

QQI Award Brand Launch

Aviva Stadium Dublin

18 November 2015

Address by

Jan O’Sullivan, T.D.,

Minister for Education and Skills

I am delighted to join you here today to formally launch QQI's new Award Brand. I would like to thank Pádraig and the rest of the team in QQI for the invitation to participate in today's event.

As you will be aware, QQI was established in November 2012 through the amalgamation of FETAC, HETAC and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. QQI was given responsibility for the functions of those bodies across further and higher education and training. It was also given responsibility for the external quality assurance function formerly carried out by the Irish Universities Quality Board.

The purpose of the establishment of QQI was to bring greater coherence to the sector, creating a single body to deliver a more efficient and integrated service. QQI has a varied and wide ranging remit in further and higher education. It acts as an awarding body for many providers. It is also responsible for validating educational programmes and the quality assurance of further and higher education and training. Another of QQI's core responsibilities is to act as custodian for Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications.

The Framework is now 12 years old and its 10 level system of awards has become familiar to learners, educators and employers throughout the country. The Framework is used throughout our post primary schools, the public and private further and vocational education and training system, and in our universities, IOTs and private higher

education institutions. The Irish Framework of Qualifications is much admired and recognised internationally.

So too is the quality of awards made in respect of Irish further and higher education and training programmes. HETAC and FETAC played an important role in bringing coherence and consistency to Irish qualifications, in developing award standards and in facilitating progression opportunities for learners. QQI has built on this important work. The launch of the QQI Award brand today is a significant step in maintaining and improving quality standards in education and training for all of our learners.

The QQI Award is now the single new logo for all QQI awards, irrespective of whether the award relates to a further education and training programme or a higher education and training programme. This is an important milestone in realising the potential for lifelong learning which is embedded in the National Framework of Qualifications.

Since February of this year, the new 'QQI Award' brand logo has issued on all certificates presented to learners. The new QQI further education and training award is now being used for awards at levels 1 to 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications. This is complemented by the new QQI higher education and training award that now applies to qualifications achieved at levels 6 to 10 of the framework. However,

all former HETAC and FETAC awards will continue to be recognised at the appropriate level of the Framework.

I commend the excellent work that has been undertaken by Padraig and his team in QQI in developing the new QQI Award brand. The QQI Award brand communicates quality in education and training in Ireland's further and higher education and training system and its qualifications. It will enable providers, learners and other stakeholders to know and recognise quality awards and qualifications. It will also play an important role in enhancing Ireland's reputation as a high quality education destination.

The next step is to raise public awareness of the new QQI Award as *the* brand of quality assured award. It is here that our education and training providers can play a crucial role. Working together, we can ensure that the QQI award is recognised nationally and internationally as a respected qualification of value to both learners and employers.

The eleven commemorative awards being presented to our learners today represent a qualification at every level of the Framework, across diverse areas such as early childhood care, social science, digital media and business studies. This is reflective of the depth and richness of the education and training programmes being offered by providers.

I would like to congratulate each of our award recipients on their achievements, and wish them every success in the future. I am looking forward to hearing more about them and their endeavours with you now. I am delighted to be presenting them with framed commemorative certificates to mark their achievements on this occasion.

Thank you.
