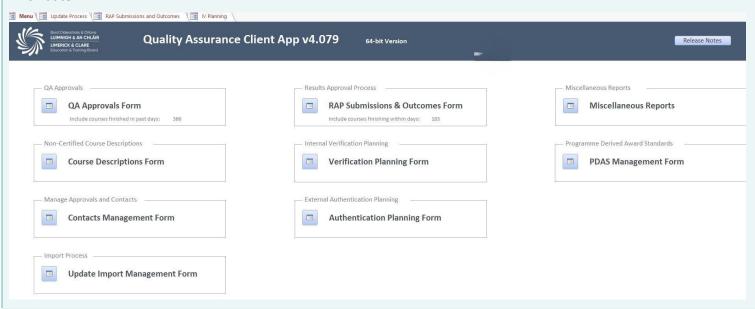# LCETB Case Study 1 – Title: QA Client App – Integration of Certification process, planning & recording

Introduction

A National Course Calendar (NCC) course approval process, developed and overseen by the LCETB College of FET QA Support Service and the FET Operations team, has been in place across the organisation since October 2022, via an application called the QA Client App. This has featured in a previous case study submitted to QQI, education-training-board-follow-up-reports-2025.pdf p.45. Since September 2024, the functionality of the app has been extended to include capability to support the planning for each QQI certification period and the recording of outcomes for same. The integration of these functions into the app replaces legacy processes that were in use across the different Campuses in the College of FET. This business process aims to provide an up-to-date view of the entire certification process for both FET centres and the Quality Assurance Support Service. The use of the QA Client App also supports the requirement in our *Teaching Learning and Assessment policy* that certification for learners is processed within 90 days of course finish date.

Description of issue

The LCETB College of FET (CFET) QA Support Service identified a number of areas where improvements could be made:

- **Collating of certification estimates -** QQI Certification estimates were gathered previously via the sharing of Excel files by QA Support Officers with centres from across the organisation. The potential for files to be edited/deleted was identified as a risk. It was also difficult for the QASS to identify the subject areas requiring External Authentication across the organisation when dealing with multiple excel files.

- **Ensuring the timely processing of certification -** Planning for each period is supported, as the app highlights which modules are due for submission based on our 90-day certification rule. All certified courses scheduled on the NCC are included in this process.

- **EA bookings –** The booking of External Authenticators is managed through a centralised system by the CFET QASS. In the past, this resulted in multiple emails sent to centre co-ordinators providing details of EA bookings, etc. Any amendments required further emails. The app now provides near real time data for all those involved in the certification process.

Action

Development Stage

Following a number of initial meetings between QASS and FET Operations, this further development of the app was progressed. The excel files used to gather certification estimate information was used a template for the development of the RAP Submissions and Outcomes Form. Course information was automatically transferred from the NCC, thus reducing the need for manual input of estimates details and reducing the risk of errors.

Centres can only see their own estimates and their IV Planning Form. QASS centrally book all EAs and enter this information into the Authentication Planning Form. This information then automatically transfers to the centres IV Planning Form so they can see EA booking details.

Approval Stage

The proposal that the QA Client App be used for the planning of certification and recording of outcomes for same was approved through our local QA Governance processes. It was decided that the December 2024 certification period would serve as a pilot.

Rollout Stage

A briefing session was held for all staff in mid-September 2024, to put forward the rationale for the change in process and demonstrate the new functions of the app. A working group was established consisting of QASS, FET Operations, centre coordinators and staff with QA responsibility.
All centres submitting for the December 2024 period were supported throughout by the QA Support Officers and FET Operations with one to one clinics and centre briefings as required.
Multiple working groups and sub-working groups have been established to support the differing requirements of centres e.g. Training Provision, multi–Provision campuses.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

1. This new process is still in its infancy and we are still applying the learning from each iteration of the Client App and each certification period.

2. The current limitations of QBS pose a risk to centres when processing learner certification, where learners have undertaken both CAS and PDAS modules or a multiple number of PDAS modules. The app supports centres by highlighting PDAS modules. While this is not a copper fastened system, it does offer a layer of protection and is the only solution we have to this issue at present.

3. PDAS modules are now flagged in the app making the tracking of same easier for centres. This helps with the current shortcomings of the QBS, which does not facilitate the submission of (a) multiple PDAS in one certification period and (b) PDAS and CAS in the same certification period.

4. The digitalisation of this process now provides QASS with a helicopter view of all certifications (QQI and other awarding bodies) across the organisation, to include IV planning and EA bookings.

5. There is a built in capability in the app to generate and download a number of reports including that for due and overdue modules.

Key Learnings

1. The introduction of new business processes requires adequate resources to ensure effective implementation.

2. The introduction of the app required training and support and this was very much dependent on the level of IT literacy among staff.

3. The standardisation of systems and processes across the organisation can be challenging due to the variety of legacy processes in place.

4. There were a number of working groups and sub-working groups formed throughout the rollout of this process. This was a critical part of ensuring everyone was kept abreast of changes, across the organisation, and could input into the process.

5. The harmonisation of process and systems across the College of FET is a challenge. The learnings from the rollout of this new business process are critical to any future such projects.