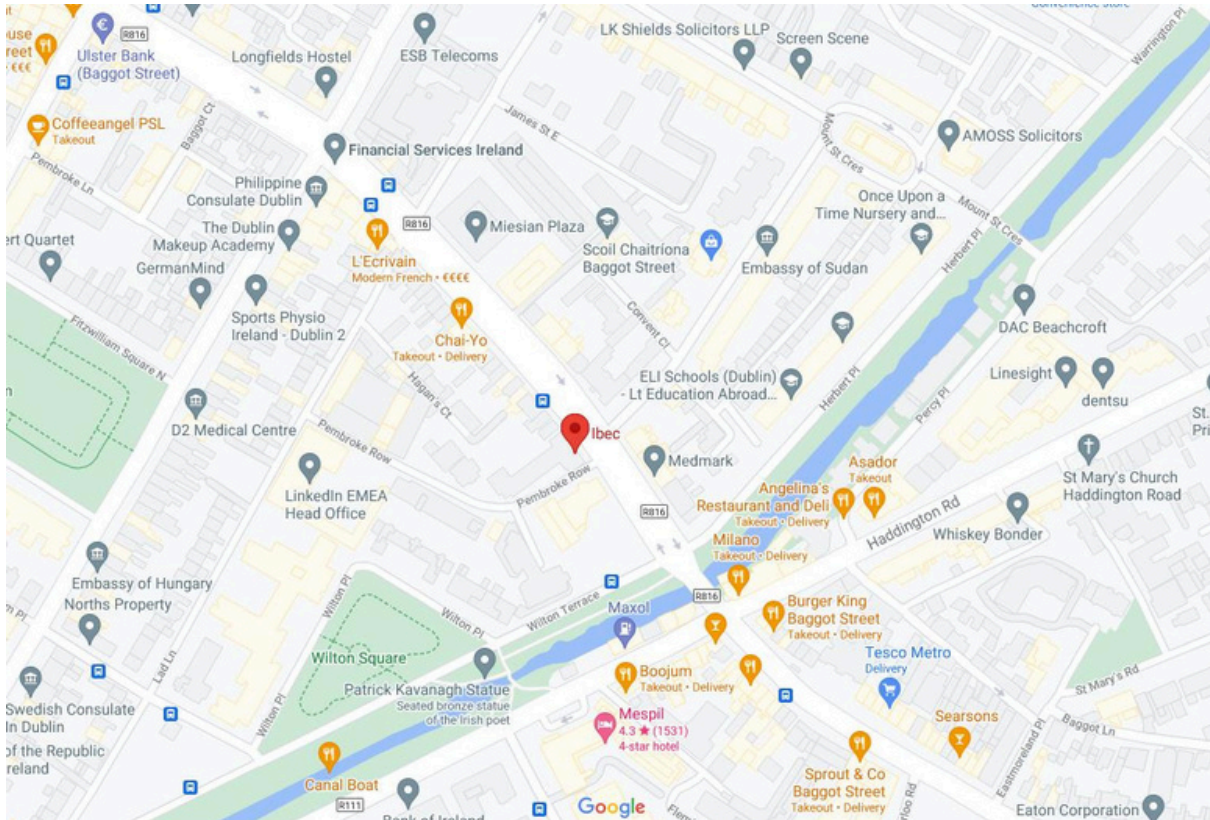
1.5 Training Facility

Location

Our administrative offices are located at: Gardner House, Bank Place, Charlotte Quay. Limerick.



Aside from the administrative offices, we also have limited training facilities at this location. In addition there are more substantial training facilities situated at the Ibec Head Office at Confederation House, Baggot Street Lower, Dublin. Typically, our training takes place on-site in organisations or in hotel conference facilities.



1.6 Onsite training

On occasion, clients request that training be provided onsite at their premises, and IMS is happy to accommodate such requests subject to the provision of suitable conditions in which to do so. IMS has a documented Training Facility Specification in place to ensure that the training environment is fit for purpose. The specification is available through the Network Management Team.

1.7 Availability of support

The IMS Management Team are willing and available to support you whenever you require. Please bring any concerns that you may have to our attention and we will work with you to resolve them.

2. Teaching and Learning at IMS

2.1 Introduction

IMS has a unique position as a dedicated provider of programmes of education to those working in the Medical Technology (Medtech) sector in Ireland. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. We take this responsibility very seriously and we have a comprehensive teaching and learning strategy in place to ensure that the training that we provide is of the highest quality and meets the needs of industry in a manner which enables learners to secure and retain employment in the sector.

Our membership includes more than 200 companies involved in the Medtech sector in Ireland.

2.2 Strategy and Governance

Our strategy begins with ascertaining the needs of industry and using that knowledge to develop programmes to meet those needs. We achieve this in a number of ways:

IMS has a governance structure in place for oversight of all activities and decision making in respect of programmes of education and training, comprising:

The Steering Committee has responsibility for guidance and corporate direction of the IMS. The Steering Committee represents the needs of industry and ensures the programmes are aligned to meet these needs.

The Academic Council has independent responsibility for academic governance and implementation and monitoring of the Quality Assurance System. It also has responsibility for the separation of academic and corporate decision making, and the separation of programme approval from programme development.

Network contracting organisation – Ibec is the IMS contracting organization. A Contracting Organisation has a remit to address business needs at an industry or regional level, and is typically a sectoral association, regional association, industry body or professional body.

We have recruited a very strong **team of highly experienced tutors** who are also practitioners within the industry. These professionals know, and would be very well known by, many of the leading Medtech companies in Ireland and can provide excellent industry insights and guidance to learners.

Development Advisor- Appointed by Skillnet Ireland, they ensure that the Training Network Programme Guidelines are complied with. The Guidelines are imperative for continued public funding.

External QA Monitoring- External Authenticators, external Evaluators, and Subject Matter experts are involved in the quality assurance system.

A **Skillnet Network Team** that includes the Network Manager and Network Support Staff - the Unit responsible for the day-to-day operations and training activities of the IMS.

Results Approval Panel – a unit with overall responsibility for approving results before they're submitted to QQI for certification.

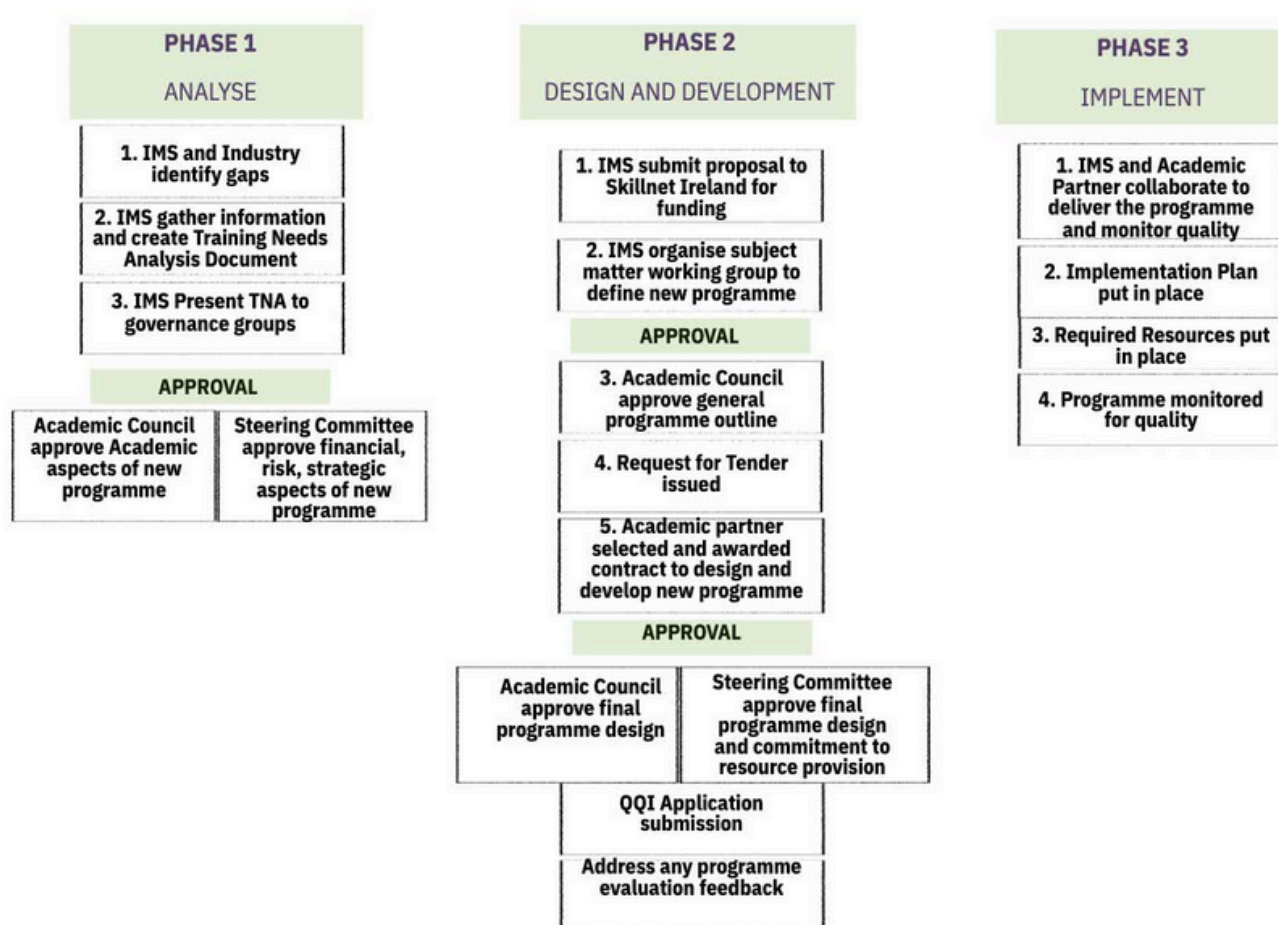
2.3 National Standards

QQI is the sole national accreditation body in Ireland for programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. Awards are based on defined learning outcomes the assessment of which is conducted according to documented assessment techniques and weightings.

These programme characteristics are contained in Award Specifications which are the outcome of a Standards Development process which QQI conducts for all new awards. IMS in common with all training providers who are delivering QQI accredited programmes, are required to validate their programmes with QQI to ensure compliance with the Award Specifications.

Programme Development

New programme development at IMS occurs in three phases (See graphic below) Analysis Design, Design and Development and Implementation.



In the **Analysis phase**, training need is discussed with relevant stakeholders including member organisations (industry), Governance Groups (the Academic Council, the Steering Committee), potential tutors, Ibec *inter alia*. Programme proposals will be assessed for alignment with organisational objectives, national accreditation, and industry need. The outcome is a documented Training Needs Analysis (TNA). The TNA is presented to governance groups for approval; the Academic Council approves the academic aspects of the new programme; the Steering Committee approve financial, risk and strategic aspects of the new programme design and development. When approval is achieved by both governance group, the programme proceeds to the next step of development.

In the **Design & Development Phase**, the IMS submit a proposal for funding to Skillnet Ireland for the new programme design and development. When Skillnet Ireland award funding, IMS commence the design of the programme. The overall programme design is documented including draft learning outcomes and assessments, delivery methodologies (instructor led/, scheduling, ATP etc. This draft is developed in conjunction with subject matter experts The outcome is a draft programme design for consideration by the Academic Council. When approval is received by the Academic Council, the programme outline is included as part of the Request for Tenders.

Also included in the Request for Tenders is a Form of Tender which seeks the information from Tenderers regarding the quality of resources (i.e personnel proposed such as trainers to deliver, academic experts to develop the programme, programme coordinators to coordinate the programme) to design and deliver the services, and method statement (i.e. the providers approach to designing, developing and delivering the programme). IMS issue a Request for Tenders on eTenders, the Irish Government Public Procurement e-platform. Once Tenders are received, IMS create an evaluation team which is comprised of Irish Medtech Skillnet Representatives, a representative from industry such as a subject matter expert, and a member of the Academic Council. The Evaluation Team follow a strict evaluation process based on the principles of public procurement.

When the evaluation process is completed, a Tenderer is selected as the successful Academic Partner and is awarded the Contract to design and develop the new programme. The Academic Partner and IMS agree a Terms of Reference and procedure for how the programme will be developed. The Academic Partner will be responsible for leading the development aspects as an academic expert on the following aspects of the programme development:

- 1.Award Level (if any)
- 2.Delivery Methodology (blended, virtual, traditional classroom)
- 3.Learning outcomes
- 4.Module development
- 5.Assessment methodology
- 6.Identify any resources
- 7.Design programme structure and teaching methodology
- 8.Project management and execution
- 9.Programme validation

Before the programme is goes for final validation with the academic partner, the final programme design will be brought before the Academic Council for approval.

The Steering Committee also approve the final commitment to resource provision for the programme. For QQI programmes, the **Approval Phase** involves completing the QQI programme validation application process is required to be completed (in accordance with QQI's 2016 'Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training'. This involves completing the required application form which demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Award Specification, paying the required application fee and addressing any feedback that QQI provide.

The Implementation **Phase** involves putting the necessary resources in place: appointing programme coordinator with the academic partner to deliver the programme and monitor quality, ensuring adequate funding, planning for any required equipment or consumables etc. The outcome is a Resource Plan. It also involves marketing the programme, recruiting learners, delivering training, assessing feedback, internal verification, external authentication, results submission to QQI, and monitoring and evaluation.

3. The IMS Training Team

IMS has a significant training team comprising management staff, programme development and delivery staff, QA personnel, and governance groups.

3.1 Management and Administration.

The Network Manager for IMS is Ann O'Connell, who is supported in her role by Network Management Team Leaders, Mary Kane and Yvonne O'Byrne.

3.2 Tutors

IMS engage contract tutors. All our tutors have been with us for many years and are highly experienced educators and practitioners. We currently have three tutors delivering accredited training and a further panel of tutors who deliver unaccredited training.

Tutor Supports

Our aim is to ensure that all tutors are supported to the best of the ability of IMS. There are several resources available to tutors including:

- Network Manager: Ann O'Connell is the Network Manager and is available to answer any questions you may have.
- Peer Tutors: Our team of tutors is highly qualified with a wealth of industry and teaching experience, and they will be pleased to assist you in any way that they can.
- Network Management Team: Mary Kane and her team will be able to assist you with any queries you may have.
- Website: The IMS website (www.irishmedtechskillnet.ie) is a useful resource for information about our programmes.
- CPD: IMS will provide briefings, product training and other learning events to tutors to ensure continuing best practice, and tutors are encouraged to discuss any CPD requirements you may have.
- Grievance: If for any reason, you wish to report a concern or grievance, please contact the Network Manager directly.

3.3 Academic Council

The Academic Council has independent responsibility for academic governance and implementation and monitoring of the Quality Assurance System. It also has responsibility for the separation of academic and corporate decision making, and the separation of programme approval from programme development.

3.4 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee has responsibility for guidance and corporate direction of the IMS. The Steering Committee represents the needs of industry and ensures the programmes are aligned to meet these needs.

3.5 Verifiers and Authenticators

Internal verification is performed by our administration staff, and our external authentication by members of a panel of authenticators.

4. ROLE OF THE TUTOR

The primary role of the tutor is to provide instruction in support of the programmes offered by IMS. There are several responsibilities of this role and these are defined in the Tutor Terms of Reference (available from the Training Network Team). A copy of this document is provided during induction.

A list of role responsibilities drawn from the Terms of Reference are provided in [Appendix B](#).

On occasion, tutors may be involved in the revision of programmes and/or the development of new ones.

4.1 Programme Delivery

IMS programmes are instructor-led in our training facilities or at hired locations. They may also be delivered on-site at a customer location.

For programmes delivered at hired locations or on customer sites there is a Training Facility Specification, to ensure that the equipment, consumables etc. are in place.

4.2 Programme Assessment

The nature of assessment is programme-specific, but may include written assignments, practical work, online assessment etc.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to complete the assessment as per the instructions given by the tutor. On our certified programmes it involves a written exam plus an assignment which must be completed in the candidate's own time, after the programme has finished.

The tutor will advise when the candidate needs to submit their assignment/portfolio of work, so that marking can be completed in sufficient time to be submitted to QQI for certification. Please let the Network Management Team know if a candidate may not submit on time. Arrangements can then be made to submit this work on a subsequent assessment date, if necessary.

Grade re-checks

A learner can request a re-check if they believe that there is an arithmetical or clerical errors, that the marks awarded to the learner are incorrect and that all the marks to which the student is entitled have not been included in the final total.

A request for a re-check is free to the learner.

The request for a re-check needs to be submitted in writing within 10 days of receiving results to the IMS team. The IMS Network Manager and (or relevant independent delegate) will undertake the re-check. The outcome of the re-check will be issued to the learner in writing.

Resits

If a learner is unsuccessful in passing an assessment, where possible, IMS will provide an opportunity for the learner to resit the assessment at a mutually appropriate time, to improve their result.

Reviews

- A review is re-consideration of the assessment decision, either by the candidate or other competent person(s).
- The review request needs to be submitted in writing to the IMS team.
- The learner needs to clearly state his/her reasons for requesting a review.
- The review should be submitted by the learner within 10 days of receiving their results.
- The Academic review is conducted by the standing committee of the Academic Council.
- The learner will be notified of the standing committee Academic Councils findings in writing by the IMS Network Manager. The decision of the Academic Council is final.

4.3 Assessment Invigilation

When tutors are invigilating, they are required to ensure:

- For classroom-based assessments, an attendance form is signed by all candidates.
- For assessments completed outside the classroom, a Confirmation of Authorship is signed by each candidate
- The classroom has the necessary physical resources and assessment materials in place prior to the commencement of the assessment
- They and the candidates are in place in a timely fashion to ensure punctual commencement of the assessment.
- They advise the Network Management Team of any potential conflict of interest in their role as invigilator
- They provide clear instructions to the candidates regarding the conduct of the assessment
- Completion of the End of Training report to record any information pertinent to security or integrity of the assessment
- They diligently monitor candidates during the assessment and avoid engaging in any activity that might detract from their ability to properly observe the candidates (e.g., use mobile 'phone, browse the internet etc.)
- They do not represent a distraction to the candidates – this might include unnecessary noise (e.g., conversation likely to be overheard, footwear/jewelry likely to generate noise), or actions/activities that are likely to draw attention away from the assessment
- They are present in the assessment environment for the full duration of the assessment – if they need to leave the environment, they must arrange replacement invigilation
- Ensure that all learners behave in a manner that does not distract or impede on the performance of others – learners violating this obligation will be cautioned, reported, or removed from the assessment
- Ensure that in answering any candidate question, that no advantage will be gained by the questioner over other candidates

- Ensure that all candidates remain in the assessment environment for the duration of their assessment – toilet breaks are permitted – a second invigilator should accompany the candidate where possible.

4.4 Academic Misconduct (including plagiarism)

The protection of the integrity of assessment is essential to good training quality assurance. Tutors play a critical role in implementing measures to prevent academic misconduct. This may include plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, or any other form of academic cheating (e.g. impersonation, collusion, illicit use of third-party services *inter alia*.)

In QQI's Green Paper on Assessment of Learners and Learning (P93), they cite Teddi Fishman's (Fishman, 2009) proposed definition of plagiarism as useful. Fishman states that:

"Plagiarism occurs when someone

- 1) Uses words, ideas, or work products*
- 2) Attributable to another identifiable person or source*
- 3) Without attributing the work to the source from which it was obtained*
- 4) In a situation in which there is a legitimate expectation of original authorship*
- 5) In order to obtain some benefit, credit, or gain which need not be monetary" (sic)*

To mitigate the risk of any form of academic misconduct IMS ensures that:

- Candidates are aware of what constitutes academic misconduct
- Robust invigilation procedures are in place
- Tutors exercise good judgement, and
- Technological aids are used where appropriate.

Specific actions to prevent academic misconduct at IMS ensure:

- Induction briefings are given to all learners at which academic integrity and the IMS measures to ensure this, is discussed.
- All learners are provided with a Learner Handbook which discusses academic integrity and the censure for deliberate cheating.
- Tutors are provided with instruction in the use of the anti-plagiarism tools used by IMS (e.g. Urkund)
- Assessment invigilation processes are in place
- Tutors and the Network Manager are advised through their ToR of their responsibility to protect academic integrity

Where academic misconduct by a candidate is suspected, the following applies:

- The candidate may be required to participate in an oral (viva voce) defence of their assessment.
- The Assessor/Tutor will decide whether an infringement has been detected and the level (i.e. minor or material). For minor infringements, the Assessor/Tutor may caution the candidate or require them to resubmit a complete or partial assessment, alternatively, they may apply a penalty mark appropriate to the perceived level of infringement. In the case of material infringement, they will refer the matter to the Network Manager for judgement.

The Network Manager may decide to allow a reassessment, endorse the proposed penalty mark, or remove the learner from the programme without recourse, and without certification for the programme. The Assessor/Tutor (or Network Manager) will provide the candidate with a written description of the infringement detected and the censure to be applied.

If the candidate wishes to appeal the decision of the Network Manager, the Academic Council will hear the appeal and make a judgement. The decision of the Academic Council is final.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AT IMS

IMS has a long and respected history of excellence in training provision. We have developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures (and supporting templates), that guide our efforts to reflect best current practice at all times. Elements of this system include:

4.5 Documented policies and procedures

The Quality Assurance Manual which documents all IMS policies and procedures is available for consultation at all times.

4.6 Learner Feedback forms

Learners are issued with feedback forms at the end of the programme. It is the tutor's responsibility to issue the forms (or form links), ensure they are completed, and provide the responses to the office in a timely manner. The blank forms are available electronically and/or through the front office.

4.7 Tutor Feedback forms

Tutors are issued with feedback forms (referred to as the "End of Training Report") when all delivery and assessment has concluded. It is the tutor's responsibility to complete the form and return it to the office in a timely manner. The blank forms are available electronically and/or through the front office.

4.8 Internal verification procedures

Internal verification refers to the checking of assessment materials and marking to ensure completeness, accuracy, and alignment with marking schemes. This is a collaborative process between the tutor and the internal verifier at IMS. Please contact the Internal Verifier for further details.

4.9 External authentication procedures

External authentication refers to the process of ensuring that assessments have been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the award and national standards as part of the Results Approval process. It also acts as a second check on the Internal Verification process. External Authentication as the name suggests is performed by an independent authenticator with national experience. The tutor/assessor is required to respond to authenticator queries.

4.10 Results approval procedures

The Results Approval Panel (RAP) consists of a sub-group which is chaired by an independent member from the Academic Council and the RAP report to the Academic Council on its findings.

The RAP, with delegated authority from the Academic Council, has responsibility to deal with escalated academic appeals, complaints, RPL.

4.11 Complaints and Complaints Resolution Process

The QQI Assessments and Standards 2013 document defines a complaint as “an expression of a concern that a particular assessment procedure is unfair or inconsistent or not fit for purpose”, or “the expression of a specific concern about the provision of a course/module, or a programme of study, or a related academic service”. A complaint may not specifically relate to an assessment but may relate to any aspect of our programme and services and /or supports.

- A complaint can be made to the Tutor, IMS Network Manager or IMS team. A complaint can be made orally or in writing.
- All efforts will be made by the Tutor, IMS Network Manager and IMS team to resolve the complaint.
- If the complaint is not resolved orally at this stage, it will be necessary for a formal written complaint to be made. A formal complaint needs to be made in writing.
- Complaint forms can be requested from the IMS office.
- Receipt of a formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the IMS Network Manager within 10 days of receiving the complaint.
- A written response will be furnished to the complainant within 10 days of confirming receipt of the complaint. If the investigation of the complaint takes longer than 10 days, the IMS team will let the complainant know of the reason for the delay in writing.
- To establish the facts of the complaint, the IMS Network Manager will hold an interview with the person who made the complaint and anyone who is pertinent to the investigation. A recording of these meetings will be made.
- A written report will then be sent to the complainant regarding the investigation and a proposed solution will be provided to the complainant.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the report findings, they are entitled to appeal the outcome of the report findings.
- An appeal needs to be submitted in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal, within 5 working days from the receipt of the decision from the IMS Network Manager.
- The network manager will bring the complaint to the next meeting of the Academic Council for review.
- The decision of the Standing Committee of the Academic Council is final unless the issue is governed by specific national legislation. If this is the case a suitably qualified independent arbiter will review the complaint and come to a final decision.

4.12 Appeals and Appeals Resolution Process

A learner can use the IMS appeal procedure if they wish to change an assessment decision.

The QQI Assessments and Standards 2013 document states that an appeal is “a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on student progression, assessments and awards” If a learner is unhappy with the result of an exam or project portfolio, they may request an appeal. An appeal can be made to the Tutor, IMS Network Manager or IMS team. An appeal can be made orally or in writing. If the appeal is not resolved orally, it will be necessary for a formal written appeal to be made. A formal appeal needs to be made in writing. Appeals forms can be requested from the IMS office. A formal appeal should be made in writing by the learner to the IMS Network Manager within a 14 day period of receiving their results.

Only approved results can be formally appealed by the learner. A written response will be furnished to the learner within 10 days of confirming receipt of the appeal. If the appeal takes longer than 10 days, the IMS team will let the learner know the reason for the delay in writing.

To establish all the details of the appeal the IMS Network Manager will conduct an interview with the learner who made the appeal. A written response will be sent to the learner advising of the outcome. Possible outcomes include:

- The original results received by the learner will be upheld.
- The original results received by the learner will be overturned.

If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome of the written response findings, they are entitled to appeal the outcome of the findings.

- An appeal needs to be submitted in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal, within 5 working days from the receipt of the decision from the IMS Network Manager.
- The appeal will be brought by the IMS Network Manager to the next sitting of the standing committee of the academic council.
- The learner will be notified of the standing committee Academic Councils findings in writing by IMS network manager.
- The decision of the Standing Committee of the Academic Council is final.
- All other relevant parties will be advised of the decision of the appeal by the standing Committee of Academic Council.
- No fee is charged for a student to make an appeal.

4.13 Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation refers to the provision of additional supports, facilities, resources or amendments to assessment tasks and activities, to enable a learner with a disability or specific learning need have a comparable opportunity to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes as any other learner.

In accordance with the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004, IMS will provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of a learner who has a disability, or any other learners covered by equality legislation. QQI advise that *“Reasonable accommodations are concerned with adapting the assessment approach, not with diluting the standard of learning to be attained, interfering with or amending the intended learning outcomes. Assessments which involve reasonable accommodations should be consistent with those which do not”*.

Any learner with a disability which has the potential to impact their learning or assessment experience is requested to advise the IMS Network Management Team and recommend the nature of any support that they may require. Requests for Reasonable Accommodation must be accompanied by documentary evidence from a medical or relevant professional.

Every effort will be made by the trainer to allow the learner to demonstrate the required level of knowledge, skill, and competence without significantly impacting on the standard or the validity of the assessment. IMS can only provide these supports within the constraints of our ability to do so.

Examples of potential reasonable accommodations include: extended assessment time, a scribe, audio visual recording, computer with assistive technologies (e.g. large text, spoken text), dyslexia support (e.g. spelling waiver).

In circumstances where specific guidance is required, IMS will consult with organisations such as AHEAD who work to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities.

4.14 Compassionate Consideration

IMS will allow learners to apply for compassionate consideration in relation to their assessment, for example, if they cannot complete a specific assessment due to extenuating circumstances.

IMS will arrange to allow the learner to complete the assessment at another time. To assist the learner to apply for compassionate consideration please contact the Training Management Team. Learners seeking compassionate consideration may be required to provide appropriate evidence, e.g. a note from a GP.

4.15 Access Transfer and Progression

Access, transfer, and progression refers to the conditions under which a learner may:

- enter our programmes
- transfer to other programmes offered by IMS (or any other training provider), or
- progress to a higher-level programme.

Access

To access programmes provided by IMS candidates will be expected to meet the following criteria:

- Candidates must be 18 years or older at the commencement of the programme.
- Have achieved a minimum of a Level 4 qualification (or equivalent).
- In the absence of a minimum of a Pass Grade at Ordinary Level in Leaving Certificate English, the candidate must provide evidence of competence in written and spoken English (e.g. B2+ CEFR).

Learners who may not be able to demonstrate compliance with the entry criteria may request access by means of Recognition of Prior Learning (see section 5.12 below).

Transfer

Transfer normally means transfer from a major award programme at one level, to another major award programme at the same level. IMS does not currently offer any major awards, so there are no internal transfer options. However, all of our programmes are components of major awards which may be offered by other providers.

IMS will assist you to identify programmes with other providers offering a major award to which your credit is applicable. Please contact the Network Management Team for advice.

Progression

Progression normally means progression from an award programme at one level, to another award programme at a higher level. IMS currently only offers programmes at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, so there is no opportunity to progress to higher level programmes with IMS. However, all of our programmes are component of major awards which may be offered by other providers. Depending on the programme in question, there may be an opportunity to progress to a higher level award.

IMS will assist you to identify programmes with other providers offering applicable programmes to which you may progress. Please contact the Network Management Team for advice.

4.16 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning refers to the possibility of gaining **entry** to a programme in circumstances where compliance with the entry requirements may not be evidenced in the usual way. This may arise for example, in the case of a non-Irish citizen who may not have taken the Junior or Leaving Certificate examinations.

It may also refer to the possibility of gaining **advanced entry** to a programme whereby modules or assessments may be exempted.

There is also the possibility of obtaining a **full award** without having to undertake the modules or the assessments. Note: IMS does not offer RPL for full awards. Should such a request be made by a learner, IMS will have to liaise directly with QQI for guidance.

All of the above are predicated on the learner's ability to furnish a verifiable portfolio of evidence to IMS which will clearly demonstrate that the learner meets the requirements for entry, advanced entry or exemption.

The RPL process for applicants with prior formal, non-formal, or experiential learning is as follows:

RPL for Access.

- Recognition of Prior Learning for access to a programme leading to an award, is a process which may be initiated when a learner cannot provide evidence that they meet programme access requirements. Access requirements may, for example, state a prior level of knowledge in a specific discipline such as English Language proficiency.

IMS programmes require a minimum of Level 4 standard in numeracy and literacy. English language competence and numeracy proficiency may be evidenced by Junior or Leaving Certificate results, or in the case of English Language proficiency, evidence of the achievement of the CEFR B2+ standard will also be accepted. If there is reason to suspect that these minimum criteria are not met or can't be evidenced by the conventional means above, the learner may request that their own evidence be considered. Such evidence may be a letter of assurance from their employer that their level of numeracy and literacy are sufficient for successful participation in the programme. The learner may discuss this with the relevant programme tutor who will make a judgement. If the learner does not accept the judgement, the learner may appeal to the Network Manager and/or the Academic Council. Their decision is final.

RPL for Credit or Exemption

- A student must advise IMS in writing of their intention to seek Recognition of Prior Learning. This may be done by e-mailing IMS directly at IrishMedtechSkillnet@ibec.ie.

The applicant should identify the programme, and the nature of the application (credit or exemption).

Evidence of prior learning is provided by the applicant during the application process. The Applicant must authorise IMS to verify the authenticity of the evidence submitted. Evidence is likely to take

the form of a Portfolio which may include certificates, awards, testimonials, employer references inter alia.

The evidence is evaluated by IMS (typically by the Network Manager in consultation with the programme tutor). Evaluation will be based on a comparison of learning outcomes for the areas where recognition is sought, and the description of prior learning offered by the learner. IMS may verify the authenticity of any associated documentation.

A recommendation will be made with respect to the applicant's RPL request.
Possible outcomes include: Credit Granted/Denied, Exemption Granted/Denied.
Unsuccessful applications for RPL exemptions can be formally appealed.

RPL Appeals Should a learner wish to appeal an RPL decision, they should formally request this in writing to irishMedtechSkillnet@ibec.ie. Their portfolio of evidence will be submitted to the IMS Academic Council for adjudication. The decision of the Academic Council will be final and will be advised to the learner in writing. Learners may request an oral hearing, but this must be indicated before the Academic Council convenes to consider the appeal.
Please contact any member of the Network Management Team for full details of the Recognition of Prior Learning process.

4.17 Information to learners

All learners are provided with a learner handbook describing IMS, our programmes, learner supports and their responsibilities as learners. Tutors should be familiar with the contents of this document which is available through the front office.

APPENDIX A. LIST OF IMS PROGRAMMES ACCREDITED WITH QQI

Course Title	Accredited QQI Module Title	NF QLe vCode	QQI vCode	Award Class
Continuous Improving in Manufacturing	Continuous Improving in Manufacturing	5	5N1915	Component / Minor
Quality and Good Manufacturing Practice	Quality and Good Manufacturing Practice	5	5N1959	Component / Minor

5. TUTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The following list of activities reflects the expectation that IMS has for staff working as tutors with us.

The Tutor will:

1. Participate in induction briefings to learners to make them aware of their environment (facilities, QA, assessment, programme information etc.)
2. Provide theoretical and practical instruction to learners in a manner which best enables them to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
3. Foster good working relationships with learners in a spirit of mutual respect.
4. Conduct assessments in line with the programme validation application.
5. Conduct assessments in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner.
6. Take all necessary steps to maintain the integrity of the assessment process (e.g. assessment invigilation, authenticity of work submitted, protection of assessment materials etc.)
7. Record and check all assessment results for accuracy and make these available to the Network Manager and learners in a timely manner.
8. Return any learner assessment artefacts/scripts for safekeeping by the IMS Administrator.
9. Assist the Results Approval Process as directed by the Network Manager.
10. Attend to the general wellbeing of the learner within the context of the programme.
11. Ensure that learners receive comprehensive, timely, and accurate information relating to the class-based/laboratory activities.
12. Provide formative and summative assessment feedback to learners.
13. Ensure that all feedback forms (tutor and learner) are completed in a timely manner.
14. Ensure that learner attendance records are accurately maintained.
15. Facilitate requests for assistance by learners out of classroom hours where possible (e.g. responding to e-mail queries, one-to-one discussions at break times etc.)
16. Where possible, assist learners to expand their industry links with a view to fostering a Community of Practice.
17. Be the first point of contact for any complaints or concerns that a learner may have.
18. Liaise with the Network Manager regarding the programme or any concerns that may arise.
19. Alert the Network Manager to any issues with facilities, equipment, or consumables.
20. Alert the Network Manager in a timely manner to any possible threat of non-completion of the programme for any reason.
21. 1.21. Participate in the design, development, and implementation of new programme proposals in collaboration with the Network Manager.
22. Engage with the peer review process during the programme development lifecycle.
23. Collaborate with the Network Manager in the development and delivery of blended learning as required.
24. Adhere to operational and policy guidelines in relation to the online learning platform.
25. Keep courseware under constant review and update courseware and references in a timely manner.
26. Respect and acknowledge the Intellectual Property Rights of the Rights holder.
27. Take responsibility for own Continuous Professional Development to ensure a high level of personal and professional performance in the role (including fostering and maintaining links with industry).

Ann O'Connell - Network Manager

Tel: 01- 6051715 /Mobile: + 353 087 4568202

ann.oconnell@ibec.ie

Website: <https://irishmedtechskillnet.ie>

Quality Assurance Manual

Appendix B LEARNER HANDBOOK

Document Reference:
IMS-LHB-Learner Handbook
Updated: 13/03/2025

Contents

Introduction	106
1.1 Welcome.	
1.2 Commitment to Quality	
1.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	
1.4 IMS Staff	
2. Training Facilities	107
2.1 Location & facilities	
2.2 Onsite training	
2.3 Availability of support	
3. Teaching and Learning at IMS	110
3.1 Introduction	
3.2 Strategy and governance	
3.3 National Standards	
3.4 New Programme Development	
4. Certification.....	114
4.1 Submission for Certification	
4.2 Programme Information	

1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Irish Medtech Skillnet (IMS). This Learner Handbook will provide you with essential information about IMS as an organisation, your programmes and assessments and much more besides. We strongly encourage you to contact any staff member if you have any questions or concerns.

1.2 Commitment to Quality

Quality Statement.

Irish Medtech Skillnet is committed to the provision of quality-assured training to enhance the competence and career opportunities of learners in the Medical Technology (Medtech) sector. Our staff recruitment, selection, and monitoring systems are designed to ensure consistently high standards of training provision. Our internal systems oversight by industry professionals will ensure continuing alignment of our programmes with industry need and best practice.

1.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The learner information held by IMS is governed by GDPR legislation and full details of the nature of the information that we store, the reason for storing it, the legal basis for storing it, and the duration for which it is held, is all published in the [Privacy Statement](#) section of the IMS website. If you have any questions about data protection please contact any member of the IMS Network Management Team.

1.4 IMS Staff

IMS is a small community comprising of a Network Management Team headed by Network Manager, Ann O'Connell, and a team of experienced tutors and programme developers.

The management team is supported by Skillnet Ireland, Ibec, a Steering Committee and an Academic Council for purposes of funding, industry support, and governance.

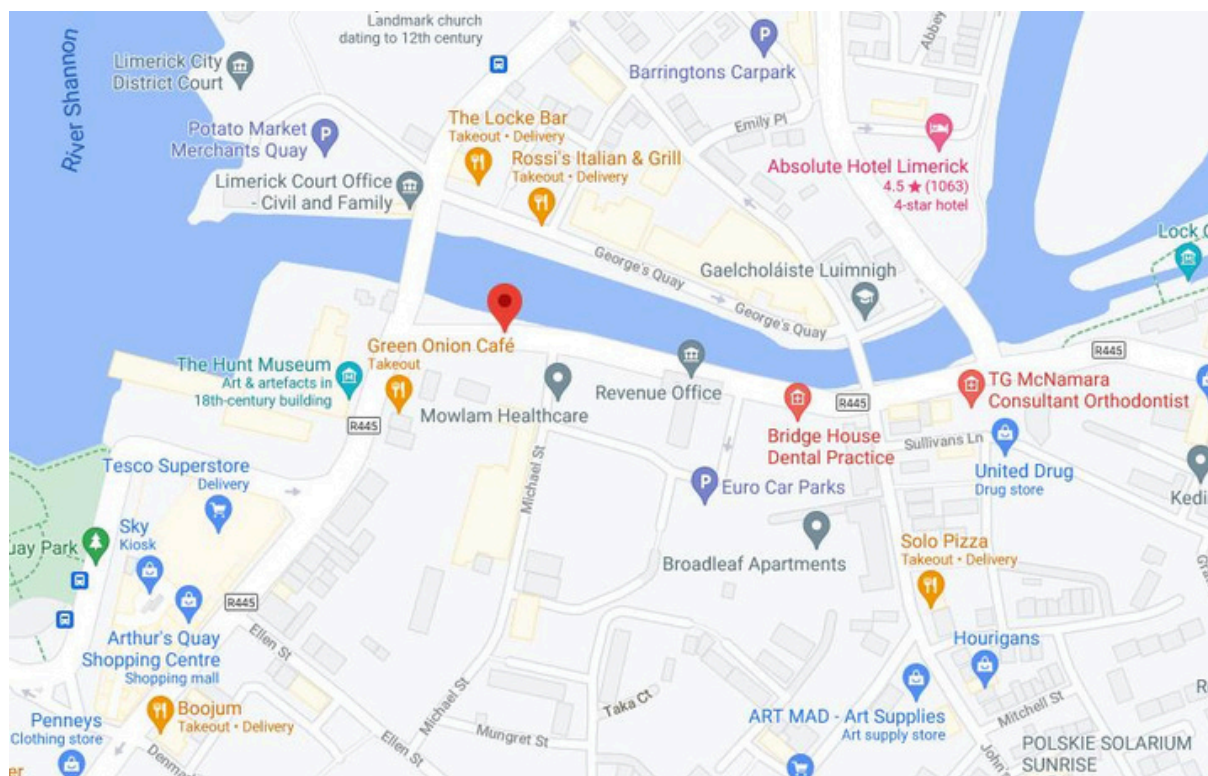
The Network Management Team led by Ann O'Connell includes members Mary Kane, Yvonne O'Byrne, Hazel Hickey, Siobhan Hennessy, Niamh Reynolds and Kathy Farrelly.

Our training delivery team includes: Michael Loftus, Martin Reddington & Siobhan Dillon. This team may be supplemented by additional subject matter experts from time to time.

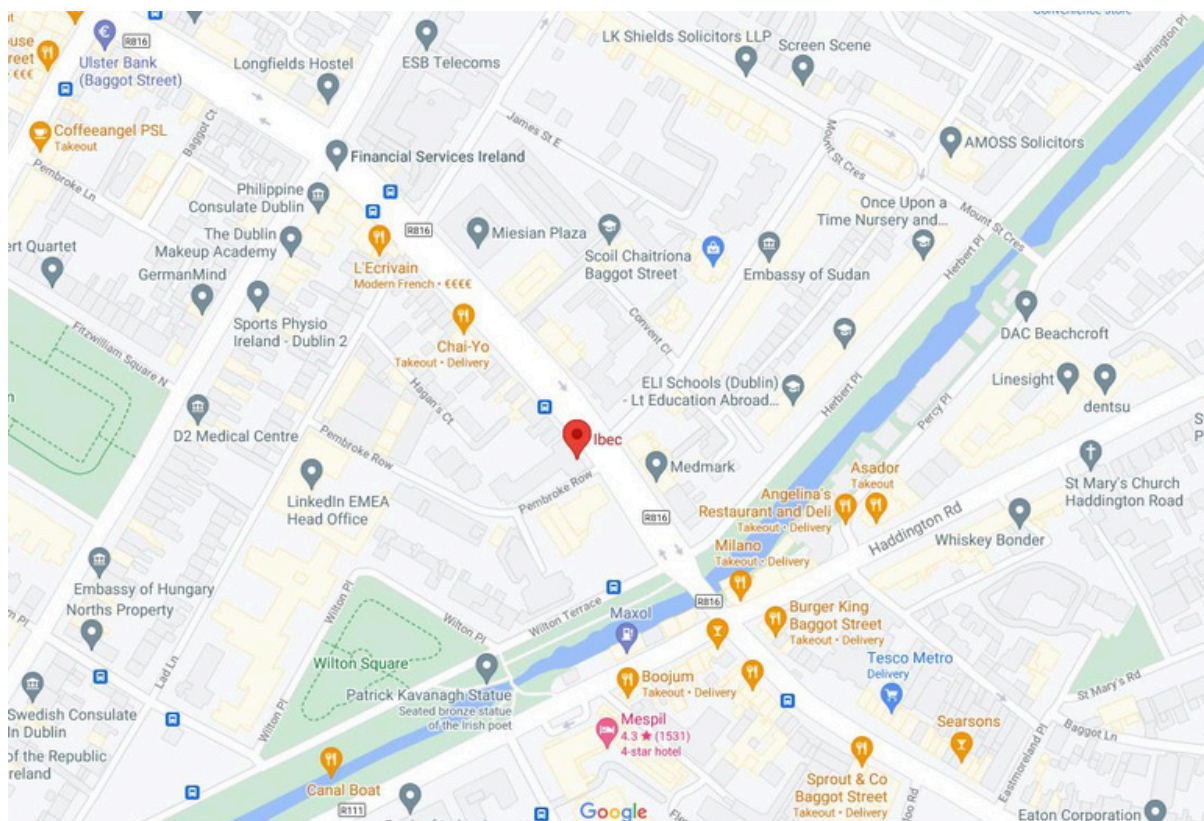
2 Training Facilities

2.1 Location

Our administrative offices are located at: Gardner House, Bank Place, Charlotte Quay. Limerick.



Aside from the administrative offices, we also have limited training facilities at this location, in addition to more substantial training facilities at the Ibec Head Office at Confederation House, Baggot Street Lower, Dublin. Typically, our training takes place on-site in organisations or in hotel conference facilities.



2.2 Onsite training

On occasion, clients request that training be provided onsite at their premises, and IMS is happy to accommodate such requests subject to the provision of suitable conditions in which to do so. IMS has a documented Training Facility Specification in place to ensure that the training environment is fit for purpose. The specification is available through the Network Management Team.

2.3 Availability of support

IMS wish to ensure that all our learners have the best possible opportunity to successfully complete our programmes. We will endeavour to help you in any way we can, and there are many learner supports described in this handbook. The IMS website is a significant resource, but the Network Manager, the Network Management Team, and the tutor can be contacted directly during office hours, or e-mailed at any time and they will respond as quickly as possible.

3 Teaching and Learning at IMS

3.1 Introduction

IMS has a unique position as a dedicated provider of programmes of education to those working in the Medical Technology (Medtech) sector in Ireland. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. We take this responsibility very seriously and we have a comprehensive teaching and learning strategy in place to ensure that the training that we provide is of the highest quality and meets the needs of industry in a manner which enables learners to secure and retain employment in the sector.

Our membership includes more than 200 companies involved in the Medtech sector in Ireland.

3.2 Strategy and Governance

Our strategy begins with ascertaining the needs of industry and using that knowledge to develop programmes to meet those needs. We achieve this in a number of ways.

IMS has a governance structure in place for oversight of all activities and decision making in respect of programmes of education and training, comprising:

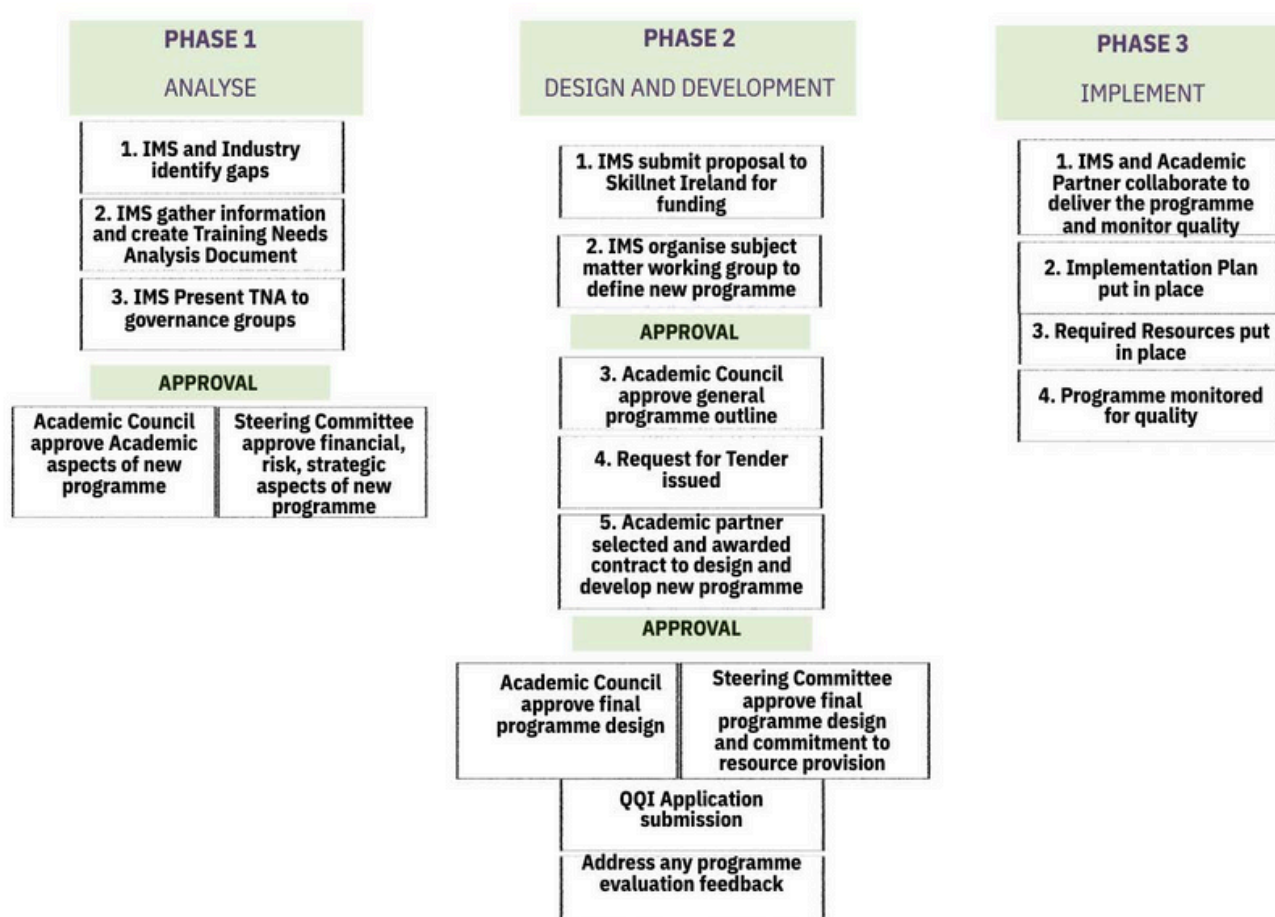
- The Steering Committee has responsibility for guidance and corporate direction of the IMS. The Steering Committee represents the needs of industry and ensures the programmes are aligned to meet these needs.
- The Academic Council has independent responsibility for academic governance and implementation and monitoring of the Quality Assurance System. It also has responsibility for the separation of academic and corporate decision making, and the separation of programme approval from programme development.
- Network contracting organisation – Ibec is the IMS contracting organization. A Contracting Organisation has a remit to address business needs at an industry or regional level, and is typically a sectoral association, regional association, industry body or professional body.
- We have recruited a very strong team of highly experienced tutors who are also practitioners within the industry. These professionals know, and would be very well known by, many of the leading Medtech companies in Ireland and can provide excellent industry insights and guidance to learners.
- Development Advisor- Appointed by Skillnet Ireland, they ensure that the Training Network Programme Guidelines are complied with. The Guidelines are imperative for continued public funding.
- External QA Monitoring- External Authenticators, external Evaluators, and Subject Matter experts are involved in the quality assurance system.
- A Skillnet Network Team that includes the Network Manager and Network Support Staff - the Unit responsible for the day-to-day operations and training activities of the IMS.
- Results Approval Panel – a unit with overall responsibility for approving results before they are submitted to QQI for certification.

3.3 National Standards

QQI is the sole national accreditation body in Ireland for programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. Awards are based on defined learning outcomes the assessment of which is conducted according to documented assessment techniques and weightings. These programme characteristics are contained in Award Specifications which are the outcome of a Standards Development process which QQI conducts for all new awards. IMS in common with all training providers who are delivering QQI accredited programmes, are required to validate their programmes with QQI to ensure compliance with the Award Specifications.

3.4 New programme development at IMS occurs in three phases (See graphic below)

Analysis, Design, Development and Implementation.



In the **Analysis phase**, training need is discussed with relevant stakeholders including member organisations (industry), Governance Groups (the Academic Council, the Steering Committee), potential tutors, Ibec *inter alia*. Programme proposals will be assessed for alignment with organisational objectives, national accreditation, and industry need. The outcome is a documented Training Needs Analysis (TNA). The TNA is presented to governance groups for approval; the Academic Council approves the academic aspects of the new programme; the Steering Committee approve financial, risk and strategic aspects of the new programme design and development. When approval is achieved by both governance group, the programme proceeds to the next step of development.

In the **Design & Development Phase**, the IMS submit a proposal for funding to Skillnet Ireland for the new programme design and development. When Skillnet Ireland award funding, IMS commence the design of the programme. The overall programme design is documented including draft learning outcomes and assessments, delivery methodologies (instructor led/, scheduling, ATP etc. This draft is developed in conjunction with subject matter experts The outcome is a draft programme design for consideration by the Academic Council. When approval is received by the Academic Council, the programme outline is included as part of the Request for Tenders. Also included in the Request for Tenders is a Form of Tender which seeks the information from Tenderers regarding the quality of resources (i.e personnel proposed such as trainers to deliver, academic experts to develop the programme, programme coordinators to coordinate the programme) to design and deliver the services, and method statement (i.e. the providers approach to designing, developing and delivering the programme). IMS issue a Request for Tenders on eTenders, the Irish Government Public Procurement e-platform. Once Tenders are received, IMS create an evaluation team which is comprised of Irish Medtech Skillnet Representatives, a representative from industry such as a subject matter expert, and a member of the Academic Council. The Evaluation Team follow a strict evaluation process based on the principles of public procurement. When the evaluation process is completed, a Tenderer is selected as the successful Academic Partner and is awarded the Contract to design and develop the new programme. The Academic Partner and IMS agree a Terms of Reference and procedure for how the programme will be developed. The Academic Partner will be responsible for leading the development aspects as an academic expert on the following aspects of the programme development:

- 1.Award Level (if any)
- 2.Delivery Methodology (blended, virtual, traditional classroom)
- 3.Learning outcomes
- 4.Module development
- 5.Assessment methodology
- 6.Identify any resources
- 7.Design programme structure and teaching methodology
- 8.Project management and execution
- 9.Programme validation

Before the programme is goes for final validation with the academic partner, the final programme design will be brought before the Academic Council for approval. The Steering Committee also approve the final commitment to resource provision for the programme. For QQI programmes, the **Approval Phase** involves completing the QQI programme validation application process is required to be completed (in accordance with QQI's 2016 'policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training)

This involves completing the required application form which demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Award Specification, paying the required application fee and addressing any feedback that QQI provide.

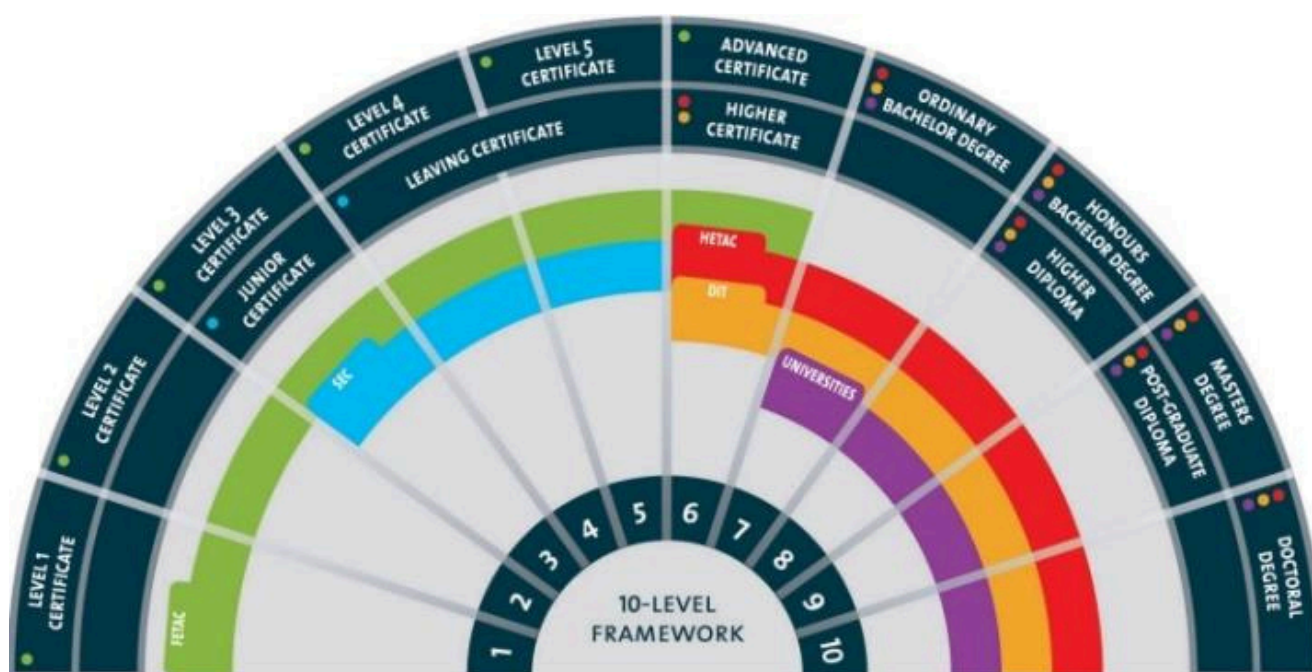
The Implementation Phase involves putting the necessary resources in place: appointing programme coordinator with the academic partner to deliver the programme and monitor quality, ensuring adequate funding, planning for any required equipment or consumables etc.

The outcome is a Resource Plan. It also involves marketing the programme, recruiting learners, delivering training, assessing feedback, internal verification, external authentication, results submission to QQI, and monitoring and evaluation.

4 Certification

Irish Medtech (IMS) Skillnet offers QQI validated programmes at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications. IMS has been providing programmes leading to QQI (formerly FETAC) awards since 2008 (Provider Code: PO01926).

National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)



See www.nfq.ie

For a full list of all programmes available (accredited and non- accredited) please visit our website www.irishmedtechskillnet.ie

4.1 Submission for Certification

Your trainer will give you details on the assessment for the course you are attending and will advise timelines if your course involves the submission of an assignment after the course finishes. Assessment results are submitted to QQI for certification usually twice/three times per year, so there may be a time lag from when you complete a course to when you actually receive your certificate.

Once results are made available by QQI, they are emailed directly to each trainee by Irish Medtech Skillnet. Results may also be made available to employers as appropriate. QQI Certificates are issued about a month after the official results are issued and are posted to the employer contact/ trainee at their work address (unless otherwise requested).

4.2 Programme Information

IMS offer the following programmes leading to QQI-accredited awards.

Course Title	Accredited QQI Module Title	NFQ Level	QQI Code	Award Class
Continuous Improving in Manufacturing	Continuous Improving in Manufacturing	5	5N1915	Component / Minor
Quality and Good Manufacturing Practice	Quality and Good Manufacturing Practice	5	5N1959	Component / Minor

Appendix C –

Terms of Reference for Network Steering Committee

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Document Version	Document Revision History	Document Author/Reviser
24th September 2018	1.0	Initial draft	Pauline O'Flanagan
14th Jan 2019	2.0	Revised with targets Irish Medtech Skillnet	Pauline O'Flanagan
18th Mar 2019	3.0	Add Glossary of Terms	Pauline O'Flanagan
15th Apr 2021	4.0	Revision of Conflict of Interest for Virtual Meeting Recognise the potential need and ability to hold meetings virtually Revision of Confidentiality Clause	Ann O'Connell
19th April 2022	5.0	Revision of TOR following QQI recommendations	Niamh Hyland
13th Dec 2022	6.0	Revision of TOR following QQI recommendations	Ann O'Connell

Index to Contents

• Objective.....	118
• Role and Responsibilities of the Network Steering Committee	118
• Role and Responsibilities of the Network Steering Committee Chair	120
• Responsibilities of the Steering Committee Members.....	120
• Steering Group Operations	122
• Matters reserved for the Steering Committee	124

OBJECTIVE

The objective of these terms of reference for Irish Medtech Skillnet Steering Committee is to assist the network to conduct their business in a more effective and efficient manner by laying out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Group and its members and providing clarity for all concerned on the role of the Steering Group.

It will also provide potential new chairs and members with greater clarity on what their commitment would be before signing up for these new roles.

ROLE OF THE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

The role of the Steering Committee is as follows: To ensure that each Network has a robust Network Strategy for its sector / region which:

- Ensures that activities are aligned with the policies and strategic goals of Skillnets as well as national policy targeting the sector / region
- Engage actively with key stakeholders as part of the process
- Align Network provision and the strategic challenges (e.g. skill shortages and competitiveness) and opportunities facing the sector / region
- Support the strategic development needs of members in the Network
- Exploit the opportunities that may exist in the Network on behalf of members
- Review and approve the development strategy for its sector / region supported by the appropriate funding as presented by the Network Manager. Note: this strategy should be of a three-year duration
- Monitor progress against the strategy on a regular basis (at least every six months)
- Review and approve the annual application made to Skillnet Ireland for annual funding in the context of the strategic plan
- Review and assess the performance of the Network Manager against the Network Strategy and the annual business plan
- Promote the Skillnet Network to members and stakeholders together with the associated opportunities and benefits
- Provide advice, guidance and support to the Network Manager in carrying out the role
- Ensure that there is a risk management framework in place and monitor this at least quarterly. This should cover the following risks at a minimum:
 - Financial
 - Procurement
 - Operational
 - Succession
 - Reputational

- Review the Network governance arrangements together with a review the terms of reference of the Steering Group annually
- Ensure that the Matters Reserved for the Steering Committee are reviewed on a regular basis
- Ensure that there is an attendance policy
- Provide induction for new members
- Authority to appoint the Chair of the Academic Council (Changed Dec 2022)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Steering Committee Chair are as follows:

- Sets the Steering Committee workplan for the year to include an outline of the business for each meeting in liaison with the Network Manager. This workplan should be approved by the Steering Committee.
- Sets the detailed agenda for each meeting in liaison with the Network Manager.
- Ensures that agendas, minutes and supporting materials are delivered to members in good time for meetings.
- Sets out his /her expectations of the Steering Committee members contribution
- Makes the purpose of each meeting clear to members and explains the agenda at the beginning of each meeting.
- Clarifies and summarises what is happening throughout each meeting.
- Keeps the meeting moving by putting time limits on each agenda items and keeping all meetings to 3 hours or less.
- Encourages broad participation from Steering Committee members in the discussions by calling on different people
- Ends each meeting with a summary of decisions and assignments.
- Ensures that minutes are kept of the meeting
- Follows up with consistently absent members to determine if they wish to discontinue membership
- Finds replacements for members who discontinue participation

Should the Steering Committee Chair be unable to attend a meeting, the members in attendance can appoint one by consensus or failing that by a majority vote of a qualified quorum.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Individual Steering Committee members have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Support the role of the Chair Ensure that the Steering Committee delivers on its role and responsibilities
- Understand the goals, strategic objectives, and desired outcomes of the Network
- Contribute to the development and review of the strategic plan and associated documents
- Contribute to the strategic direction of the Network, including driving the vision and mission of the Network.
- Oversight and approval of the IMS Quality Management Systems
- Represent the interests of the Network to members and stakeholders
- Take a genuine interest in the Networks outcomes and overall success
- Act on opportunities to communicate positively about the benefits of the Network
- Authority to appoint the Chair of the Academic Council
- Actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of minutes, papers and

other Steering Committee documents

- Support open discussion and debate, and encourage fellow Steering Committee members to voice their insights
- Take collective responsibility for all Steering Committee Decisions
- A member who could reasonably be considered to have a conflict of interest should make this known in writing to the Chair who will decide what action (if any) is required to address the conflict.
- Bring to the attention of the Chair any potential conflicts of interest.
- A member shall not, without the consent of the Chair, disclose confidential information obtained because of having performed duties as a member of the group.

STEERING GROUP OPERATIONS

Composition of the Steering Group

The Steering Group should be comprised of representatives from participation network member companies and reflect the profile of companies in the sector / region

The Network Manager to attend Steering Committee meetings as a full voting member, to present information, and answer questions. Other team members may attend as well if they are presenting a report, taking minutes, or providing other administrative or logistical support to the Steering Committee.

Members should be selected based on their specialist knowledge, ability to represent the interests of stakeholders, and ability to help resolves issues the project may face

Quorum and Decision-making

Quorum

A minimum number of **5 Steering Committee members are required for decision-making purposes.**

Decision-making Process

The decision making process for the Steering Committee is as follows:

- Consensus: a majority approve a given course of action, but that the minority agrees to go alongwith the course of action, potentially with some modifications
- Majority: a course of action requires support from more than 50% members who attend the meeting if there is quorum.

Ideally, decision-making will be by consensus, but if this cannot be achieved then a majority vote should be considered decision-making.

Frequency and Format (In Person or Virtually) of Meetings

Ideally, this schedule is set out at the beginning of the year. It would be based on the workplan developed by the Network Manager and approved by the Steering Committee so that members can plan ahead and arrange their attendance.

Steering Committee meetings should ideally be timed to be at key milestones as set out in the Workplan. This could be monthly, quarterly, or according to the schedule set out by the Network Manager

When required the Steering Committee shall recognise the potential need and ability to hold meetings virtually. The meeting will be managed to enable access through the virtual portal only to steering committee members or invited guests.

Agenda, Minutes, and Decision Papers

A meeting pack will be sent to members three to five business days in advance of a Steering Committee meeting. This package will include the following:

- Agenda for upcoming meeting
- Minutes of previous meeting
- A progress report based on performance against the Network Workplan
- Progress against budget
- Any other documents/information to be considered at the meeting.

MATTERS RESERVED FOR THE STEERING GROUP

The following are the Matters Reserved for decision by the Network Steering Group:

1. Mission, vision and future direction

- Process to develop the Network strategy
- Approval of the Network Strategy and modifications to it
- Assessment of progress against the strategy on a regular basis [twice annually]

2. Finance

- Approval of annual network budgets, business plans and workplans
- Approval of annual application for funding to be submitted to Skillnets
- Performance of subcontractors
- Approval any contracts worth over €5,000 awarded to any sub-contractor in a 12 month period

3. Risk

- Establishment of the level of risk (Risk Appetite) the Steering Group is comfortable being exposed to and the associated parameters

4. Performance of the Network Manager

- Establishing objectives and KPI's for the Network Manager
- Review of the Network Manager's performance against the agreed objectives and KPIs

5. Approval of the following governance matters

- Approval of all roles and responsibilities
- Approval of new policies for example:
 - Attendance
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Risk
 - Etc.
- Establishment, composition and terms of reference for any sub - committees
- Winding up of limited term Sub committees
- Changes to governance policies and structures

- Processing urgent matters between Steering Group meetings
- Decisions relating to court/legal proceedings against and/or on behalf of the Network
- Review the TOR for the Network Steering Group annually

6. Procurement

- Ensure that there is a procurement policy in place, that is consistent with Skillnets procurement policy and provides clarity on what procurement decisions the Steering Committee can make and the Network Manager can make

Glossary of Terms

Skillnet

A Skillnet is a group of companies that form a network (approx. 20 private companies) who work together to deliver a training intervention that could not be delivered by one company working on their own.

Steering Group

A steering group comprises of nominated senior representatives from the network companies (8 to 10 private companies). It plays an essential role in providing strategic direction and network governance.

Network Promotor

The network promoter is an individual appointed by the contracting organisation whose role is to champion the aims of the network. The promoter should be a member of the Steering Group.

Contracting Organisation

An organisation that is contracted by Skillnet Ireland to run a Skillnet network. The contracting organisation can be a trade association, chamber of commerce, representative body or even a private company. Their role is to ensure good corporate governance and actively oversee the management of the network.

Network

Group of companies approx. 20 plus working together to deliver the skills needs of a sector of a region that could not be delivered if working alone

Network Manager

Work with the promoter, steering group, Skillnet Ireland and other stakeholders to ensure that activities align with the overall aims of the network and Skillnet Ireland.

TNP or Training Network Programme

Training Network Programme is a 50:50 funding model to deliver training or events to member companies

FSP or Future Skills Programme

The Future Skills Programme is a 80:20 government funding model for the development of new programmes

EAP or Employment Activation Programme

The EAP programme is a 100% funding model to deliver training interventions to activate employment in future skills needs for the sector

Match funding

This is the funding contribution by private member companies.

Government Funding/ Skillnet Ireland

A Skillnet is co-funded by Skillnet Ireland and member companies. Skillnet Ireland is 100% funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Education and Skills.

Irish Medtech Skillnet

The Irish Medtech Skillnet is a national network which delivers training, upskilling and professional development programmes for the Medical Technology and Engineering sectors.

Appendix D –

Terms of Reference for Network Academic Council

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Document Version	Document Revision History	Document Author/Reviser
15th September 2018	1.0	Initial draft	Ann O'Connell
19th April 2022	2.0	Revisions based on QQI panel visit recommendations	Niamh Hyland

Irish Medtech Skillnet Quality Statement

Irish Medtech Skillnet is committed to the provision of quality-assured training to enhance the competence and career opportunities of learners in the Medtech industry. Our staff recruitment, selection, and monitoring systems are designed to ensure consistently high standards of training provision. Our internal systems and independent oversight by industry professionals will ensure continuing alignment of our programmes with industry needs and best practice.

Index to Contents

- Objective130
- Authority and Accountability130
- Role and Responsibilities of the Academic Council Chairperson130
- Responsibilities of the Steering Committee Members...130
- Academic Council Group Operations 130
- Glossary of Terms132

OBJECTIVE

The objective of these terms of reference for Irish Medtech Skillnet Academic Council is to assist the network to conduct their business in a more effective and efficient manner by laying out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the Academic Council and its members to oversee affairs of the Irish Medtech Skillnet, ensure the separation of academic from commercial decision making and approve training programmes.

Additionally, it provides potential new chairs and members with greater clarity on what their commitment would be before signing up for these new roles.

Authority and Accountability

The AC is established by the IMS Steering Group as an independent governance group to make decisions on all matters relating to its function as detailed below.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON

- The Chair of the Academic Council is appointed by the IMS Steering group.
- The tenure of the Chair will be for an initial period of one year, extending by mutual agreement to second and subsequent years.

ACADEMIC COUNCIL GROUP OPERATIONS

The Academic Council will:

- Oversee the planning, development, and co-ordination of educational provision of the Irish Medtech Skillnet.
- Protect, maintain, and enhance the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Irish Medtech Skillnet propose and approve new programmes in consultation with the Steering Group and monitor their implementation.
- Guide the strategic direction of teaching and learning of the Irish Medtech Skillnet including blended learning.
- Review and approve training quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Ensure compliance with programme delivery and assessment for programmes as validated with QQI.
- Ensure learner representation on academic matters and provide the opportunity to have learner feedback considered on matters relating to programmes.
- Adjudicate on any learner complaints or appeals brought to Council.
- Evaluate and approve any proposed substantive changes to existing modules.
- Appoint external quality assurance personnel (e.g., authenticators and evaluators) subject to the approval of the Network Manager.
- Periodically monitor and evaluate Irish Medtech Skillnet programmes and their effectiveness in meeting their intended KPIs (e.g., learner recruitment, programme completion, grades, satisfaction rates, value to employers etc.)
- Identify and monitor risks using the Risk Register.

- Drive continuous improvement using Programme Improvement Plans
- Monitor the effectiveness of learner supports (e.g., website, English-language supports, reasonable and compassionate accommodation, facility/IT supports etc.)
- Monitor, evaluate, and propose changes to academic regulations including the conduct of examinations and assessment, academic integrity and procedures for appeal, and the moderation and verification of results.
- Review internal and external reports from other stakeholders (e.g., internal verifier, external authenticator, external evaluator)
- Promote and guide pedagogical best-practice of the Irish Medtech Skillnet.
- Assess the adequacy of, and make recommendations to the Network Manager regarding resources (e.g., staffing, technological, and physical resources)
- Establish, oversee, and dissolve any sub-committees required to assist the function of the Council as required.
- Document an annual review of the performance of the Council itself and act on the results of findings.
- Review the provision of public information by the in terms of fitness for purpose (i.e., completeness, currency, accuracy, clarity)

Academic Council Sub-Standing Committee

A sub group of the Academic Council, a Standing Committee is responsible for the escalation process for Appeals of Assessment results, Complaints and RPL. This group possess the power to make final decisions. This standing committee membership is comprised of an academic, a learner representative and one other.

Composition of the Academic Council Group

The AC should be comprised (at a minimum) of:

- Independent Chair
- Academic Representative from a Higher Education College
- Student Representative
- Industry Representative
- Tutor Representative

Note re additional members:

Additional members can be a representative of a public body (e.g. IDA, Enterprise Ireland, SOLAS etc.) under Skillnet Ireland rules, they cannot benefit financially or otherwise from the network.

Quorum and Decision-making

Quorum

A minimum number of **4** Academic council members are required for decision-making purposes.

The quorum members should include at least one of the academic members.

Decision-making Process

The decision-making process for the Academic council is as follows:

- Consensus: a majority approve a given course of action, but that the minority agrees to go along with the course of action, potentially with some modifications
- Majority: a course of action requires support from more than 50% members who attend the meeting if there is quorum.
- Ideally, decision-making will be by consensus, but if this cannot be achieved then a majority vote should be considered decision-making.

Organisation Chart

