An Evaluation of the Efficacy of a Virtual Institutional Review Process

EQAF 2020

Marie Gould – QQI (Presenter)
David Denieffe, Yvonne Kavanagh – IT Carlow
Mairéad Boland, Orlaith O’Loughlin, Kevin Henry – QQI
Questions

Fundamental Question
1. Does conducting an institutional review virtually impact on the efficacy of the institutional review process?

Supplementary Questions
2. How does the virtual institutional review impact on:
   • the review team members’ ability to engage and collaborate with each other, with institutional representatives, and with external stakeholders?
   • the capacity of students and other stakeholders to engage with the process?

3. What are the design elements that need to be considered by the QA agency and the institution in a virtual institutional review?
Methodology

1. Pilot virtual institutional review visit (June 2020)
2. **Focused feedback** from review team and institution
3. **Focus group** with students
4. Survey – review team, institutional representatives, stakeholders
5. Comparability with other similar institutions’ review reports
Survey Results

• Participants in the survey represented the various stakeholders involved.

• Questions focused on the efficacy and efficiency of the virtual process.

• Participants were asked for comments and suggestions to improve the virtual process.

1. Please indicate your role within the review:

- Review Team Member: 6
- Senior Management Team IT: 3
- Academic Staff IT Carlow: 8
- Professional Support Staff IT Carlow: 3
- Current/former student: 3
- External/Industry Representatives: 5
- Other: 5

2. I found the virtual review to be effective and robust.

- Strongly Agree: 24
- Somewhat Agree: 7
- Neutral: 1
- Somewhat disagree: 0
- Strongly disagree: 0

4. The online delivery of the process briefing was effective.

- Strongly Agree: 21
- Somewhat Agree: 6
- Agree: 4
- Neutral: 0
- Somewhat disagree: 1
- Strongly disagree: 0
- Not Applicable: 0
Survey Results

- Feedback was very positive
- Majority of participants confirmed they were able to engage with the review team
- Participants allowed to be open and honest during the virtual process
- 97% expressed confidence in the efficacy of the process and its outcomes.

6. I was able to establish effective engagement with the review team during the online process.

8. The virtual review process allowed for open and honest discourse.

10. I have confidence in the efficacy of this institutional review and in the outcomes of the process.
Design Elements - What worked well?

- Detailed advanced planning and preparation
- More frequent meetings with review team prior to virtual visit
- Lead and supporting reviewers for each session
- Targeted lists of questions devised by review team in advance
- Weekend break in review schedule
- Daily morning meeting with Institutional Co-ordinator
- Advanced briefing for students on the process (Provided by NStEP)
- Advanced briefing for staff and other stakeholders (Provided by IT Carlow)
- Library/central repository for documentation (OneDrive)
- Using multi-media – institution tour
- Allowing submission of comments up to one hour after the session
Design Elements – Some lessons learned

- Dedicated virtual meeting space for review team
- Mechanism needed for review team to communicate informally - WhatsApp
- Frequent private review team meetings essential during the review
- Condensed timeline
- Need a contingency plan for technology failings
- Small stakeholder groups – run parallel meeting sessions if needed
- Meeting support essential for each stakeholder session – Agency
- Meeting protocols and guidelines for all stakeholders (on utilising Chat facility for example)
- Time Zones – impact on schedule...and review team selection
THANK YOU AND QUESTIONS?

Marie Gould
Head of Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review
mgould@qqi.ie