

# Inspection of European Social Fund Projects

## Information

---

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## WHY IS THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PROJECT BEING INSPECTED?

The Department for the Economy (the Department) have requested that the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspect the quality of all European Social Fund (ESF) Projects. The purpose of inspection visits is to ensure the highest possible standards of provision throughout the ESF projects in Northern Ireland. Inspections inform all those who need to know, such as the Governing Body / Management Committee, the participants, parents, employers, the general public, the Department, and the Northern Ireland Assembly, about how effective the ESF projects in Northern Ireland are and what needs to be changed so that they can improve.

## WHO INSPECTS?

The ESF projects are inspected by inspectors who work for the ETI. The inspection team may also have Associate Assessors drawn from the wider education and training sectors. The team is led by the Reporting Inspector (RI) who is in charge of the inspection and responsible for the report of the findings.

## WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN INSPECTION?

During the inspection, the inspectors:

- observe how the teaching, training and learning/mentoring sessions are carried out and talk to the staff and managers;
- talk to the participants;
- scrutinise participants' individual learning plans;
- where appropriate, visit and observe participants in the workplace and talk to employers;
- examine portfolios of participants' work; and
- scrutinise a range of documentation provided by the ESF project.

They assess:

- how well participants develop and achieve;
- the effectiveness of the teaching, training and learning and assessment (where appropriate)
- how well the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the participants and the wider community;
- how well participants are cared for, guided and supported; and
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting participants.

An inspector will want to talk informally to some groups of participants, without a member of staff being present about:

- how participants were introduced and inducted to the project;
- the help available in the project if participants have any personal difficulties;
- careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- access to learning resources;
- the complaints and grievance procedures;
- participants' experiences in the project, for example; timetabling, accommodation, facilities; and
- the project's policies on matters such as safeguarding, inclusion and diversity.

## THE ROLE OF STAFF MEMBER IN INSPECTION

Inspectors will observe a sample of teaching, training and learning/ mentoring/ support sessions taking place during the inspection. They always provide staff with a brief, oral evaluation of the work observed, which normally takes place at the end of the session observed; they do not make reference to the work of individual staff members in published inspection reports. They assess the quality of the provision because of its direct influence on the quality and appropriateness of the participants' experiences and the standards of their work. Inspectors will also hold discussions with some of the staff members about their involvement in important activities such as self-evaluation and participant assessment and progress.

## THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS IN INSPECTION

It is the ESF project which is inspected and reported on, but employers make an important contribution to the inspection activity. When inspectors visit participants in the workplace they will wish to discuss the following areas with employers or workplace supervisors:

- how participants were introduced and inducted to the workplace;
- the guidance and information given to the employer or supervisor by the project on the training requirements for the participant;
- the nature and effectiveness of the project's monitoring in the workplace, and the involvement of the employer in this;
- the quality of work-based training; and
- the participant's progress in the workplace.

Discussion with employers and observation of participants in the workplace assist inspectors to assess the quality of training and to evaluate the standards of the participants' work. There will be no reference to individual employers within the inspection report.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INSPECTION?

The RI and members of the inspection team will provide detailed oral feedback to the project's senior management. Following the report back, the organisation/project should begin work on any area(s) for improvement identified and amend their quality improvement plan accordingly. Following the inspection if the overall effectiveness of the project is evaluated as needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement or below, then the ETI will undertake follow-up inspection activities within 18 months. The full detail of the post-inspection process is outlined in the Education and Training Inspectorate publication 'What Happens After an Inspection: Further Education, Work-based Learning and European Social Fund Programmes', which can also be accessed on our website [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

The ETI will publish a written report on the project following the inspection, which can be accessed, around two months after the inspection, at [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk). We use the following overall effectiveness outcomes in reports:

Overall effectiveness outcome
High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement
Needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement

## HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED IN THE INSPECTION PROCESS?

Use the inspection process to give your views on how well the ESF project is doing by:

- discussing any views you have about the project with an inspector if they visit you;
- e-mailing the reporting inspector prior to or during the inspection at [eti@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:eti@education-ni.gov.uk);
- contacting Inspection Services Team prior to, or during the inspection to arrange a discussion with the reporting inspector or a member of the Inspection team.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Inspection Services Team:

By e-mail: [eti@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:eti@education-ni.gov.uk)

By telephone: 028 9127 9726

In writing:

The Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
BANGOR  
Co Down BT19 7PR