



## Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)

There is an increasing number of accreditation and third party evaluation programs in health and ageing being introduced around the world. Many are being auspiced by government. Over the next few editions *Extra!* will feature some of these programs.

While the 'accreditation world' is small but growing there is a considerable amount of collaboration between accrediting bodies. We contribute to the debate and collaboration through membership of a number of working parties and committees and our membership of ISQua [www.isqua.org](http://www.isqua.org).

The Health Information and Quality Authority was created in May 2007 in Ireland, as the statutory body responsible for:

- Setting and monitoring standards in healthcare and investigating serious safety concerns
- Registering and inspecting residential care services
- Conducting health technology assessments and
- Developing standards and strategic direction in relation to health information.

HIQA is the single, independent organisation that sets quality standards for the delivery of health and social services in Ireland. They monitor and inspect that the standards are being met and publish the findings so

the public is aware, from an objective and consistent basis, about how the health and social care services are performing.

In addition to setting and monitoring person-centred standards across health and social care, HIQA also assesses new and existing health technologies where, for example, drugs and medical devices can be assessed for their overall effectiveness. Similarly, the Health Information function will enable HIQA to put in place standards for health information systems and provide meaningful, accessible information to support the safe and high quality provision of services.

All of these quality functions together, provide a strong lever for driving improvements through a more coherent approach than has previously existed in Ireland. You can read more about HIQA at [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie)

Mark Brandon and Elizabeth Pringle presented at the Inspectorates inaugural Planning Day in October 2009, while in Ireland for the ISQua Accreditation Council Meeting and 2009 ISQua International Conference.



## Assessor development program (ADP)

We are introducing a new assessor development program (ADP), which builds and expands on the Quality Assessor Information and Training (QAIT) sessions that have been in place for almost four years.

The new program will be rolled out over the next couple of years, taking into account feedback and other developments along the way.

We comprehensively reviewed QAIT with the result being a revamped ADP to be implemented from next month. The review included:

- A review of the QAIT processes, materials and feedback
- An online survey of all registered assessors
- Focus groups with key stakeholders including assessors (internal and external), state education coordinators, assessment managers, state managers and general managers.

Results of the review revealed that QAIT is well received by assessors, particularly for its networking opportunities and chance to learn from each other, and especially to ensure assessors are kept up to date and informed about our company and the industry in general.

The provision of QAIT also helps assessors meet their professional development requirements of 15 hours each year.

While QAIT is well regarded, there were some opportunities for improvement and this was recognised in survey and focus group results. Assessors were interested in a number of other options for learning.

Face to face remained the most popular but there was also interest in on-line learning, workplace based learning, research, literature reviews, evidence based practice, use of visual media, use of external professionals, discussion groups, learning circles and self-directed learning packages.



# In with the new...

QAIT workshops have been revised and there will be new workshops to replace QAIT sessions in 2010.

Workshops will now have a maximum of 30 assessors. This will allow for more discussion and means some states will need to run a series of workshops to accommodate all assessors.

The first part of the workshop will feature information from the State Manager, with more time for them to talk about relevant local issues. The rest of the workshop will focus on training, with the emphasis being on discussion and activities.

Each state will be encouraged to use local examples to demonstrate, for example local outbreaks or state legislation. Prior to the workshop, all assessors will be expected to prepare by reading theory material which will be made available before the workshop. This theory material will be used as the basis of the workshop.

This year in response to feedback, there will be three half-day workshops and two full-day workshops.

The first workshop for 2010 will be in March with the theme 'Incident reporting, serious risk and critical events'. Assessors will be informed of the dates and locations for your states.



## ADP Network Online

Our website currently hosts an Assessor specific page that is continually updated with assessor resources and tools. From June 2010, this page will be enhanced to build a webpage containing a repository of information including pre-reading related to ADP workshops, making information available to all assessors, not just those that attend.

The webpage will also contain links to any recent research, legislation changes or review articles related to the topic as provided by Accreditation division.

An ADP discussion room within the webpage will be available, where ongoing discussion and problem solving around the topic can occur. This discussion room will be monitored with appropriate input from a designated topic expert as moderator.

This discussion room will be open for one month following each ADP workshop and contents deleted after that time. Its purpose will be specifically for discussion around the current ADP topic only.

At the end of the month the Learning and Development Manager will review the discussions, seek advice or clarification from the moderator if needed and be responsible for allocating credit.

The screenshot shows the Accreditation Agency Ltd website. At the top, there is a logo and navigation links: Home, About us, Accreditation, Recipients and standards, Education, resources and training, Assessor information, and Employment. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area includes a 'LATEST NEWS' section with the headline 'State Manager Welcomes the Standard Application for accreditation'. Below this, there are sections for 'REPORTS ON HOMES', 'External assessor information', 'UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING', and 'Self-directed learning packages'. The 'External assessor information' section lists links for Registration, Workshops, Manage contract information, External audit, External audit, External audit, and Personal details, change contract assessors. A note states: 'The Agency does not guarantee to employ or contract work to all quality assessors registered with the Register. According to workload requirements, the Agency will enter into contractual arrangements with individual quality assessors based on the following factors: availability, cost (including travel costs), and skills and experience.'

# The ADP horizon

Here are some more options we are developing further.

## **Article review**

Develop guidelines for reviewing articles and documenting learning so that credit towards annual professional development can be given.

## **Self directed learning packages**

Provide options for completion of these, either as individual assessors or as part of a group. Completion will provide credit towards annual professional development requirements.

## **ADP learning circles**

A learning circle is a focused discussion group that provides a structure and framework for high quality peer learning in which members share professional challenges and receive feedback and ideas from others. Each learning circle will consist of approximately eight assessors, meet for a period of 12 months and as they will be based on line or via teleconference can cross state or geographical boundaries.

Participation in a learning circle would be via application based on suitability to participate meaningfully in this style of learning. Robust guidelines and accountability mechanisms will be developed including assessor suitability, appointing a moderator, methods for recording and capturing learning, and guidelines for assessing and assigning credit towards annual professional development requirements.

## Meet Megan McNab

Megan McNab is our Learning and Development Manager.

### **How long have you worked for us?**

Six months

### **What is your background?**

I trained initially as a nurse, working mostly in community nursing. I have worked in aged care for around 13 years in management and education in both residential and community aged care. I have qualifications in nursing, theology, aged care management and adult education.

### **What do you love about your job?**

I love adult education as well as working in an organisation that directly impacts aged care

### **Tell us something about yourself that not many people would know?**

I am married to Geoff, a primary school teacher and have two children Heather 19, Lachlan 16 and one dog, Lucky 42 (in dog years).

My secret dream job would be as a performer in a stage musical. The closest I get is front row in the audience.

