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Learner-Oriented Quality Certification for Further Education Organisations

Guidelines

Version 3



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Preface

The Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung (LQW®) is currently the most widely accepted quality management system for further education in Germany and Austria. From 2000 to 2005, LQW was funded within the framework of several projects organised by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The European Social Fund also provided financial support. The quality procedures described are now recognised in countries beyond Germany.

Quality development in the field of further education has always existed. Every motivated employee strives to improve his/her work, when confronted by deficiencies. He/she will obviously do this to make his/her work easier and to remain motivated over a longer time period. Every trainer will consider how to make the next seminar better, especially if the last one was less successful. The development of quality is an integral part of the everyday work of adult education institutes and has, therefore, always existed in its basic form.

The use of a quality management system is standard in further education organisations nowadays and there are more than enough reasons for the systematic development of quality:

- The social situation is rapidly changing.
 - Organisations which counteract such changes through their own restructuring can influence their markets and surroundings.
- The environment in which people learn and the motivation of the learners are different and specific.
 - Organisations which optimise their product range based on the interests of their participants will retain the trust of their clients and win new customers.
- Financial resources are shrinking.
 - Organisations which prove that the monies have been wisely invested will secure the legitimization of their sponsors and clients.
- The demands placed on employees are increasing.
 - Organisations which arrange their work processes more effectively will manage the motivation of their employees more successfully.

Today it is more relevant than ever to remember that quality development was originally an integral element of the further education profession. The modern philosophy of certifying everything to regulate the distribution of public funds has nothing to do with the development of quality and could be seen to be counterproductive. Quality development is a professional strategy for further education and not an instrument of state-run regulatory policy.

Educational quality occurs neither through administrative control mechanisms, nor through bureaucracy and the formalisation of processes. Educational quality means that the training organisation and the learners explain why they do something and reflect upon their actions.

With the Learner-Oriented Quality Certification, a practicable and effective quality management system is presented which stems from the learning process and is focused on the learner. All other motivational elements are important, but when compared to the goal of offering the best possible support during the life-long process of learning, they are of a secondary nature.

In this third version of the LQW, you will receive a document that has been updated based on much feedback from further education institutes and auditors as well as an analysis of practical changes that were made. Changes in the requirements of the quality areas are, in the first instance, more specific than before. Our intention was, primarily, to produce a comprehensible and user-friendly description of the assessment process for quality development. For interested readers, the three excursions in the brochure provide a deeper understanding of it. However, the guidelines can also be read and understood without these excursions.

We have endeavoured to treat both sexes equally, where possible, without making the text more difficult to read.

Prof. Dr. Rainer Zech
Hanover, July 2006

- ➔ Under www.qualitaets-portal.de you can download support tools for the Learner-Oriented Quality Model.
- ➔ Further copies of the English and German guidelines are available for download under www.qualitaets-portal.de.
- ➔ Further copies of the German guidelines can be ordered online under the heading »Leitfaden« for 12,00 € plus postage.
- ➔ Further resources and reading material can also be found on www.qualitaets-portal.de under »Literatur« (Literature).

Part A: The Quality Development and Certification Model LQW

1. What is quality in further education?

Quality is generally defined as the condition, class or value of an object or a process. Quality is a neutral description, but more often than not, it is representative of good quality and for that reason, the term is usually used to talk about something valuable, useful or applicable.

When talking about further education, quality takes on another meaning. Quality in education depends on the reason for training. The individual chooses to study in order to find better ways of doing his/her job, the realisation of his/her needs and wishes, i.e. an improvement in the standard of living. At the end of the day, educational quality is measured by success in life.

Quality is made up of objectively measurable factors, intersubjective agreements and subjective preferences, e.g. how much knowledge we acquire, how we deal with other people or which method of learning suits us the most. The ultimate quality of the learning process, in terms of value, usefulness, meaningfulness and ability, can only be »measured« by the learner – only he/she can see the impact the training has on his/her life.

A person who studies not only improves his/her knowledge, skills and proficiencies, but his/her personality will also develop during the training process. A successful education improves the social standing of the individual. This is an all-encompassing definition of education. Of course, it does not always mean that all dreams are fulfilled, but there could be many different stages along the way. One thing is for sure, education is reflexive. It is not manufactured like a piece of work, but through practical and theoretical discussions, a learner changes the relationship to his/her surroundings and capacity to act.

Therefore, it is advisable to differentiate between the »quality of the education« and the »quality of the way the conditions for education are organised«. This refers to the fact that the training organisation only provides the tools for learning. Learning is and always will be a process determined by the learner.

Therefore, it is essential that the development of quality in the organisation is focused on a definition of successful learning and is substantiated. Only a quality management system that guarantees this can be considered suitable for education. In this sense, the development of quality represents the development of the organisation; the organisation's learning will increase and optimise the conditions for the learning done by the subjects.

➔ Further explanations can be found in chapter 8 and the subsequent Excur-sus "The principle of success".

In addition to the above, there is an ethical dimension to educational quality. If the learners are the central figures in the quality development process, then we must take into account that we are dealing with individuals, who invariably have gaps and inconsistencies in their previous learning, which need to be worked on. Above all, if we are looking at the connection between career and commercial goals, quality is not neutral. The demands of the client/purchaser and the demands of the participant/learning subject might conflict in various ways. In the quality development process, these issues must be considered. A formalisation in this particular area could be counterproductive, because it does not adapt itself to the uniqueness and peculiarities of individuals and different situations.

When a further education organisation sets about improving the conditions for training within a framework of quality development – that must be the goal of quality management – then this will only happen when the organisation reflects more upon what has been done in the past. Formalising procedures and processes do not automatically mean an improvement in quality, but could also prevent it. Formalisation, which is very often at the core of other quality management systems, only makes sense when the organisation can justify why something was formalised in a particular manner. The technical/bureaucratic use of diagrams or checklists is counterproductive.

LQW is, therefore, based on reflection, not formalisation. What is important is that the organisation can identify why and in what way a particular process improves the conditions for successful learning. It is necessary to agree on pedagogical goals. When this is clear, then a decision can be made as to whether the formalisation of a process is beneficial or may limit the quality. It is a misconception to think of developing educational quality as only the formalisation of processes.

The quality of an educational organisation is evident when

- suitable procedures and methods are employed to give the work a direction.
- useful results are achieved.
- conclusions and consequences are of value.
- its actions are based on the interests of the learner.

2. What makes LQW special?

Education is a special »product« in that it cannot be bought or sold, it is something that each individual has to do for him/herself. Nevertheless, educational organisations can provide competent support during the learning process. However, the learner is, to a certain extent, responsible for the success of the training; the educational organisations provide the opportunity.

- Based on this premise, organisations need their own quality management systems, which have the educational process as their foundation.

Learner-Oriented Quality Certification for Further Education Organisations is

1. the only quality development process which is focused on the learners and was designed by further education experts for further education organisations.
 - That means: Total quality in the organisation is focused on the learners.
2. a recognised quality management system using external and independent certification.
 - That means: A recognised process is used to check the quality of the organisation and, therefore, confirm the quality.
3. a freely accessible quality management system with a multitude of practical aids.
 - That means: All users receive, free of charge, a selection of quality tools without having to register for the certification process.
4. a quality »community« in the field of education.
 - That means: You belong to a network of like-minded professionals and a forum in which these colleagues can be consulted.

In the field of further education and in terms of developing quality, this **extensive offer** is unique.

3. What uses does LQW have?

LQW will introduce a continuous cycle of quality development and assist in setting strategic development goals. At the end, the educational organisation will be a »learning organisation«.

Organisations that took part in the quality development process and participated in follow-up surveys have provided the following **successes of this learning process**:

- The development of a mission statement strengthens the identity of the organisation and its employees.
 - That means: The feeling of »belonging« increases.
- Pedagogical professionalism increases by having to discuss the meaning of successful learning.
 - That means: The organisation's pedagogical self-concept is strengthened and becomes more obvious to the observer.
- The needs of the learners have more influence on the learning process.
 - That means: The success rate of the learners increases.
- The evaluation process identifies potential for future development and new chances.
 - That means: Innovation and change occur more easily.

- The exact definition of processes streamlines the workflow within the organisation.
 - That means: Work flows more smoothly and duplication of work is avoided.
- The clarification and definition of interfaces and responsibilities within the organisation promote transparency and make the work easier.
 - That means: Everybody in the organisation knows his/her responsibilities and what the duties of the other employees are.
- An overview of the various work areas will improve teamwork.
 - That means: An understanding of the work of the others grows.
- Management of the organisation is improved by having clearly defined goals. Steps along the way to achieving these goals can be checked and the success evaluated.
 - That means: The future of the organisation is in its own hands.
- The public image of the organisation improves through knowingly marketing the quality of the organisation.
 - That means: Public recognition increases.
- The management of the organisation is driven by common principles.
 - That means: Decisions are more transparent.
- The involvement of the employees in the quality development process helps them to recognise the value of their own work.
 - That means: Motivation increases.
- The work of the whole organisation is focused on the interests of its customers.
 - That means: Customer satisfaction increases.

4. What is the structure of LQW?

Education as the »line of business« and learning as the »product« are different to other lines of business and products because of one reason, in that the end result, i.e. successful learning, cannot be produced by the training organisation. It is the duty of the learner him/herself to acquire this knowledge. Further education organisations only provide the conditions under which training takes place. Whether education actually takes place or not is out of their hands. This special situation means that a separate quality management system is required and limits the transference of procedures from other well-known quality management systems.

Therefore, the following **premises** exist as a means of determining the adequacy of the quality management:

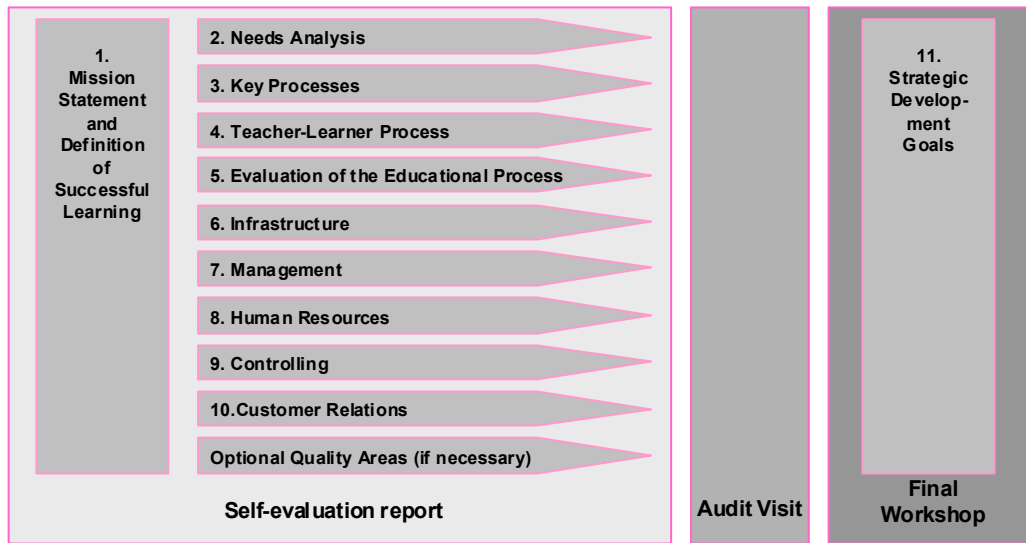
1. The learner as a »knowledgeable producer« is the focus of all efforts to improve quality. The organisation's development of quality and the certification process are based on this piece of information.

2. It is not only a question of quality assurance; it is also the continual development of quality within the organisation – starting with the changing needs of the environment surrounding the organisation. The fact that the organisation learns is the basis for improving the learning of the participants.
3. Education is gained by reflecting on previous experiences. The improvement of the organisational conditions must, therefore, also be a reflexive process. An improvement in educational quality cannot be advanced through formalising processes alone.
4. LQW is not only an external assessment process; it will also take into account the development potential of the organisations and further extend that potential. LQW supports the learning process of the further education institutes and does not check for standards set by external organisations.
5. The model is not limited to one type of organisation and can be used by both small and large organisations; as LQW can be adapted to the needs of the organisation, it is also subject to continuous development and is flexible.
6. The LQW-Network provides the basis for comparison of further education organisations and thereby promotes the exchange of knowledge and experience.

Clearly defined requirements for the development of quality and the certification thereof are examined in the following areas:

1. Mission Statement
2. Needs Analysis
3. Key Processes
4. Teacher-Learner Process
5. Evaluation of the Educational Processes
6. Infrastructure
7. Management
8. Human Resources
9. Controlling
10. Customer Relations
11. Strategic Development Goals

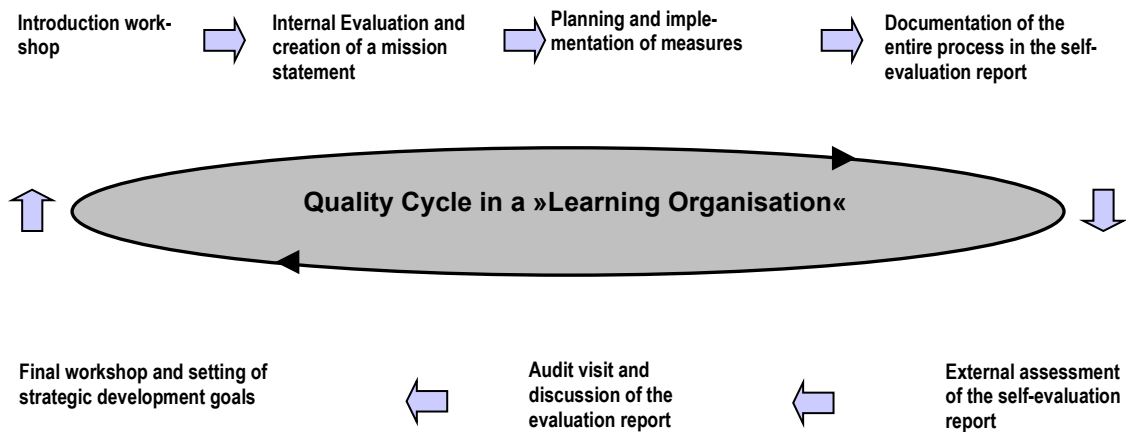
Compliance with the defined requirements in these obligatory quality areas must be proven in a self-evaluation report and confirmed by an audit visit. Organisations can also refer to particular strengths in the optional quality areas defined by the organisation. The impressions and opinions of the auditors will be given to the organisations during the visits. In the final workshop, strategic development goals for the next defined period will be agreed on and the further education organisation gives feedback on its experiences with the certification process, which are used for future revisions of the model. The quality certification process »learns« from its practical application.

Diagram 1: The Quality Development and Certification Model

5. What are the steps involved in the quality process?

LQW is a **quality cycle** in that quality development represents the work of the further education organisation and the quality certification represents the evaluation by external auditors and the confirmation of quality compliance. As opposed to the more traditional certification process, which is governed by predetermined standards, the LQW certification relies more on the quality criteria defined by the organisation.

The quality development process begins with an internal evaluation, e.g. an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. After the formation of a mission statement, based on that specific organisation's definition of successful learning, the planning and implementation of the required quality development measures follow. This process will be documented in the form of a self-evaluation report. The self-evaluation report is subject to external evaluation by LQW trained auditors during an audit visit. If this report complies, the quality cycle is completed by a final workshop and the formation of strategic development goals for the next quality period.

Diagram 2: The Quality Cycle

When a further education organisation has opted and registered for the LQW model, the internal quality management process begins with an **introduction workshop**, in which the process is presented and explained. Based on the quality areas and their requirements, an internal evaluation of the organisation will take place, and areas will be highlighted that need more attention. It is advisable that as many employees as possible attend this appointment, so that transparency of, trust in and motivation for the development of quality is the result. In organisations that are too big, it is recommended that this occurs in more than one section. In the first section, the procedure will be presented to all of the employees, and in the second section, an analysis of the current situation is carried out, e.g. with a steering committee or with the organisation's designated quality team. In cases where there is a good understanding of the LQW procedure, the introduction workshop can be dedicated to the subject of how to write a self-evaluation report. In cases where there is a re-certification, the introduction workshop will then be replaced by a **follow-up workshop**, which is designed to support the quality development process of the organisation and is made-to-measure.

➔ Further explanations of the introduction/follow-up workshops can be found in chapter 7.

Based on the **internal evaluation**, a mission statement and a definition of successful learning will be produced. The current quality situation in the organisation will be documented, plans for future **quality development processes** are drawn up, and internal goals will be established identifying measures required, timetables, resources and responsibilities. Good project management is one of the most important factors governing the success of the quality development. In this phase of the development process, organisations have access to numerous tools developed by ArtSet, a hotline (telephone or e-mail) to answer any questions as they arise and access to the opinions and experiences of other LQW organisations through a mailing list. Regional support centres and national

»network conferences« bring the organisations together to share their experiences and support the organisations' quality work with special workshops.

➔ Further explanations of how to manage the quality processes can be found in chapter 9.

Designated members of the organisation will meet at predetermined times to reflect upon and evaluate the process so far and to make further plans. The written form of this internal evaluation is the **self-evaluation report**, in which the organisation describes the existing quality processes, an evaluation of those processes and proves compliance with the requirements. This report should be an integral part of the quality development process and not summarise how things are done at the end of the process. During the process, the self-evaluation report is an aid, while at the end, it will show the preliminary results. It is also necessary to document the results of all quality measures, e.g. in an »organisation handbook«. This **documentation** can also be in electronic form.

➔ Further explanations of the self-evaluation report can be found in chapter 10.

After handing in the self-evaluation report and receipt of the audit report thereof, the **audit visit** is a decisive milestone within the organisation's learning process. Now is the moment to discuss the contents of the audit report with the employees. The description of the organisation itself will be confronted with the point of view of the external observer. This feedback-process provides the greatest chance to learn. It will now be possible to discuss and to understand why the outside looks at the organisation the way it does and even why, possibly, there are misunderstandings, because the organisation's opinion of itself might be contradictory to the public's perception. However, these discrepancies also give the organisation the chance to learn – by understanding why they occurred in the first place and how to prevent them in the future. The auditor will also check the validity of the evidence given to support the existing quality measures and, if necessary, check the obligations of the audit report.

➔ Further explanations of the audit visit can be found in chapter 11.

In the **final workshop**, a reflection on the past and a look into the future will occur. The future period of development will depend on how the organisation interprets the results of its quality process, especially the successes and failures, and which conclusions it draws from this reflection. **Strategic development goals** will influence not only the quality development, but also the future of the whole organisation. These strategic development goals determine the organisation's development and quality development for the next four years. In this way, the organisation can guarantee that it will not only react to its environment, but can also influence the way it develops. The lasting quality development helps the educational organisation to become a »learning organisation«.

➔ Further explanations of the final workshop and strategic development goals can be found in chapter 12.

6. What is the administrative process?

All education organisations are entitled to apply for the Learner-Oriented Quality Certification for Further Education Organisations. All organisations that have applied for the certification are listed on the LQW website under the heading »Organisationen« (Organisations) together with links to the homepages of these organisations. This allows all organisations interested in certification to contact those that have already been certified before applying for certification.

The **Terms and conditions of business** are available on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), which are printable.

Applications for the Learner-Oriented Quality Certification can be made by completing the application form available as a PDF document under the heading »Anmeldung« (Application) or »Service/Anmeldung« on the LQW website. The application for certification and acceptance of the application by ArtSet® Qualitätstestierung GmbH represent a legally binding contract. It does not represent a legal right to the certification.

The completed application must either be sent by post or by fax for it to be binding. All other forms of application will not be processed. Within one week of receipt of the application, the organisation will receive confirmation, information about the certification conditions, »LQW guidelines« to the eleven quality areas and their (minimum) requirements to be examined.

The current **costs** of certification can be found under the terms and conditions listed on the homepage of ArtSet® Qualitätstestierung GmbH. They can be paid in instalments. The applying organisation will be invoiced the first half of the certification costs when confirmation is sent, and the second half is due when the self-evaluation report is submitted.

The services of ArtSet® Qualitätstestierung GmbH can be accessed as soon as the first instalment has been paid.

The costs of certification include the following **services**:

- a copy of the LQW guidelines,
- an introduction workshop and a follow-up workshop for the re-certification in the organisation,
- an assessment of the self-evaluation report, performed by two independent auditors nominated by the certification organisation ArtSet, and a written detailed report of the findings, i.e. the audit report,
- an audit visit performed by the senior auditor,
- a final workshop in the organisation,
- a certificate issued by ArtSet® Qualitätstestierung GmbH confirming the certification, which is valid for a period of four years,
- the LQW logo in electronic form for marketing purposes.

The following **additional services/products** will be made available by the certification organisation:

- the first time of certification, a tile representing the LQW Network Picture, designed by the artist Guido Kratz,
- a signed print of the current status of the LQW Network Picture,
- a website containing information about LQW, the certification process and support systems, together with quality tools and other aids to download,
- a hotline to deal with any questions arising during the certification process (telephone and e-mail),
- a mailing list, which provides the opportunity to obtain advice and support from other organisations.

Withdrawal from the certification process is possible, without any cost, within the first four weeks after the date of confirmation, but only if none of the above services have been used. If any services have been used or the four-week period has passed, the first instalment will be retained, but the second instalment is no longer due.

Any information received by the certification organisation (especially the self-evaluation report) is subject to **German data protection laws** and will not be given to third parties, other than those involved in awarding the certification. The auditors are also subject to the same data protection laws.

The assessment will be performed by **specially trained and independent auditors** and ArtSet is responsible for the accreditation of the said auditors. The organisation applying for certification has the right to decide, within one week of being informed who the auditors will be, whether to accept or not. When the organisation rejects the auditors it has to give reasons for this.

The obligations listed in the audit report are necessary for certification. In cases where these obligations have not been fulfilled during the audit visit, a **revised self-evaluation report** can be submitted within six months for a renewed assessment. This new assessment will incur additional costs. It will be carried out by the senior auditor.

It is possible to **appeal against** the findings of the certification. The appeal process begins with a written explanation for the appeal, to which the certification organisation will respond. If it is not possible to reach an agreement, there will be a possibility to assess the self-evaluation report once again, with an alternative pair of auditors. In case the results of the second assessment are different, the costs will be carried by the certification organisation; if the same result arises as in the first assessment, the applying organisation will be liable to pay the additional costs.

With the **letter of confirmation** that the certification process will begin, the organisation will receive details of what support is available on the LQW website and what tools are available for download. In addition, the services of the certification organisation will be introduced and there is also a special reference to the available tools for each quality area.

A maximum time period of thirteen months from the date of confirmation, also known as the **start date**, is permitted for submitting the self-evaluation report. Payment of the invoice for the first instalment is expected within four weeks. At this point, it is also possible to **fix a date for the introduction workshop**, which will last approximately four hours. In order to find a suitable auditor/consultant for this workshop, it is helpful to be given two or three alternative dates. However, it may be necessary to make other arrangements and all attempts will be made to integrate this appointment into the calendar of the respective organisation. The representatives nominated for this workshop are always accredited auditors.

In the **time before the self-evaluation report is submitted**, the certification organisation will contact the applying organisation three times in written form (excluding contact to the hotline). In the first time period, tips on how to write the report will be given; three months before submitting the self-evaluation report, details of how to submit the report and the assessment process will be explained; one month before handing in the report, the second instalment is due for payment, an invoice will be raised and the date for submission of the report will once again be communicated.

As previously mentioned, a maximum time period of thirteen months is planned from the date of application to the submission date of the report. It is often the case that towards the end of this process, time is short. This situation is taken into account by the certification organisation, in that the self-evaluation report is submitted in electronic format by e-mail, at the latest, on the **agreed submission date** and the two printed copies of the document are sent by post on the same day. It is the responsibility of the applying organisation to guarantee that the self-evaluation report arrives at the certification organisation, at the latest, on the agreed date for submission.

Written confirmation of receipt of the self-evaluation report will be sent by the certification organisation, containing the **names of the auditors**. According to the terms and conditions of business, the applying organisation has one week to reject the nominated auditors with well-founded arguments.

The **assessment** will be completed within sixteen weeks of the self-evaluation report being submitted and payment of the second instalment at the latest. The auditors will produce their reports within five weeks and independently of one another. The senior auditor is responsible for formulating and writing the audit report, whilst the junior auditor's report is responsible for providing an alternative perspective on the self-evaluation report. The two auditors have to achieve a consensus. Where necessary, the certification organisation will be involved and submit a joint report. The self-evaluation report forms the exclusive basis for the assessment, and in cases where the requirements for certification are not clear from this report the auditors will identify certain obligations, which will be checked during the audit visit.

Every audit report is subject to a **quality check** by the certification organisation. The audit reports must be formulated in such a way that the evaluations and observations are not only factually correct and plausible, but also appreciative. The certification organisation will refer directly to the self-evaluation report during the quality check and all observations will be passed to the senior auditor in written form. All observations and, where relevant, any differences in opinion between the certification organisation and the auditors will be thoroughly discussed. After this exchange of views, the senior auditor will revise the audit report, the certification organisation will check the content and a final formal check will be performed. As soon as this has been completed, the final audit report will be sent to the organisation.

The **audit report** is 25-30 pages long and contains three sections.

The first section is a summary of the assessment and begins with statements about which requirements were complied with. Next, a listing of all the results of checks on the individual quality areas will be presented. The auditors will give their overall impression of the self-evaluation report, the organisation's strengths, its possible development opportunities and where further development is necessary. Feedback on the self-evaluation report and the quality development process will appear in this section. The definition of successful learning will be reformulated and commented upon.

Section 2 of the audit report contains the results of the checks on the individual quality areas. The feedback given here is based on two points of view – one as the auditor and one as the advisor. In the auditor's part, the feedback is based on whether the minimum requirements have been fulfilled and an explanation as to why such a decision has been made. Observations on each and every requirement in each quality area will be made. In the advisory part, suggestions and comments will be presented, which should form the basis for all future quality development plans of the organisation.

Section 3 will provide information about the audit visit and the final workshop.

The **results of the assessment** can fall into basically one of two categories:

1. All the requirements relevant to certification have been complied with in the self-evaluation report and certification is recommended. In such cases, the audit visit and final workshop will generally happen on one day or over two consecutive days.
2. It is not possible to decide whether the organisation meets all the requirements relevant to certification based on the self-evaluation report. The quality areas that have met the requirements and the availability of all necessary evidence will be identified. The auditors will indicate which quality areas need further examination and identify obligations for the organisation. In such cases, the audit visit will take place, at the latest, six weeks after the audit report has been sent. The final workshop can only take place when the missing requirements have been complied with.

The **audit visit** should take place within six weeks of the organisation receiving the audit report. The audit date will be agreed between the organisation and the

senior auditor, who will forward this information to the certification organisation. The audit visit will last approximately four hours.

At the end of the visit, minutes will be compiled, giving details of whether the unfulfilled requirements have been met and all the relevant evidence is available. The minutes will be completed within one week of the visit by the senior auditor. A recommendation for or against certification will be made, but the final decision will be made by the certification organisation. The certification organisation will inform the organisation accordingly after having checked the minutes.

When all obligations are fulfilled, a date for the final workshop will be fixed.

In case the **obligations have not been met**, the organisation has a maximum of six months to submit a revised self-evaluation report for a **renewed assessment**. A certification fee is once again due, and another audit visit will only occur if it was necessary to make obligations again (additional fees will again be due). The final workshop will take place after the renewed assessment.

If the audit report findings were positive and the audit visit was successful, the **final workshop** can take place. This workshop will last approximately four hours and take place in the organisation. The date will be agreed between the organisation and the senior auditor, who will forward this information to the certification organisation. A minimum of two weeks between informing the certification organisation and the workshop taking place is needed to ensure that all the necessary elements for certification can be completed by the certification organisation, e.g. to assign a tile of the LQW Network Picture created by the artist Guido Kratz to the respective organisation, to send the tile to the senior auditor and to prepare the LQW Certificate, the corresponding print and the LQW logo.

The result of the final workshop is a written agreement between the organisation, the senior auditor and the certification organisation, of what the **strategic development goals** will be. This agreement is a fundamental element of the minimum requirements for re-certification and must be sent, in the form of a WORD document, to the certification organisation via e-mail. The organisation applying for certification is obliged to arrange this part of the process. The strategic development goals will be coordinated, formulated and documented by the organisation and the auditor. Ultimately, the certification organisation will formally agree to the goals. The purpose of this formalisation is to avoid any interpretation problems during the re-certification process four years later, when examining these additional minimum requirements.

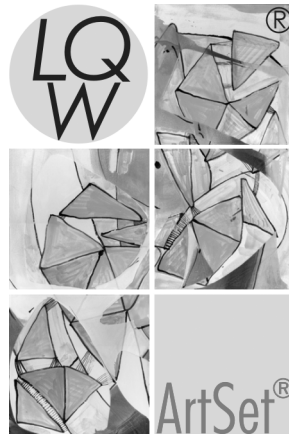
After the strategic development goals have been checked and accepted by the certification organisation, the details will be transferred to a standard form, signed by the certifiers, and two copies will be sent to the organisation. One copy will be signed by the organisation and returned to the certification organisation.

As soon as a copy of the strategic development goals signed by the organisation has been received by the certification organisation, the **certificate** will be signed by the certification organisation. The date of certification as well as of the certificate is always the date of the final workshop. Together with the certificate,

the LQW logo and a signed print of the LQW Network Picture will be sent to the organisation.

Approximately one week after dispatching the certificate, the organisation's link will be activated on the LQW Network Picture on the website. On the LQW Internet page, the organisation will be included under the heading »Organisationen« (Organisations) and the validity of the certification will also be indicated.

Fig. 1: LQW logo

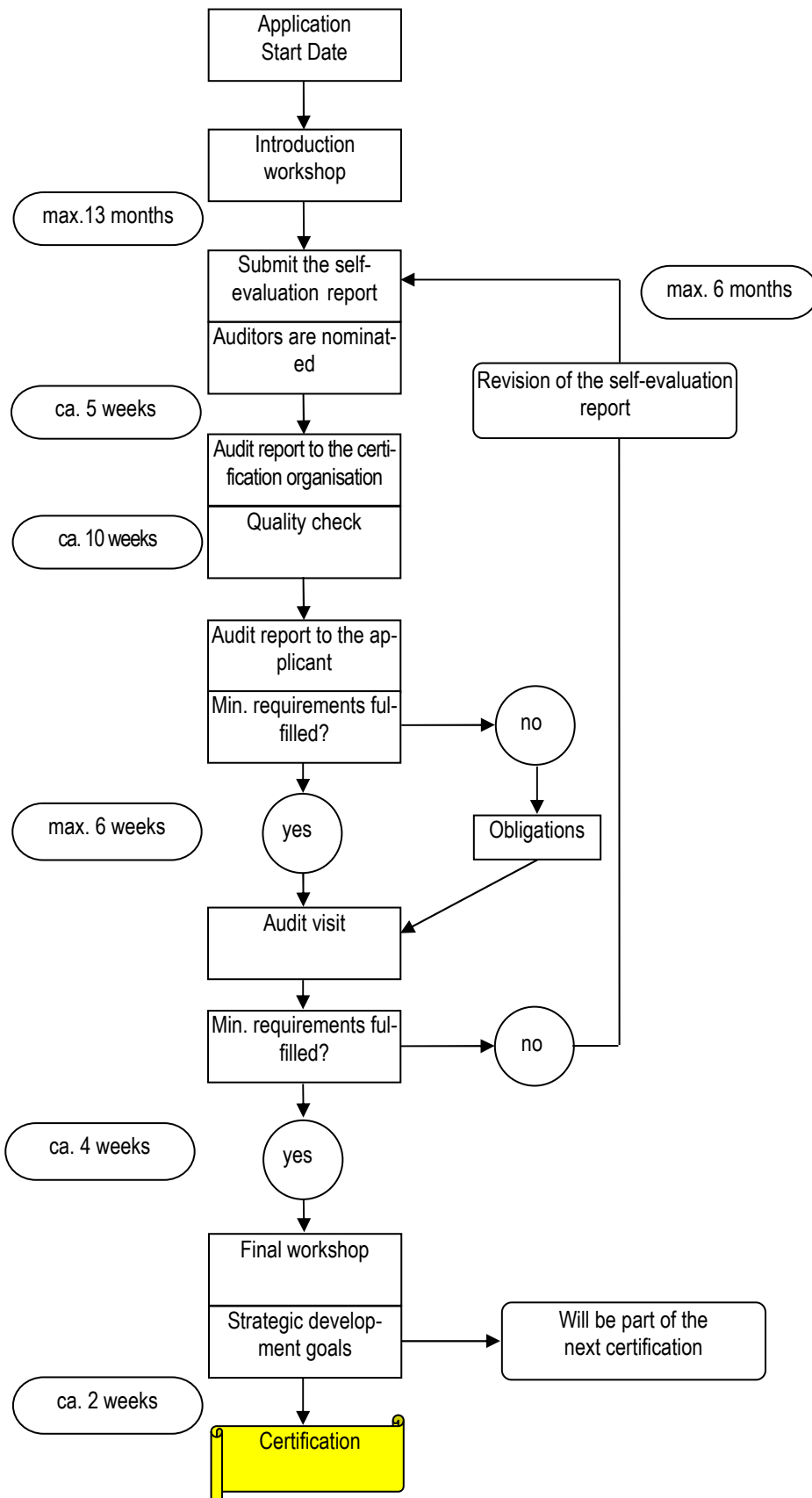


At the end of this process, ArtSet requests that the organisations assist in **evaluating the LQW model**, e.g. by completing and returning an evaluation questionnaire.

The results of this evaluation process will be used to revise and improve the LQW model.

The **LQW certificate is valid** for a period of four years. LQW does not require annual checks because the strategic development goals, formulated in the final workshop, are prerequisites for the organisation's future development. The LQW process relies on the organisation's initiative and responsibilities to prolong the development process.

In order to guarantee a smooth re-certification process, the organisation must apply for **re-certification** nine months before the end of the four-year period at the latest; a new self-evaluation report must be submitted for the assessment six months before the end of the period of validity at the latest. The organisation is of course permitted to begin this process earlier. The relevant documents are available on the ArtSet website. Only this application form will be accepted, either by post or by fax, and it must be stated when re-certification should take place. Re-certification follows the same procedures as in the first certification.

Diagram 3: The Administrative Process

Excursus: A sample of systemic thinking for quality development

Systems are complex units, comprising of separate elements, their relations and a boundary separating them from their surroundings. There are, for example, psychical or social systems. Organisations, which represent *formalised* social systems, belong to this last group. The theory of systems assumes that systems are entities that are separate from their surroundings and impact upon themselves. Systems have their own logic, their language, their own »grammar« – they function in a very special way.

The environment surrounding the systems will provide stimulation, challenges and aggravations to the self-development process. However, the environment cannot control the systems – the systems exclusively control themselves. That is relevant for both psychical systems connected to learning and organisational systems relating to quality development. A prerequisite of learning for organisations and individuals, in the first instance, is observation: self-observation and examination of the surroundings. There are, however, blind spots – much of what goes on in their surroundings remains unclear for the systems. Many things within themselves are systematically not seen by them.

Systems arise and develop based on one fundamental distinction: e.g. educational organisations differentiate between learning and not learning, and the church makes a difference between believing and not believing. By using this basic philosophy, the educational organisations will look at their surroundings, discover opportunities for learning, motivation, topics, target groups, etc. All the information which does not pass the filter of the fundamental distinction – known in the theory of systems as »code« – will be omitted. Everything a system recognises must be »set off against« its code, i.e. educational systems consider everything based on the premise whether the observed element can be part of the learning process and/or the organisation of it.

Systems are, by the nature of their conservative approach, very often not able to identify things that are alien or new ideas and, therefore, only seek to reproduce themselves with minimal changes. They separate themselves from their surroundings and only discover things that were already known to the system/organisation. It is very often the case that, as systems get older, this process of separation increases. Therefore, systems can become resistant to learning.

External and independent observers of systems and their surroundings will therefore see things that are not obvious to the systems. The same mechanism applies to the observers – who are also »systems« themselves – and their surroundings: They will, as well, only recognise certain things about themselves/their surroundings and will not see others.

When systems come into contact with one another, they can stimulate and enrich each other and introduce new elements, by playing the game »I can see something that you can't see«. So long as systems permit it, the exchange of observations can be extremely productive.

In the case of the Learner-Oriented Quality Certification of educational organisations, the systems of the organisation and the auditor will meet. The educational organisation will describe its observation of itself and its surroundings, based on defined requirements, in the self-evaluation report. At this point already the organisations have to observe themselves from the viewpoint of their surroundings (a challenging task of itself). The auditors, for their part, »observe« the self-evaluation report and, during the audit visit, the organisation itself. The findings of their observations will be explained, above all, in their audit report, which not only contains statements relating to compliance with the minimum requirements, but also, and above all, comments and recommendations. In this way, their observations will be reflected to the organisation, and the organisation may use the auditors' observations to stimulate learning. Of course, the educational organisation will also observe the auditors and draw their own conclusions.

When both systems (organisation and auditor) meet in the audit visit and discussions about the audit report begin, the analysis and feedback sessions will have an enormous impact on the development of both parties. The educational organisations learn about quality development and the auditors learn about their auditing techniques. Therefore, the assessment in the LQW process should promote development, because it helps the system being examined to develop itself, it offers the educational organisation chances of further development – a task which is the responsibility of the organisations themselves.

It is important to understand that the auditors cannot instruct or give directions to the organisation about its quality development process, in the same way that teachers cannot do the learning for their students. That is the paradox of the teacher-learner process – it is not possible to make the other person learn, and it is the same with organisations. Everybody and every organisation must learn for itself – the training program or any certification process only provides the context and the conditions for learning.

➔ Further explanations of the connection between the assessment and the ways to promote development can be found in chapter 15 and the excursus on hermeneutic understanding.

Part B: Instructions for implementation

7. What happens in the introduction workshops and the follow-up workshops?

The introduction workshops and the follow-up workshops in case of re-certification provide the basis for future quality development in the organisations. The logic of the LQW model, the specific nature of the requirements and how to proceed will all be explained. Generally, this workshop will last approximately four hours and it is, therefore, critical that comprehensive preparations are made. At this point it is vital that the auditors and the organisation work well together. Many issues need to be clarified in advance to ensure that this introductory phase is optimised. Only experienced and accredited auditors will be used. The auditors will already have discussed the following with the management or the person responsible for quality management in the organisation over the phone: any special circumstances that are relevant to the certification process, the person's knowledge of the LQW model and the specific requirements of the workshop.

The organisation is obliged to make all the arrangements concerning the workshop, e.g. rooms, projector, flipchart, etc. It is recommended that as many employees as possible, including freelance instructors where necessary, attend the workshop, because the motivational elements of the model will be defined to ensure that the concept of quality and its importance in the future are understood. If the group is too big, it is conceivable to split the presentation into sections. In the first part, the logic of the model will be introduced, and in the second section an analysis of the current quality status of the organisation will be performed either in a smaller group, which will be responsible for the quality process, or in different work groups. It will be helpful if all participants have read the LQW guidelines, paying particular attention to the quality areas and their requirements. It also makes sense, where relevant, to look at the results of all the previous quality development processes already completed. The auditors are responsible for the content of the workshop.

In the case where it is the first **introduction workshop**, i.e. the organisation has no prior practical experience of LQW, it is especially important to explain the **principle of being »learner-oriented«** and the function of the **definition of »successful learning«**. When there is no lasting understanding of these two points, the ensuing quality process will be misdirected, which means that the quality process will be robbed of its identity-defining nucleus. The auditors themselves must have a complete understanding of the model and must be highly skilled at transmitting a complex and difficult theoretical concept to the further education organisation, so that it is possible to see the connection between the theory and the organisation's problems. In the second part of the presentation, the individual quality areas will be considered and, based on the requirements, the following will be identified, together with the organisation –

- which processes comply with the requirements and the necessary documents exist,
- which processes comply with the requirements, but there are no documents to prove this,
- all the, until now, missing elements needed to fulfil the requirements for certification.

This part of the process prepares the organisation for its future work on quality and the person responsible for quality in the organisation is assisted in how to structure this work. Therefore, the auditors must also possess project management skills, because many of the questions coming from the organisation refer to this area and competent answers must be given. The senior auditor is responsible for hosting the workshop, and already at this point of the quality process he/she is an advisor who gives the first advice concerning development.

The **follow-up workshop** for organisations which have applied for re-certification serves other purposes. It could be the case that the LQW model has been changed and the organisation needs to be informed of the amended requirements. It is also conceivable that the results of the preceding self-evaluation report and the audit report thereof need to be examined. It is also possible for the organisation to use this workshop for a specific area that has been identified as requiring assistance. That means that the auditors have more of an advisory role to play in the follow-up workshop than in the introduction workshop and that the follow-up workshop is more company-specific. Therefore, organisations have the freedom to choose any consultants, providing they are accredited LQW auditors. It would be logical to choose the senior auditor from the previous certification, because that individual already has an in-depth knowledge of the organisation. As in the case with the introduction workshop, the organisation is responsible for arranging the logistics and the auditors are responsible for overseeing the content.

8. Why are the mission statement and the definition of successful learning so important?

The Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification recommends that all efforts made to improve quality are focused on the successful learning of the learners. The goal is to optimise the conditions for learning by giving the organisation the chance to learn about itself as well. The quality process in a further education organisation begins, maybe after a strengths/weaknesses analysis, with the creation of a **mission statement**. This is imperative because it is assumed that this concept describes the organisation's corporate identity, thereby allowing the organisation to understand itself and develop an identity, which will influence all future operations. Therefore, the mission statement must direct the employees on how they are supposed to work. All employees should be involved in creating the mission statement, because only those people who joined in the process will identify themselves with the statement. A part of this mission statement has to be the definition of successful learning. Without having a »pic-

ture« of itself and how it operates, every action of the organisation will be random and lack system.

Successful learning can basically be measured as an increase in the knowledge of a subject and that, in turn, means an improvement in the ability to perform an action. At the end of the day, learning refers to the everyday life of an individual, which should benefit from increased knowledge and skills. The completion of this learning circle is the fact that the individual's ability to perform certain tasks means that he/she is better able to deal with life's everyday challenges. Learners will, therefore, be motivated to learn when they perceive an improvement in the quality of their lives is gained by attending a program of learning.

By **defining successful learning**, the educational organisation has to change its viewpoint to that of the learner. Right at the beginning of the quality process, each organisation creates its own definition, which identifies what the learner can, at best, achieve by making use of the offer of training. It is critical to remember that the definition represents the ideal situation, upon which the organisation bases all its operations. The definition of successful learning is, therefore, the »red thread« of the whole quality development process.

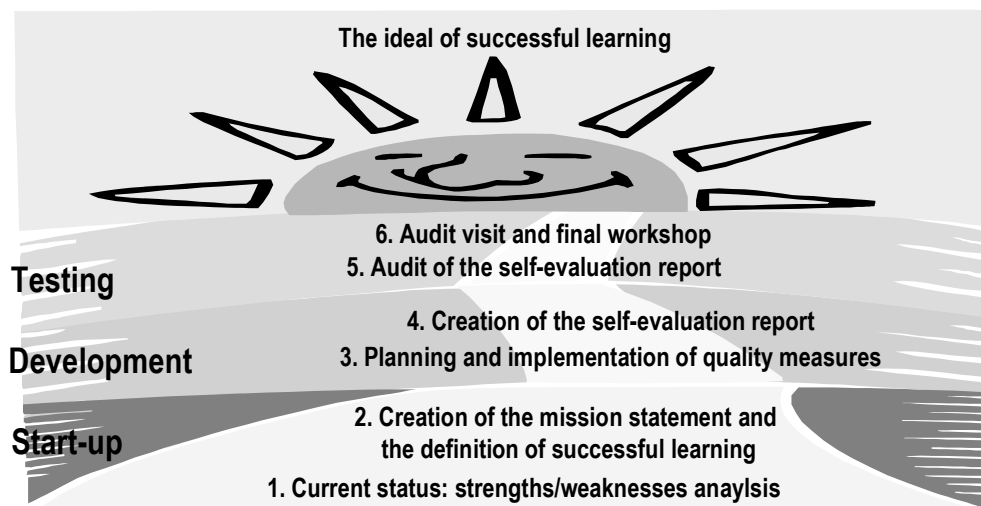
This definition does **not** refer to the setting of pedagogical/technical goals for the instructors or the learning goals of the participants. It is more than this, it is a principle, and all training programs must be justified based on this principle.

The Learner-Oriented Quality Model claims to be a quality management system suitable for the field of further education and relevant for certification purposes. It must take into account the special qualities of the learning process, i.e. learning is something learners do and which can only be supported and improved if the conditions are correct. This happens in the following ways:

- To begin with, the requirements in the majority of the quality areas refer to the learner, e.g. the mission statement, the needs analysis, the teacher-learner process, evaluation of the training processes, infrastructure and customer relations. In these quality areas the organisations have to take into account the learner's perspective.
- Central and unique to the model in question is the necessity to define successful learning right at the start of the quality process and the fact that all quality measures have to be justified based on this definition. The further education organisations is given, for example, the opportunity to decide which processes are keys to success, but again, these must be chosen based on the interests of the learner. In this case the learner's perspective is integrated, via the arguments presented in the definition of successful learning.
- Finally, references to the definition of successful learning arise in the assessment process, in that the auditors revise the definition and comment upon it, check the validity of the arguments used for the quality measures and discuss this subject during the audit visit when talking about the self-evaluation report and the audit report.

Every person must learn for him/herself, and that means no external influences can make that happen – learning is a self-managed process. However, by managing the conditions surrounding the learning process, greater control of the process itself will be achieved. It is, therefore, important to make sure that the learning takes place in a suitable environment and is accompanied by professional staff. In order to consciously and purposefully manage the conditions surrounding the learning process, it is critical that those persons supporting the process have a clear and complete understanding of what successful learning means. Due to the fact that this definition is specific to the organisation, it must be included in the preliminary phase of the quality development process and be part of the mission statement. The definition of successful learning becomes the main focus, upon which all quality efforts and procedures that guarantee quality are based.

Diagram 4: Focus of all Quality Measures: the Learner-Orientation



Internally, the organisation will gain from these processes a basis for making decisions on how to regulate those processes which support the learning process. To the outside world, the further education organisation indicates, with this definition, what it deems successful learning to be as well as the services offered as a guarantee. Potential clients can compare this offer of success to their own expectations and decide whether to learn at that particular organisation or not. The definition of successful learning will be a permanent reference point for the auditors throughout the whole assessment process, especially the evaluation of how quality improves.

Excursus: The principle of success as the focal point of the complete quality development process

What does »success« mean? It might be helpful to start with examining some of the meanings of the word:

Success can be defined as an effect or result. When the focus is exclusively on the result, however, getting certain results could also mean that learners do so by simply following instructions, which is often the case in education. Yet this does not focus on the subject/learner and the learning process.

Success can also mean that one **manages to do** something, that something **works**. When looking at success, one might also focus on the needs and activities of the subject, at achieving important personal goals.

Success may refer to prosperity and a person's reputation:

A **prosperous** life could mean that the individual has become a general manager, a person with power, influence and wealth. Status, reputation and possessions are all indicators to the outside world of what this person has achieved.

Yet a **successful** life can also mean that the individual is content, at peace with him/herself and his/her life – this person has *managed* something, has reached his/her goal and is satisfied. One can feel the difference.

When a person passes an exam, it is seen as a success. But was the learning process itself a success? Success can be determined from different perspectives:

From a result-based perspective, i.e. an external source provides the tools by which success can be measured. In this environment, to be successful, one has to make sacrifices – this is not a bad set of circumstances, as the results often make it all worthwhile. Or it can be determined from a learner-based perspective, i.e. the individual has learnt and understood something and is more than satisfied with the whole process. From this viewpoint, the person is trying to »find« him/herself and not disown him/herself.

Result-based learning means reaching specific, predetermined goals (and confirmation occurs in the form of a certificate being awarded). **Successful, i.e. learner-based learning represents what the individual believes to be valuable to his/her wellbeing, and the quality of this process is, therefore, of a higher value.**

Success goes beyond the learning process itself and can be applied to human nature. When we arrive at a particular place, be it a seminar or an appointment in a company, a visit to a store or even to a doctor's surgery, we will recognise after a short time if we feel comfortable in that particular situation. In general, humans possess a very reliable mechanism for evaluating whether a situation is good or bad. Recent research into the subject of intuition confirms that this »feeling« can be trusted, more so than trying to analyse the situation based on intelligence. Therefore, a feeling that something (e.g. learning) is successful (or not) can not easily be misinterpreted. Yet characteristics can be identified, discussed and impartially analysed.

The principle of success becomes the benchmark by which quality in an organisation can be measured. This is what LQW does. The following are examples of questions that can be asked:

- Was the process of creating the mission statement successful, i.e. were all the employees involved? (QA 1 Mission Statement)
- Was the organisation successful when identifying the trends in society? (QA 2 Needs Analysis)
- Are our cooperations successful, i.e. are the processes well defined and working? (QA 3 Key Processes)
- Is the behaviour of our instructors promoting successful learning? (QA 4 Teacher-Learner Process)
- Can the organisation show that the learning of the participants was successful? (QA 5 Evaluation of the educational process)
- Does the accommodation promote successful learning? (QA 6 Infrastructure)
- Is the management team successful in its job to keep driving the organisation forwards, in the right direction? (QA 7 Management)
- Is our employee training successful? (QA 8 Human Resources)
- Is the success of the organisation clearly represented by data and statistics? (QA 9 Controlling)
- Do the customers believe that they have been suitably informed, advised, accompanied, supported throughout the training, i.e. is the communication with the customers successful? (QA 10 Customer Relations)
- Are we successful while planning the organisation's future, i.e. are the vision and the strategic goals motivating and sustainable? (QA 11 Strategic Development Goals).

To ask these and other questions during the process of quality development and discuss them with the workforce might increase the level of reflection within the organisation seriously and clear the organisation's pedagogical self-concept. Thus quality management is not an imposed technical procedure but part of the organisation's daily pedagogical work.

This principle of success can be the main focus for the whole quality development process and is an evaluation tool for all procedures and services, which serve only one purpose – **the successful learning of the participants**.

9. How is the quality process managed?

To do a good job and to improve are part of the same process. Quality development is, nowadays, a never-ending task for further education organisations and one that requires complete commitment.

There are several recommended processes when looking at **quality management**:

- It is imperative that the senior management team is 100% behind developing quality and ultimately responsible for the process.
- A quality manager from within the existing staff members, someone who is a recognised member of the organisation, is entrusted with operational management of the process.
- Regular meetings (every 4-6 weeks) of all employees in smaller organisations or a representative working group in larger organisations guarantee continuity. Discussions about quality measures will take place in these meetings, necessary decisions will be outlined and thereafter carried out in the relevant places.
- Certain tasks can be delegated to smaller working groups, which will report back to the main group. It is also possible for these smaller groups to work simultaneously on compliance with the requirements of the various quality areas.
- It is recommended that writing the self-evaluation report is started at the same time as the beginning of the self-evaluation process. By doing this, all suggestions/recommendations from the working groups can be incorporated as and when they occur, so that the report progresses from the raw data to the finished product. The joint effort in developing this report gives everyone the opportunity to follow the progress and comment upon it.
- The writing of the self-evaluation report can be shared or done by one person, but what is important is that the content is regularly discussed within the organisation, to raise the quality-awareness of the organisation's employees.
- Project management methods will make the quality development process run smoothly and increase the success rate. It is necessary to set clear goals and milestones, to plan time and resources well and to have regular progress checks. It is also recommended that only 60% of the allocated time is used for the project itself and the remaining 40% be set aside for the unexpected.

Successful quality development depends on the **relationship between the senior management team and the quality manager**. It has been proven that these roles should be divided, but there must be a very close working relationship. Potential dangers occur, e.g. when the senior management team is weak and the quality manager tries to fill the gap or when the quality manager receives no support from his/her colleagues and is left alone. Therefore, the quality manager must have the support of the management team and be accepted by colleagues. The quality manager should have knowledge of the complete company, understand the science of quality management and make it practicable, possess the necessary knowledge/skills to make use of the tools available, both technical and electronic. He/she should also feel comfortable with the logic of the LQW model, be interested in learning new things and be communicative.

The following table will identify the separate functions of the management team and the quality manager.

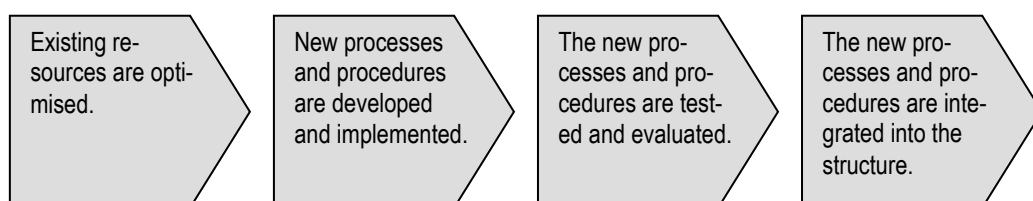
Table 1: Management and Quality Manager Tasks

Tasks of the management	Tasks of the quality manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiate the quality process and be responsible for it • general decision-making • define the visions and set goals • make resources available, e.g. time, people and finances • create freedom and, if necessary, new structures • create communication and information structures • be an example of quality and create stimuli where relevant • define milestones and check them • organise communication with the surroundings • Conflict management • have ability to reflect upon oneself and to develop this skill in others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage the quality process, give it direction and host it • specific decision-making • transmit the visions to employees and pursue the goals • plan the time, human and financial resources • implement processes and document results • organise and coordinate the communication and information processes • motivate and inspire colleagues • define tasks, delegate and check completion of the tasks • organise external support and advice • mediate in conflict situations • have ability to reflect upon oneself and to develop this skill in others

All parts of the **quality development process** can be divided into **four phases**:

1. Existing resources are optimised and used more efficiently.
2. New processes and procedures are developed and implemented.
3. The new processes and procedures are tested and evaluated.
4. The new processes and procedures are integrated into the structure of the organisation and become part of the normal routine.

Diagram 5: The Four Phases of the Quality Development Process



10. How is the self-evaluation report written?

The organisation will identify its existing quality measures in the **self-evaluation report** and, thereby, **describe the organisation itself**. Internally, the report provides an indication of how the organisation **perceives itself** and, externally, it is **proof of the quality** within the organisation, which can be used as a marketing tool. In the preparation part of the process, the organisation explains to itself and others what has been done, what is done and how it is done. By putting it in writing, the organisation is forced to identify results, processes and procedures, which are based on common arguments, and it has to show what measures are in place to allow changes to be made. This description of the organisation itself enables the organisation to critically analyse how it operates. The self-evaluation report is more than just a report on the current status, it also contains explanations about the development taken place, comments on future needs and development goals. The self-evaluation report brings together all of the steps along the way to quality development, it requires commitment from the organisation and will be not only an aid to the reflection process, but also an aid to the planning and decision-making processes. By performing further evaluations, the report continues to evolve and it documents the development of the »learning organisation«. At the same time the self-evaluation report can be used as a handbook for continuous quality development within the organisation.

The self-evaluation report makes a statement about the proceedings and results of the development of quality in the organisation and is written in such a way that external observers can understand what happened. The report should be self-explanatory, i.e. it can be understood without looking at the proof of compliance. Expressions such as »regular«, »suitable«, »future«, etc. describe no definite system or points in time, but appear to be more »anecdotal« descriptions of the processes and should, therefore, be avoided where possible. In the place of »regular«, an exact timetable of events should be defined; in the place of »future«, deadlines must be defined stating when a particular measure will be introduced or by which time a goal should be reached. The self-evaluation report should also not include any assumptions or claims, but must prove that the minimum requirements have been complied with. The report will gain credibility when the results of the quality development measures have been recorded and presented. A description of these measures/processes will include evaluations and recommendations based on the evaluations. It is not enough to list key data without justifying the reason for including the information, analysing the data and making conclusions. The information needs to answer questions such as: What statement do these key data provide us with? What concrete steps were taken as the result of a customer survey?

In addition, the organisation is obliged to decide upon and describe its own benchmarks and goals. It is possible to include material that is available in the organisation, but not included in the self-evaluation report. The **proof of compliance**, which is referred to in the report, must be made available during the audit visit and sorted based on the different quality areas. Documents that serve this purpose include documents and examples such as programs, question-

naires, evaluation results, a sample break-even analysis, interview checklists, inventory lists, media checklists, agendas and minutes of meetings. The self-evaluation report itself counts as proof if the relevant documents or facts are fully integrated into the report, e.g. the mission statement or organisational chart. When only references are made, the final proof must be available in the organisation.

Every **quality area** has different specifications, requirements and proof possibilities. The specifications are not a basis for the checking system, but are examples of or ideas on how to understand the requirements and to give a deeper understanding of the quality area itself. **The requirements, however, are the checks for the certification process and minimum standards must be complied with.** The organisations have, of course, the possibility to set their own minimum requirements, beyond the requirements given in each quality area, to use the specifications as an inspiration for the quality work, change or extend the specifications. Where possible, it should be stated that the minimum standards have been exceeded, as that represents an excellent understanding of quality.

The organisation's self-evaluation report justifies the structure and way of operating, based on its own professional understanding of successful learning. The benchmarks for the various quality areas are derived from this knowledge and the compliance with the requirements is proven.

The self-evaluation report is a description of the organisation itself and, therefore, the organisation's own and specific access to the quality areas is relevant. In the case where a definition of successful learning is expected, it should be based on the organisation's understanding of customer needs and should not be a generalised statement or a theoretical definition. This is important, because all the quality development measures will be defined and justified based on this concept of successful learning.

The self-evaluation report always comprises of three sections:

Section 1 contains the **administrative elements**. It includes a presentation of the organisation's structure, general tasks, legal status of the company and staff analysis. It is possible to add an organisational chart. This section will contain an obligation on the part of the organisation to continue with the quality development process. It is also possible to include a short history of the organisation.

Section 2 describes the whole process concerning quality and development of quality processes either in the first quality development period or the time between certification and re-certification. This complete process should be reflected upon and evaluated, using the following **questions**:

- What steps were taken to drive the quality development process forward?
- Which groups of people, departments, positions, etc. were used at which point in the process?
- Was a regular update on the status of quality development included in meetings?

- How did the quality circle perform?
- How successful was the project management process?
- How well were the evaluation and development workshops received?
- Was the frequency of workshops and working group meetings adequate?
- What were the highlights/low-points of the various elements of the quality development process that were already completed?
- What was beneficial?
- What was a hindrance?
- What should be done differently/better next time?

Section 3 of the self-evaluation report includes the **content** of the whole quality system, based on the various quality areas and their requirements. Optional quality areas can be included. In Quality Area 1, the mission statement must be presented.

Every chapter of each quality area must include, **as a minimum, answers to these three questions:**

1. In what way were the minimum requirements fulfilled? Where relevant, what was done over and above that? (information about procedures and results)
2. How were the procedures and their results evaluated? What were the conclusions of the evaluations? (information about the evaluations and conclusions)
3. How and where are the procedures and results recorded? How can they be checked? (information about the proof of compliance)

All information regarding the **content must be identified** (at least in summary or by example), must be **authentic, proven, accessible** and **subject to scrutiny**. The quality assurance procedures must have been **introduced** (all staff members know about them and they are being followed); **justified** (based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning); and **systematised** (it did not occur only once because of the random actions of an individual).

It is recommended that the self-evaluation report uses the sections »procedures and results«, »evaluations and conclusions« and »proof of compliance«. It is also advisable to include all the (minimum) requirements from the quality areas, so as not to overlook one of them.

The proof of compliance, referred to in the self-evaluation report, should have a reference number, which will also include the location in the organisation of the documentation. A list of all these proofs of compliance has to be included in the appendices to the report.

In chapter 11, "**Strategic Development Goals**", the aims of the organisation for the next quality period are to be suggested. Strategic development goals are the long-term and extensive goals of the company, which determine where the organisation wants to be at the end of the defined period of time – according to its expected future surroundings. They are based on the mission statement as

well as on the internal and external evaluations of the organisation. It is recommended that a database of ideas/concepts that go beyond the minimum requirements of the quality development process be created to assist in this goal-setting process. This database represents a catalogue of quality development goals/measures, which can also be used as suggestions for strategic development goals (QA 11). These suggestions will be discussed with the auditor during the final workshop and, where necessary, will be revised to become a requirement. These strategic development goals will then be formally agreed upon by the organisation and the certification organisation. They will be an additional requirement of the re-certification process.

Formal requirements of the Self-Evaluation Report:

1. The self-evaluation report is to be written in a **continuous format**.
2. A **cover sheet** giving the full address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of the organisation, together with the name of the contact person, must be included.
3. Page two will be a **table of contents** with page numbers, so that the auditors will have an overview.
4. A **list of the proof of compliance elements, sorted by quality area**, is included in the appendices to the report. The proof itself is not part of the report, but will be retained in the organisation.
5. The self-evaluation report must be at least 60 DIN-A4 pages long and printed on single pages. The maximum **size of the report** for the first certification is 90 DIN-A4 pages and 100 DIN-A4 pages for re-certification.
6. The self-evaluation report is to be formatted to **1.5 lines** and the right **margin** is 7 cm to allow comments from the auditors to be written. All other margins are 2.5 cm and the **font/size** to be used is »Arial 12«.
7. **Two printed copies** of the self-evaluation report are to be submitted to the certification organisation and no proof of compliance needs to be sent. For the purpose of documentation, the self-evaluation report should also be sent as a Word file either by e-mail or saved on a CD.

11. What happens during the audit visit?

The senior auditor will visit the organisation and the first part of the **audit visit** is a tour of the establishment. Above all, the audit visit will be used to examine all proof of compliance documents referred to in the self-evaluation report, to examine, if necessary, the obligations and, in the main part, it will be used for a discussion of the audit report findings with the relevant staff members or managers. **The goal of the audit visit is to encourage the learning process of the organisation itself and to create a basis for future quality development efforts.** Therefore, it is essential that all questions from the organisation are answered and, where necessary, clarification must be achieved of what work must be done to achieve compliance in all of the quality areas.

All arrangements for the audit visit will be made by the organisation, but the auditor will manage the content of the audit visit and the time needed to complete the audit visit.

During the audit visit, management, the quality manager and all staff members involved in the writing of the self-evaluation report should participate. The final decision as to who participates in the audit visit is made by the organisation.

The audit visit will include the following:

1. a tour of the organisation
2. a look at all proof of compliance documents and, where necessary, checks of the fulfilment of the obligations
3. discussion of the audit report

The audit visit usually lasts approximately four hours.

The **discussion about the audit report** is vital, because learning done by the organisation itself is always »bounded« by the reflections of the organisation's surroundings. Therefore, the organisation's learning process can be initiated, in particular, at those points when the description of the system itself (i.e. the self-evaluation report) will be confronted with the »external observations« of the environment/surroundings (i.e. the evaluation done by the auditors). Because the observation process is reciprocal, the question how the organisation has perceived the audit report also belongs to this discussion. Therefore, not only the checks for compliance are a central element of the audit visit, but also the advisory, discursive process to advance further development is relevant. During this discussion the auditors will reflect upon how they have assessed the definition of successful learning and how the respective arguments of the quality instruments/particular processes given in the various quality areas have turned out. Do the auditors believe that the self-evaluation report was written based on the needs of the learners, i.e. was the »learner-orientation« successful? Are the mission statement and the definition of successful learning the »red thread« for all quality development measures and recognisable as such? How and where would changes or additions be useful, if any?

The first part of the audit visit is rightly perceived by the organisation as a **test**; therefore, it is especially important that the auditors are sensitive towards and appreciative of the feelings of the people involved. The tour of the organisation at the beginning is the warm-up phase and should be used to develop a connection to the organisation. If the compliance checks, together with all the special requirements, have been objectively prepared and approved by the auditors, then the **consultancy** function of the audit report becomes the main focus of the audit visit.

It must be possible to check that the statements made in the self-evaluation report are correct and that proof of existence has been found. Every document referred to in the self-evaluation report as **proof of compliance** must be sorted

by quality area, bound together and made available during the audit visit. The auditors have the right to look at every proof of compliance. Any obligations formulated in the audit report are also topics of the audit visit.

12. Why is the final workshop not the end of the process?

Concerning content, the quality process ends with the **final workshop**. It is in this workshop that the future **strategic development goals** of the organisation will be discussed, revised and agreed upon by the auditor and the organisation. The responsibility for the content of these goals lies simply and solely with the organisation. All arrangements for the workshop as regards content will be made by the organisation and the auditor will host it.

The basis of this maximum four-hour workshop is the catalogue of quality development goals/measures, together with the nominated strategic development goals of the organisation, listed in chapter 11 of the self-evaluation report. The auditors assume an advisory role in this workshop, paying attention to the reasonableness of the goals and ensuring that the wording is correct and can be proven. These goals will not be judged as right or wrong. The organisations themselves have control over their future, not the auditors. However, it is the consulting task of the auditors to check that the wording of the strategic development goals can be proven in the re-certification process. The agreed goals – as well as the minimum requirements of the obligatory quality areas – become elements of the next certification process. Therefore, the organisations have to give strong arguments as justification if these goals have not been reached, through no fault of the organisation, e.g. because of an objective change in circumstances.

Strategic development goals are the longer-term and comprehensive goals of the organisation. They determine where the organisation wants to be within a defined time period with reference to its expected future surroundings. These goals are based on the mission statement and the internal and external evaluation of the further education organisation which occurred during the certification process. They represent the guiding principle for the long-term development of the organisation itself.

To **determine their own strategic development goals**, the organisation should ask itself the following **questions**:

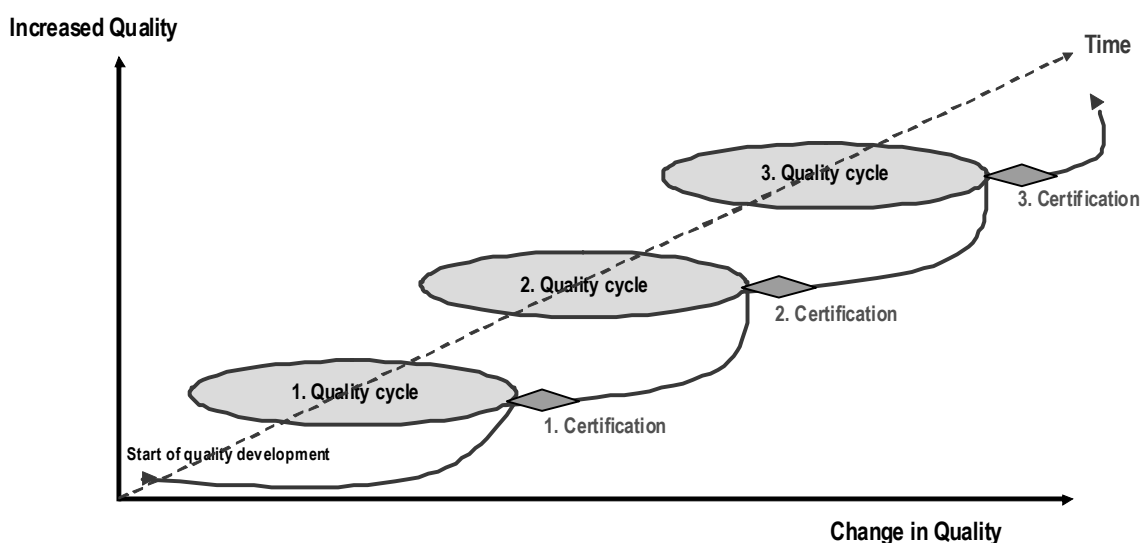
- How are our relevant surroundings going to develop?
- How are the needs and interests of our customers going to develop?
- How are the conditions affecting competition going to develop?
- What are our own visions for the future of the organisation?
- What values should we adopt and observe?
- How does our organisation need to be developed in order to be ready for future challenges?

Because the strategy is always based on the **positioning of the whole organisation**, strategic goals cannot simply be quality goals. It is also not enough to identify simple events, e.g. develop three new products. Rather, the goals have to be global, e.g. to become the market leader, or they have to be aimed at the structures and processes of the organisation, e.g. a procedure for continuous product development is developed and introduced.

During the whole quality development process and based on the demands of this process, all concepts that exceeded the (minimum) requirements should be continuously saved. They will then be bound together in preparation for the final workshop, designated as **plans of action** or listed under the strategic development goals the organisation defines for itself. Those items nominated by the educational organisation as strategic development goals will be discussed with the auditor during the final workshop, agreed upon and formulated based on the requirements of the quality areas concerned. Finally, the **strategic development goals** will be formally agreed upon by the organisation and the certification organisation and they then officially become a **committed element for the re-certification**.

This procedure will ensure that the quality development based on the LQW model not only consists of a self-repeating quality assurance mechanism. At the end of each period of quality development, the organisation must decide where it wants to be four years later, i.e. at the time of re-certification. The goal is not only to improve the quality of the work done, but above all else, to make it possible for change to take place, so that the organisation is ready to meet the challenges presented by the continuously changing social conditions of its surroundings. In this way, a **continual development of quality** will occur out of the unique efforts of improvement.

Diagram 6: Continuous Quality Development



Ultimately, the final workshop will serve as a **reflection on the completed phase of quality development**, so that the organisation can learn for its further quality improvements. To assist in this part of the process, it is necessary to find information which clearly was of benefit to the quality development process, which elements hindered it or are at least not recommendable and what things should, in the future, be done differently or better. Under the heading »Service/Allgemeines« (Service/General) on the LQW website (www.qualitaetsportal.de), a special tool has been made available, which can also be used by the organisation to prepare reflection upon its quality development process. In this phase of the final workshop, the organisations also give feedback on the experiences they made while working with the LQW model, so that the model can be continuously developed.

All arrangements for the final workshop (especially its content) have to be made by the organisation and the workshop itself will be hosted by the senior auditor. **The quality of the final workshop depends enormously on the quality of the preparations made by the organisation.**

At the end of the final workshop (first certification process only), the senior auditor will present the organisation with a **tile of the LQW Network Picture** in appreciation of the quality work done. This tile is unique and is the sole property of the organisation and remains under its ownership indefinitely.

13. What is different during re-certification?

The quality certification obtained as a result of the LQW certification process is valid for a period of four years and the LQW logo can also be used during this time. **Re-certification**, which becomes necessary after this period, includes in principle the same conditions as used during the first certification and will be based upon the LQW version in place at the time of application. The assessment itself will be performed by a new team of auditors.

A **follow-up workshop** is included in the services covered by re-certification. This workshop will be of an advisory nature and it is, therefore, tailored to meet the specific needs of the organisation. So the contents of this workshop will be agreed individually with each organisation.

Possible **topics** could be:

- a change of the LQW model – it may be that a newer version is available,
- the self-evaluation report for re-certification,
- conclusions the organisation has drawn from the audit report of the previous certification process,
- work carried out on quality since the last certification process,
- etc.

The organisations are free to choose who leads this workshop, so long as the consultant belongs to the pool of accredited auditors. The follow-up workshop is

optional and in cases where none takes place, the fee for certification will be reduced accordingly.

The logic of the Learner-Oriented Quality Development is that work on quality is a long-term project and that the self-evaluation report will be revised continuously. The new self-evaluation report must meet the requirements, both in terms of content and structure, of the model in use at the time of application for re-certification. **The self-evaluation report for the re-certification will be an updated and revised version of the previous self-evaluation report**, i.e. the same three sections as the previous self-evaluation report and the same requirements exist for compliance purposes.

The audit report of the previous self-evaluation report contained recommendations, which have possibly been used in the previous four years' work on quality and have been included in the new self-evaluation report. It is also possible that some of these recommendations have been rejected or postponed by the organisation. If changes have occurred as a result of the discussion and reflection of the audit report or for any other circumstances, this will »automatically« appear in the new self-evaluation report.

The self-evaluation report for the re-certification must also be written in a self-explanatory way and it must reflect the organisation's new situation. That means that **any changes to procedures and processes that have occurred must be referred to and named in the self-evaluation report**. When existing procedures and processes have been continued, these must be written in such a way that they are self-explanatory to the new team of auditors (because they only know the new report). **The contents of the self-evaluation report presented for the re-certification process must be up to date**, i.e. they cover the period since the last certification **and they have to be described in a self-explanatory way as well**. That means that not only the procedures and processes need to be named, but also the results of the quality work must be provided and described (a summary or example as a minimum).

It is very important that the self-evaluation report contains **topical proof of compliance documents that refer to the time period between the previous certification and re-certification**. All documentation relating to proof of compliance is to be retained in the organisation for examination during the audit visit.

The Quality Area 11 (Strategic Development Goals) is subject to change.

The self-evaluation report submitted for re-certification will contain a **new or additional entry/section** (chapter 11a), which includes the agreed strategic development goals from the previous certification, indicating **fulfilment of these strategic goals** together with proof of compliance references. If these strategic goals were not reached, e.g. because of an objective change in circumstances, the organisations have to give strong arguments as justification. A further (?) entry, chapter 11b, includes the new strategic development goals for compliance with the requirements of the Quality Area 11.

➔ Further explanations of the self-evaluation report can be found in chapter 10.

14. What support do we offer and how do we offer it?

By officially joining the LQW certification process, the organisation is given access to a complete support system.

The support system includes:

1. an interactive website
2. a set of practical tools to provide assistance in the quality work
3. a hotline
4. a regular information service
5. a mailing list
6. regional support centres
7. regular network conferences
8. a network of auditors/advisors
9. further literature

The **goal of the LQW network** is to continuously promote positive aspects, increase potential and to enable organisations to learn from and with one another. This is relevant for the support given to both the development of quality within the organisation itself and the development of a system for the whole field of further education.

The LQW Website

The LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de) represents the central information and support portal, which is used by organisations, auditors and interested parties alike. The website provides various categories of the information relevant to the Learner-Oriented Quality Certification. Under the menu headings »Neuigkeiten« (News), »Verfahren« (Procedures), »Anmeldung« (Application), »Leitfaden« (Guidelines) and »Literatur« (Literature), information is provided for visitors concerning quality development using the LQW model and its workflow. Extensive work tools are available under »Service«. The headings »Organisationen« (Organisations) and »Netzwerkbild« (Network Picture) are dedicated to organisations which are already active according to the LQW model. All organisations that are part of the LQW network are listed. Institutes and organisations already certified are also represented by their tile, which forms a part of the LQW Network Picture. Information about all the organisations is provided, based on the premise of promoting contact and cooperation. Under the heading »Netzwerkkonferenzen« (Network Conferences), e.g. reports from previous network conferences are available or information about upcoming ones will be presented.

The headings »Gutachter-innen« (Auditors) and »Unterstützung« (Support) provide information about the LQW auditors as well as support services offered. The purpose of these headings is, on the one hand, transparency in the certification and on the other, to offer organisations working with the LQW model the option of obtaining advice independently as and when the need arises. The regional support centres and the auditors are also here to provide assistance.

Fig. 2: The LQW Website



The LQW Work Tools

ArtSet has developed a number of tools for the LQW process, which are available under the heading »Service« on the website and can be downloaded by members of the LQW Network. In this way, ArtSet introduces know-how into the network. The tools available relate to all the quality areas and to the organisational procedures involved in the certification process. These tools have been created specifically for the context of the quality development based on the LQW model and they aim to stimulate and support the quality management of the educational organisations and the writing of the self-evaluation report.

Each of these tools is structured in a similar way, e.g. the topic of the quality area that is to be considered will be presented and, if necessary, the technical terms used will be explained. Some tools will include examples taken from existing organisation, e.g. the definition of successful learning or the principles of management. Central to all of these guides are the practical tips and tools that can be used in particular quality areas, especially when looking at questions such as: How can the creation of the mission statement be organised so that it will be an interactive process in which everybody can participate? What methods of needs analysis are available? What actions are needed to lead the organisation to its strategic development goals? Therefore, the tools are built up as aids to stimulation. In accordance with the basic philosophy of the LQW model, they are not meant to provide instructions which must be followed by the

organisation, but to create a situation where the organisation finds its own solutions.

These tools are continuously being completed and further developed. By doing this, the organisations' experiences in the LQW process will be constantly considered and provided as assistance for new participants.

The LQW Hotline

A »Hotline« is provided by the certification organisation to give answers to all the topical questions of the organisations during their process of quality development. It is possible to obtain advice via the LQW website under the heading »Hotline« by e-mail or directly over the phone. Many problems and hindrances can be avoided by taking advantage of this service and short-time assistance. Proof exists that there is a clear connection between the use of this hotline service and the quality of the self-evaluation report.

The LQW Information Service

The information service is the mouthpiece of the LQW certification organisation, in that all participants will be given important news and kept up to date on developments in the LQW model. All information relating to the Learner-Oriented Quality Certification and its surroundings will be sent by e-mail, at various times during the year (on average 12 times), to thousands of interested parties.

The LQW Mailing List

All organisations that have registered for LQW certification or have already been certified have exclusive access to the mailing list (via the relevant heading on the LQW website). It is possible to send e-mails to all the other organisations listed, which will promote the exchange of information and discussions about the LQW process. In most cases, the advice given by organisations with experience of the LQW model occurs as the result of an enquiry, e.g. what experience do you have concerning the introduction of employee appraisals? Which documents have been created to help the quality development process, e.g. questionnaires, job profiles, etc.? Communication via the mailing list is dominated by openness and a willingness to help. Usually a reaction to enquiries from the network occurs promptly. Material will be transferred, tips on useful procedures will be given and reports from an organisation's own quality development process will be provided. These supporting answers also reach all organisations in the LQW process, so that even the quiet observers of the mailing list can profit from the exchange of information. Doing this, a lot of assistance has already been given and, over and above that, this form of communication has the charming effect that a college of further education in Vienna is able to exchange ideas on quality with an educational organisation in Northern Germany.

The Regional LQW Support Centres

Learner-Oriented Quality Development is a very demanding process, which profits from an exchange of information between experts and organisations using the LQW model. Due to the fact that the organisations are located in all regions of Germany and, in some cases, across the border, it is not possible for

ArtSet® Qualitätstestierung GmbH to manage this exchange of information only through a series of networking conferences. Therefore a number of regional support centres have been established as a complement.

These regional support centres are led by known LQW experts and provide, on a regional level, possibilities for both the auditors and the organisations using the LQW model to network and exchange information. On a needs basis, the support centres will organise events in the region, manage contacts, manage the tools available and offer additional qualifications to those employees responsible for quality management in the company. The organisations are free to choose which support centre they refer to for assistance.

➔ A list of the support centres can be found on the LQW website under »Unterstützung« (Support).

The LQW Network Conferences

The regular national network conferences are the key to providing an opportunity to exchange opinions about the work being done with the LQW model, face-to-face with other people in the same situation. Employees from a wide variety of organisations, who have either completed the certification process or are in the middle of it, come together at these meetings. One of the main goals when planning and organising these conferences is to create an atmosphere which will promote the successful exchange of information. Experience shows that the most successful cooperations occur when people open to future changes meet in an atmosphere conducive to free-flowing discussions. The network conferences are the central place where the LQW quality community comes together to learn from one another.

The LQW Auditor Network

An independent element of the LQW network is the network of auditors. It is a community of experts, in which organisations can find advisors to assist in the quality development process. Names and contact details can be found under the heading »Gutachter-innen« (Auditors) on the LQW website.

The auditors' networking serves the purpose of quality development and assurance of the assessment. The creation of an audit report on the self-evaluation report, as well as carrying out the introduction workshops, audit visits and final workshops demand a lot of the auditors, especially in terms of qualifications needed. In order to give additional training and support to the auditors after their own studies and accreditation, ArtSet will arrange two conferences for the auditors each year, during which all topics relevant to the auditor's role and the assessment work will be discussed. The auditors are obliged to attend at least one of these meetings to retain their accreditation status. Besides these qualifying meetings, the auditors will receive briefings by e-mail. The briefings are an instrument of the certification organisation to instruct the auditors and to support them in developing a common standard of quality when performing assessments.

The LQW List of Publications

Additional literature relating to the LQW model can be found under the heading »Literatur« (Literature) on the LQW website. This list of publications is regularly updated with new material. Those organisations/people who want to gain more knowledge of the LQW model will find many important tips here. A selection of publications can be downloaded or ordered online.

15. What is the connection between the assessment and the ways to promote development?

The Learner-Oriented Quality Model is a quality management system that will help organisations reach the required quality standards by using various preparatory and accompanying methods and measures. **At the core of the model is the unification of the assessment process with the promotion of development** – a big difference when compared to other procedures! Therefore, the certification organisation and its auditors are both controllers and development assistants.

To give the process reliability and clarify the roles in this process, a systematic procedure of the auditors' employment and the control of the audit reports was introduced. Of course, the certification organisation takes care that any person involved in an advisory capacity in the years prior to certification will not be assigned to the assessment process of the concerned organisation.

The checking element of the audit report involves identifying where compliance to the requirements defined in the LQW model has occurred. This represents approximately one-third of the audit report. This thorough check of the compliance issues will be performed in goodwill and full appreciation of the organisation itself.

Comments and observations on the self-evaluation report and the quality processes of the organisation make up the biggest part of the audit report. In this part the text is an advisory audit report and it contains reflections and comments as well as tips, suggestions and ideas for the further development of the organisation and its quality. The organisation itself will decide which pieces of advice are going to be followed.

The facts concerning **how LQW supports development** can be seen below:

- Already in the introduction or follow-up workshops, the special situation of the organisation and its previous work on quality will be taken into consideration. A status report of the existing quality development standards (compared to the requirements of the LQW model) belongs to the introduction workshop. The organisation should, as part of the re-certification process, select an area for more detailed analysis in the follow-up workshop.
- The table of the quality areas (cf. chapter 16), together with the relevant requirements, can be used as a checklist/planning aid for the internal quality development and the self-evaluation.

- Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website, all aids and tools relating to work on development are made available. They will be continually updated and expanded.
- When putting together the self-evaluation report, knowledge (very often informal) will be put into writing. This process will give added reliability to the internal procedures of the organisation. The self-evaluation report becomes a handbook giving structure to the everyday tasks and can be used internally by staff members for quality assurance. It is also a reflection on the activities of the organisation.
- The audit report relating to the self-evaluation report consists of a shorter part referring to compliance with the minimum requirements and a longer section of observations and recommendations relating to identified strengths, potential for development and improvement opportunities.
- The audit visit is a tour of the organisation, which completes the assessment. During the audit visit the auditors' unanswered questions can be clarified, proof of compliance can be completed and discussions with the management, the employees and, where necessary, also with participants will take place. Not only the control mechanism will be utilised, but also feedback from the auditors will be discussed with the organisation and in cases where certification is unsuccessful, recommendations will be made for improvements and the revision of the self-evaluation report.
- In the final workshop, the potential for development will be put into concrete terms and converted into the strategic development goals. The organisation will reflect upon its previous processes connected to quality development and give feedback relating to its experience with the Learner-Oriented Quality Model. From this they draw conclusions for their further quality development and because of this, the final workshop itself has a direct advisory function.
- The strategic development goals ensure that the organisations will constantly improve their work on quality even in the period following the certification (up to the possible, wanted re-certification).
- The certification organisation provides a hotline for the organisations to ask questions, either by phone or e-mail, at any time during the period of quality development. These questions will be individually answered immediately by the certification organisation.
- Under the heading »Unterstützung« (Support) on the LQW website, a list of advisors is available who have the necessary LQW qualification and accreditation. These consultants are available to the organisations and their services can be requested, subject to a fee charged by the consultant.
- A mailing list makes it possible for the organisations using the LQW model to contact one another. Further education organisations can present successful projects, give or obtain advice and build up new contacts.
- Regional support centres offer a wide range of support for organisations in their areas.

- Regular network conferences give further education organisations the opportunity to work together on selected subjects. The conferences will also promote the development of a common quality culture in this sector.

Excursus: The assessment as a hermeneutic realisation

The self-evaluation report is a description of the organisation itself, in which the organisations focus their identity and which expresses this identity. The self-evaluation report is the result of the self-reflection process and is a self-portrayal, both inwardly and outwardly.

The audit report is an attempt by auditors to interpret and understand the self-evaluation report in a hermeneutic, i.e. acquiring and reconstructing way. This understanding of the self-evaluation report is a prerequisite for »connecting communication«. What is understood must be communicated in the form of a description. Therefore, the audit report is a re-description of the organisation's self-portrayal. This re-description makes the self-evaluation report accessible, it says how the self-evaluation report was understood, comments on what was understood and gives, relating to this, diverse stimulation for further communication.

Therefore, such re-descriptions of self-portrayals cannot be a judgement in the form of a positive or negative characterization of the organisation described in the self-evaluation report, because that would presuppose the position of the only correct observation, i.e. an external observer knowing how it should really be. In fact, it is more a case of mirroring the organisation in this way, how it is perceived from the outside.

Similarly, observation is not a neutral activity. On the one hand, it is dependent upon the fundamental distinction/»code« used by the observer (as also seen in the excursus on systemic thinking), and on the other hand, the observation has an effect on those who are observed. Psychical and social systems react when they recognise they are being observed and both people and organisations are accordingly influenced by this fact. Communication of observations brings about a process of change and the re-description will have an effect on the description, i.e. the self-portrayal.

This principle of coupling/connection of the self-portrayal and the re-description will be used as a benefit in the processes of quality development and assessment, because communication is stimulated by this principle and finds its discursive expression in the discussion of the self-evaluation report and the audit report during the audit visit. The assessment as well as the consultation proceeds from founded self-portrayals and sees its task in that respect, while understanding these self-descriptions, to break them down, to reconstruct and to comment on them.

The organisation observes itself and its surroundings, and based on these observations it draws conclusions in the self-evaluation report. The auditor observes the organisation and draws his/her own conclusions, which are the basis for development suggestions. Just like a systemic consultation/piece of advice,

the assessment based on the LQW model is a »second-order observation«. This »second-order observation« observes the observer while he/she is observing. Doing this, it not only pays attention to that *which* the first observer observes, but, above all, *how*, i.e. with which distinctions, criteria of observation, etc., he/she observes and which consequences will follow from this. The observer of the observer is certainly not a »better« observer, but he/she is different. He/she never sees more objectively and sometimes he/she does not see more, but, as a rule, he/she will see something else than the first observer.

This process of observation also works the other way around. The organisation observes the auditor when he/she observes the organisation. In the audit report the auditor always gives a description of him/herself; therefore, the organisation will create a picture/impression of the auditor, via the audit report, just like the auditor created a picture/impression of the organisation, via the self-evaluation report. So these are reciprocal relations of observation, which lead, via communication, towards a learning process on both sides.

Organisations are »coded systems«, they talk in a particular language, function according to a particular »grammar«, have their own particular qualities, i.e. a unique tone colour, sound, melody. It is important to understand and pick up this special logic of function of the organisations if learning is to be stimulated effectively. Changes to systems are thereby caused in such a way that they will both recognise themselves in and feel irritated by the reflections from outside.

Organisational learning is stimulated through specific feedback processes. The auditors must have the ability to understand/talk the language of the organisation and at the same time, trigger the desired process of self-reflection by the organisation. The aim is neither to duplicate the perceptions of the organisations nor to confront them with totally alien concepts. Praise and calculated criticism must be delivered in equal measures, potential for improvement will be identified, not problems.

Hermeneutic comprehension does not target observer-independent objectivity, which cannot exist in the human world anyway. Nevertheless, the potential for objectivity of the procedure must be demanded. The potential for objectivity of descriptions and re-descriptions is not given by itself, but shows itself in the discourse. It is therefore subject to a communicative validation process. The discussion of the audit report during the audit visit decides upon the »content of truth« and the benefits thereof.

Neither the managers nor the senior management team decide autocratically whether the self-description of the further education organisation, which is made in the self-evaluation report, is accurate. The self-evaluation report represents a collective reflection of the whole organisation, otherwise it would not be a *self*-description, because it does not reflect »the self« of the organisation, but the viewpoint of individuals at most.

The audit report itself is also subject to a validation process, because at first the auditors have to take a vote on it and then the certification organisation also has to agree upon it. At the next level the description and the re-description will

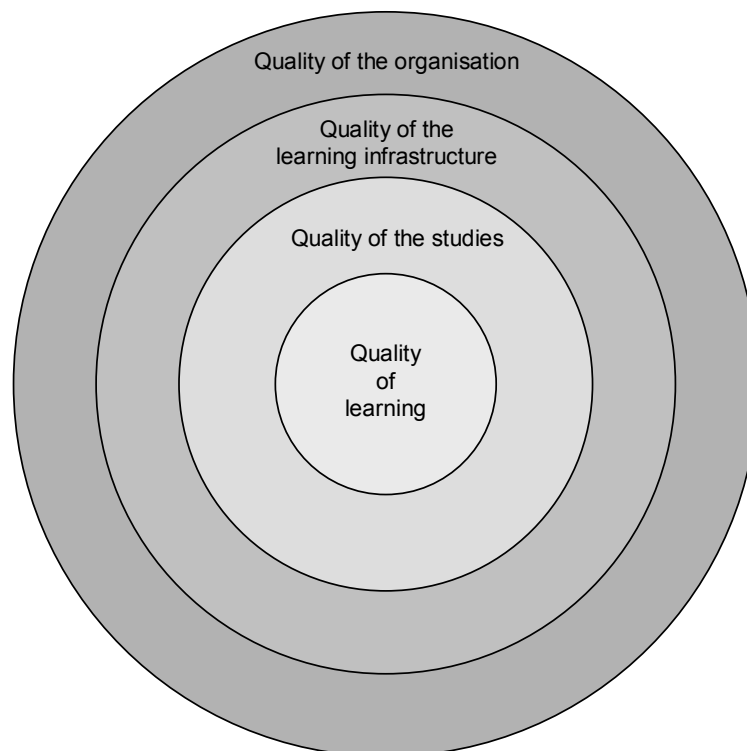
meet in the discussion during the audit visit – again, a promotion of objectivity in a discourse as a reciprocal »ability of connection«. Learning occurs through reflection.

Part C: The Quality Areas and their Requirements

16. General explanations of the quality areas and their requirements

The LQW model does not involve linear processes, but consists of a number of concentric circles. Nucleus of the quality management are the mission statement and the definition of successful learning. Going outwards from the core are all the conditions affecting the learning process, starting with those closest: the quality of the studies, the quality of the learning infrastructure and the quality of the organisational processes.

Diagram 7: The Learning Contexts



These four logical »Rings of Quality« will be put into operation by quality areas to be worked on, which can be assigned to one or also several of these quality rings. All statements in the self-evaluation report concerning the requirements in the quality areas 2-11 must refer to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning (QA 1). The correlation to these two elements must be justified and described. Thus, it will be guaranteed that the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are the »red thread« of the whole quality development.

The quality areas described in the LQW model follow, in principle, the pedagogical process. The starting point will be the mission statement (QA 1). Thereafter follows: a needs analysis of the needs of the target group (QA 2); the organisation of how the training is offered (QA 3 Key Processes); the provision of training (QA 4 Teacher-Learner Process); assessments (QA 5 Evaluation of the Educational Processes). Then follows the organisational general framework (QA 6 Infrastructure) and aspects of the general management (QA 7 Management, QA 8 Human Resources, QA 9 Controlling). Fundamental is the systematic communication with the customers (QA 10 Customer Relations). The final area to be considered is the future (QA 11 Strategic Development Goals).

Quality development needs to be focused on optimising the conditions in which the learning process occurs. The organisation is a condition of the opportunity of learning, it creates the contexts which provide successful learning. The quality development of further education organisations aims at the control of the context conditions of learning as they are systematised in the quality areas.

On the following pages (in chapter 17) the above quality areas, which organisations are obliged to work on, will be presented. The obligatory eleven quality areas can be extended, as previously mentioned, to include optional areas decided upon by the organisation. These optional areas could be the result of special circumstances affecting the establishment or the strategic development goals needed for the re-certification process or can identify a specific service.

Each working paper of the following quality areas has the same structure:

- At the head of each table is a **definition** of the specific quality area. This will provide the **basis for a common understanding** of quality for both the organisation seeking certification and the auditors who will assess the processes described. The definitions will explain in general how to work with the areas and more specifically, how to improve the quality work being done.
- Under the heading **specifications** (in the first column of the table), the definition is expanded upon and substantiated. These are separate elements of the quality area, which could give structure and functionality to the quality development. It contains areas of work that can be looked at and where improvements to quality can be made. The function of the specifications is to **explain** the quality areas. The list of specifications is not final and, where possible, should be extended. The specifications are there to help understand the quality area and give guidelines on how to operate within the area. They are not minimum requirements and are, therefore, **not a basis for the certification**. Quality Area 1 is the exception, in that the specifications are also the minimum requirements.

- The second column is the control element of the certification process, in that the **requirements** are defined on what is needed to show that compliance has occurred. They represent minimum requirements. The organisations are expected to show that the minimum requirements have been met. The requirements are a component of both the self-evaluation report and the external evaluation. The requirements are non-negotiable, they **must be complied with** and are necessary for a successful conclusion to the certification process.
- Under the heading **proof of compliance**, which appears in column three, examples are given of how the organisation can show that the requirements have been fulfilled. It is obligatory to provide reference to documents in the self-evaluation report that describe the quality processes in the form of examples and recommendations. The proofs of compliance listed are only examples. The documents chosen must be relevant to the quality area being assessed and are to be retained in the organisation for inspection.

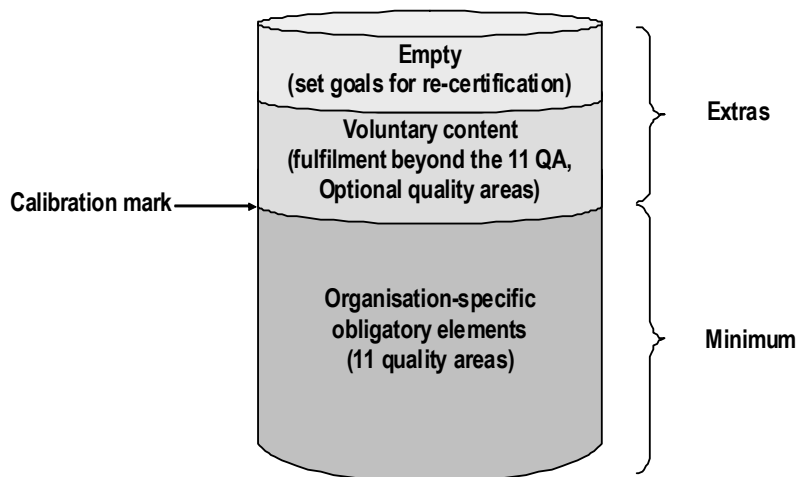
The **mission statement** with the **definition of successful learning** provides the basis of the quality requirements and gives the direction for the work needed to meet these requirements. All statements concerning the processes in the various quality areas have to refer to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning. For example, the evaluation of the educational processes (Quality Area 5) could refer to the definition of successful learning.

In nearly every quality area, the requirement “**Arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented**” does not mean that each process and each measure must be justified. It is expected that work done on the quality area and the results, as a whole, are based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning. That means the correlation between the quality development in each quality area and mission statement has to be described. It must be recognisable that the mission statement is the »red thread« of the quality development in the various quality areas.

The **requirements of the Learner-Oriented Quality Model** have one special feature – formal requirements are presented, without the organisation having to conform to a specific design. This is also the reason why value-oriented statements have been avoided. The LQW model is a »technical« instrument that must be usable independently of any values of the further education organisation. The organisations are, however, permitted to develop their own »value orientation« and realise it within the model. In Quality Area 1, for example, it is defined which topics have to be an element of the mission statement, but it is not determined what the special contents of the mission statement have to be. In this case, statements about the specific organisation's »value orientation« are explicitly demanded. In this way, the obligations of the quality requirements, the comparisons between organisations and the freedom of choice for each organisation on how to form the contents within the requirements can be combined. The requirements are, so to say, the pots that need to be filled, but the contents

can be different and, on the basis of an obligatory minimum, the volume might vary. This corresponds to the assessment, which is not a standardizing process and does not check its own content benchmarks, but proves the reasonableness and relevance as well as the systems introduced by the organisation within the self-determined contents defined by the organisations.

Diagram 8: Principle of the Quality Requirements



An obligatory framework will be created, within which organisation-specific justifications are necessary and quality performances developed by the organisation itself have been made and proven. **It is very important that the self-evaluation report describes the results of the quality development process (as a minimum, a summary must be provided) and not only the procedures and processes.**

It is possible to extend the eleven obligatory quality areas to include **optional areas** such as marketing. The organisation could define these options as part of the strategic development goals presented for the period leading up to re-certification.



Qualitätstestierung

Handbuch Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung (LQW)

*Grundlegung - Anwendung -
Wirkung*

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Aus der Weiterbildung für die Weiterbildung: Das Lernerorientierte Qualitätsmodell (LQW®) ist das einzige aus der Weiterbildungspraxis abgeleitete Qualitätsentwicklungs- und -testierungsverfahren. Es stellt den Lerner und die Prozesse gelungenen Lernens in den Mittelpunkt.

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17. Table of quality areas

Quality Area 1: <u>Mission Statement</u> The mission statement is a description of the organisation's internal system and one which can be implemented by the organisation. It must be recognisable to potential customers as a profile of the organisation and internally accepted. The mission statement includes a definition of successful learning, which identifies the service delivery promise.		
Specification	Requirements	Proof
Identity and Mandate Values Customers: Purchaser, participants, addressees/target groups General company goals Skills Services Resources Definition of successful learning	The mission statement contains references to all eight specifications. The mission statement is created as part of an interactive process. It is in written form. It is communicated internally and available to the public. Responsibility for revisions of the mission statement is defined.	Minutes Documents Publications Written procedures etc.

Arguments for the quality area

The **mission statement** is the identity of an educational organisation; it includes statements about its mandate, values, customers, skills, goals, performance and resources. The mission statement provides a framework for managing the organisation and is, therefore, the first step in the quality assessment process. A fundamental element of the mission statement is a definition of successful learning, which provides the »red thread« for quality development based on this model.

Explanation of the specifications

“Identity and mandate”: Who are we? What is our mandate?

“Values”: What do we represent? Which values govern the way we operate?

“Customers: Purchaser, participants, addressees/target groups”: Who do we actually work for (purchaser)? Who attends our seminars/training sessions (participants)? Who do we approach for our business (addressees/target groups)?

“General company goals”: There are two possible answers: What general goals does the organisation want to reach in the public eye, e.g. improved education in the community, or what does the organisation want for itself, e.g. to be the market leader? This item has nothing to do with the learning goals of the participants, but lays the focus on the goals of the organisation.

“Skills”: What can we do? What are our competences? What “know-how” do we possess?

“Services”: What products and services do we offer?

“Resources”: What resources are available to us? What other options do we have? This item is the »trump card«; at this point the organisation should remember and reflect upon its »power reserves«.

“Definition of successful learning”: When does successful learning occur according to our interpretation, our specific mandate and our specific target group? What are the participants capable of after completing/attending one of our courses, seminars, etc.? In the best-case scenario, what is the result of the learning process? The definition is an ideal, which the organisation uses to orient itself and its business practices and which is an indication to potential customers of what services they can expect.

Explanation of the requirements

N.B. In this quality area, as an exception, the specifications represent the requirements!

“The mission statement is created as part of an interactive process.” This item refers to the process and asks for the participation of the employees when creating the mission statement. Only people involved in formulating the mission statement will be able to relate to the mission statement.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

Quality Area 2: <u>Needs Analysis</u> Needs analysis means the use of suitable tools to systematically analyse the needs of the community in general and the specific educational needs of the addressees. These demands, needs and the specific mandate of the organisation serve as the basis for program and offer development.		
Specifications	Requirements	Proof
Information about the personal needs of addressees/ target groups Information about the demands of potential institutional customers Information about social development trends Creating needs/demands by managing the markets Innovative program development as a result of observing the markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools • Procedures • Frequency • Extent <p>of the needs analysis are described and justified based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning.</p> <p>Analyses are evaluated and based on the results, recommendations for change are made.</p>	Reports Evaluations Documentation Research etc.

Arguments for the quality area

In the quality area **needs analysis**, the focus is on the application of suitable procedures and tools to meet both the demands of the community and the educational needs of the individual. Only by using a clearly defined needs analysis of the individual and the institutional customers can the organisation update its training offer to meet the changes in its social environment as well as the changing expectations and needs of its addressees/customers. It is also important to include developments in local/regional/national trends in the needs analysis.

Explanation of the specifications

“Information about the personal needs of addressees/target groups”: This means information about the individual needs of people, addressees, participants and potential customers.

“Information about the demands of potential institutional customers”: The needs of the individual are not relevant here, but those of organisations, administrations, etc., i.e. the institutional customers.

Explanation of the requirements

“Tools, procedures, frequency and extent of the needs analysis are described and justified based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning.”

This requirement refers to the fact that every organisation is responsible for deciding and justifying the relevant questions, suitable methods, a sensible timeframe and the extent of the needs analysis.

The specifications have given some of the possible fields that are relevant. A variety of procedures and timeframes may be needed based on what the organisation wants to know, the target groups (immigrants, youths, management, etc.) or the content of the training (languages, training for the workplace, art, etc.).

It is not always necessary to conduct analyses yourself. An analysis carried out by third parties is also admissible.

Especially in this quality area, it is important to remember that the self-evaluation report contains not only statements about the procedure itself, but also the results of the needs analysis (at least in summary or by example).

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

<p>Quality Area 3: <u>Key Processes</u> The key processes are those central processes which lead the organisation to the creation and implementation of specific training offers and services. Key processes refer to the work processes of the whole organisation and result in more transparency, procedural and legal security, reliability, obligations and clarity. The combination of these processes guarantees a coordinated and cooperative approach within the organisation.</p>		
Specifications	Requirements	Proof
<p>Creation of a training program or offer of training</p> <p>Product development</p> <p>Acquisition, marketing, sales</p> <p>Planning, implementation and evaluation of training measures</p> <p>Selection, employment and training of the instructors</p> <p>Informing and advising the learners</p> <p><u>For organisations which offer residential courses:</u> Planning, implementation and evaluation of the accommodation and catering</p>	<p>Key processes for the organisation are defined and documented.</p> <p>Responsibility for the processes is defined.</p> <p>The interfaces within the processes and in particular between the key processes are described.</p> <p>Arguments for the relevance of the key processes to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.</p>	<p>Action plans and flow diagrams</p> <p>Lists, tables</p> <p>Handbooks</p> <p>Organisational charts</p> <p>Standard forms</p> <p>etc.</p>

Arguments for the quality area

The **key processes** are those processes which will lead to the educational organisation recognising the core obligations, i.e. a coordinated and cooperative approach to business within the organisation. All employees within the organisation must cooperate to some extent, so all processes where employees and different positions are involved need to be examined and, if necessary, improved.

It is imperative that the organisation identifies and justifies its key processes and thereafter implements standards.

It is possible to differentiate the key processes and the respective sub-processes, e.g. bookkeeping is necessary, but it does not add value to the core obligation of the company.

Explanation of the requirements

“Key processes for the organisation are defined and documented” means that each individual organisation decides for itself which central processes are most important. The specifications provide a selection of key processes and not a complete checklist. Alongside or even in place of this selection, other key processes can be defined, documented and justified.

In certain cases there could be only one key process, e.g. when the organisation is very small or the process itself is complex.

Documentation includes text, tables or flow diagrams.

At least one key process must be presented in the self-evaluation report and the others can be documented in the organisation. The self-evaluation report must also provide proof of compliance.

“Responsibility for the processes is defined” – at least one employee is nominated as responsible for each key process. It is also possible to nominate several people who share this responsibility.

“Interfaces” are locations within the organisation where tasks are performed by more than one person/position, such as pedagogy and administration, or where there is contact with external service providers (e.g. a printing works). In order to enable the coordination of activities and the best services possible, the different ways of functioning and the differences in performing tasks need to be addressed. In order to perform these tasks effectively and efficiently, it is critical to coordinate these functions, both from the viewpoint of time and content.

“Arguments for the relevance of the key processes to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented” means that justification for the chosen key processes is present. Why were particular key processes identified? What is the connection between these key processes and the statements of the organisation’s own mission statement and definition of successful learning?

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

<p>Quality Area 4:</p> <p><u>Teacher-Learner Process</u></p> <p>The quality of the teacher-learner process is determined by the competences of the instructors, the interactivity between teachers and learners and the specific elements of the learning process, which promote an element of self-study. Study advice is an integral part of a competence connected to adult pedagogy.</p>		
Specifications	Requirements	Proof
<p>Qualifications of the instructors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist competence • Didactic competence • Social competence • Personal competence • Advisory competence <p>Quality of the teaching processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency based on goals, content, methods and the teachers • There is adequate focus on content, goals and work-styles based on participant feedback. • Continuous review of the learning process and the learning success • Space, time and technology for practice and usage • Possibility of self-organised learning • Study promotion and advice <p>Indicators of successful learning, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material learnt is applied through a sequence of exercises. • The needs of the participants are actively included. 	<p>Customers are informed about the content, goals, methods, instructor qualifications and the obligations of participation.</p> <p>Instructor profile, selection and recruitment processes are defined.</p> <p>The qualifications and competences of the instructors are documented.</p> <p>Work methods which promote individual learning processes are described.</p> <p>The organisation describes how it proves that successful learning occurred.</p> <p>Instructors receive advice, training and support from pedagogical professionals.</p> <p>Arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.</p>	<p>Concepts, curricula</p> <p>Card indexes, database</p> <p>Minutes</p> <p>Procedural documents</p> <p>Program, offer</p> <p>etc.</p>

Arguments for the quality area

The quality area **teacher-learner process** covers the expertise, didactic, methodology, social, personal and advisory skills of the pedagogical team, as well as the contents, objectives and methods of learning. Systematic continuous professional development of the instructors also belongs to this quality area. Only well-qualified instructors will be able to support the learners by creating the right conditions for learning as well as the right motivation.

Explanation of the specifications

In terms of competences, differences between social competence, e.g. communication skills or the ability to criticise constructively, and personal competence, e.g. the ability to reflect upon one's performance, the ability to accept criticism and to learn from it, will be analysed.

“Indicators” are characteristics and behavioural patterns that can be observed by outsiders and clearly represent successful learning or the achievement of the teacher/learner goals.

Explanation of the requirements

“Customers are informed about the instructors' qualifications” does not necessarily mean that the qualifications of all the instructors will be listed. It is also possible to give a general statement of the competences of the employees.

“Instructor profile, selection and recruitment processes are defined.” The profile will identify what the instructors should be able to do and what the educational organisation expects of them. Requirements are based, for example, on the task at hand as defined by outside/external sources. The selection and recruitment processes identify what criteria will be used and what procedures will be followed. In addition to these processes, it may also be relevant to describe the process for terminating a contract of employment.

The definition of **“qualifications and competences”** refers to the resources that the instructors possess (based on the requirements). Qualifications are formal proof of specialist knowledge and skills. However, competences represent the practical capabilities, the ability to deal with certain situations, strengths and potential of the individual instructors and, where necessary, even competences outside the world of formal qualifications.

A description identifying **“that successful learning occurred”** is possible when the organisation defines indicators that are visible to external observers. It is logical that these indicators cannot be described for every training program in the self-evaluation report, but that they represent the organisation's own definition of successful learning.

“Instructors receive advice, training and support from pedagogical professionals” represents the fact that instructors receive support from a third party, e.g. a freelancer gets advice from a contracted employee or a contracted employee is given advice by a line manager. In certain situations, it is also possible that colleagues on the same level can be advisors.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

<p>Quality Area 5:</p> <p><u>Evaluation of the Educational Processes</u></p> <p>Evaluation of the educational processes means that the completed work will regularly be checked and evaluated using suitable tools. Determining factors in this process are successes of learning, the satisfaction of the participants and, where relevant, the paying company, as well as the attainment of the educational organisation's own goals. An appraisal of the teachers' performances should be part of the evaluation.</p>		
Specifications	Requirements	Proof
<p>Feedback from the learners re:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes of learning • Satisfaction • Teacher-learner processes • Infrastructure • Work of the instructors <p>Feedback from the instructors</p> <p>Feedback from the purchaser</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools • Procedures • Frequency • Extent <p>of the evaluation are described and justified based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning.</p> <p>Analyses are evaluated and based on the results, recommendations for change are made.</p> <p>The instructors are informed of the results of the evaluation.</p>	<p>Evaluation tools</p> <p>Documented results of the evaluation</p> <p>Documented minutes of evaluation meetings</p> <p>etc.</p>

Arguments for the quality area

Without feedback, the educational organisation cannot make empirical statements about the success of the work done. **Evaluation of the educational processes** means that the training given by the organisation is internally checked and evaluated using suitable tools. To this end, feedback is needed based on the successes of learning, the learning process itself, the level of satisfaction of both the learner and the purchaser and, of course, the training organisation's own requirements. Systematic evaluations also include checking the performance of the instructors, to give them, where necessary, support and training or whatever other actions are suitable.

Explanation of the requirements

“Tools, procedures, frequency, extent of the evaluation are described and based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning.”

This requirement refers to the fact that every organisation is responsible for deciding and justifying the relevant questionnaires, suitable methods, a sensible timeframe and the extent of the evaluation. It can be useful to limit this procedure, but it must be justified so that comparisons between the different educational areas can be made. In cases where the organisation has defined a wide variety of target groups in its mission statement, it might be necessary to have a number of different evaluation processes.

Not all training sessions need to be included in the evaluation process, but a sample can be taken and must be justified, too. However, the organisation must clearly state in the self-evaluation report why it has chosen that course of action.

Especially in this quality area, it is important to remember that the self-evaluation report contains not only statements about the procedure itself, but also the results of the evaluation (at least in summary or by example).

Indicators of both successful learning and learning goals should be used as a basis for evaluations, so that not only the satisfaction of the participants is surveyed.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

<p>Quality Area 6: <u>Infrastructure</u> On the one hand, infrastructure covers the conditions within the context of learning relating to the rooms, technical equipment, time, materials and media. On the other hand, the working conditions of the employees are also covered. For organisations offering residential training, this will also include accommodation, meal options and availability of leisure activities.</p>		
Specifications	Requirements	Proof
<p>Locations and furnishings</p> <p>Workplaces and equipment</p> <p>Relevance to subject, addressees and methods</p> <p>Study materials</p> <p>Media, machines and tools</p> <p><u>For organisations offering residential courses:</u> Living conditions</p>	<p>Quality criteria for locations and furnishings are defined.</p> <p>Locations and furnishings are regularly checked by the organisation based on the defined criteria.</p> <p>Quality criteria are defined for the working conditions of the employees.</p> <p>The organisation regularly checks the working conditions based on the defined criteria.</p> <p>The organisation identifies what improvements have been made, where necessary.</p> <p>The availability and functionality of media (machines, tools, etc., where necessary) is guaranteed and regularly checked.</p> <p>Arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.</p> <p><u>For organisations offering residential courses:</u> The organisation regularly checks that the living conditions are suitable for the addressees and match the needs of the participants.</p>	<p>Reports</p> <p>Room allocation plans and timetables</p> <p>Floor plans</p> <p>An index of available media</p> <p>Inventory lists</p> <p>etc.</p>

Arguments for the quality area

Infrastructure is relevant because the whole environment in which learning takes place influences the success or failure of the learning process. The condition of the rooms, the work and learning conditions have an enormous impact on the performance of the learners. Infrastructure covers such elements as rooms, timetables, technical equipment, materials and media. In addition to the above factors, organisations offering residential courses must also take into account the living conditions of the participants. All working conditions of the employees must be included in this section as well.

Explanation of the requirements

The organisations must at first define their own **“quality criteria for locations and furnishings”**, i.e. the conditions of their learning infrastructure, and describe them in the self-evaluation report. This represents the learning infrastructure of the organisation.

A check of **“locations and furnishings”** must include both rooms owned by the organisation and any rented space. An inventory and a list of the quality criteria are requirements of this check.

The **“quality of the working conditions of the employees”** is an important prerequisite for assessing the quality of the organisation’s performance. In terms of this requirement, the organisation has to proceed based on the learning infrastructure.

When performing the quality checks, it is imperative that **improvements are made** where necessary. To fulfil this requirement, it must be shown that an attempt to change the conditions was made, even if the attempt or the change were not (immediately) successful.

“Media” covers a wide range of equipment, not only electronic products, but also flip-charts, presentation kits, notice-boards, rubber mats in a sports hall, kilns for pottery courses and machines in the workshops.

“The availability of media (machines, tools, etc., where necessary) is guaranteed and regularly checked” means that the equipment is available and is readily accessible.

“The functionality of media” means that the media is checked to ensure that they work.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

Quality Area 7:

Management

Management includes controlling all processes and is a function involving the coordination of how the work gets done. Leadership is, above and beyond that, a supervisory position with special responsibilities. Management (esp. the senior management position) is responsible for the introduction and development of a management system, including quality development. It includes leading the decision-making process and ensuring that those decisions are enforced. Decisions influence the way an organisation operates and provide the necessary confidence. Management can be observed at all levels within the organisation.

Specifications	Requirements	Proof
<p>Acceptance of complete responsibility and responsibility for success</p> <p>Management of finances, human resources and all other resources</p> <p>Direction of processes and cooperation</p> <p>Creation of communication structures</p> <p>Management of information and knowledge</p> <p>Decision-making</p> <p>Goal setting and controlling of the results</p> <p>Responsibility for quality development and continuous improvement</p> <p>Strategic planning and implementation of change</p>	<p>The company structure is presented.</p> <p>Management principles are agreed on and documented.</p> <p>The decision-making processes are defined and documented.</p> <p>Tools and procedures for internal communication are described and implemented.</p> <p>Goals are defined, documented and checked.</p> <p>Responsibilities for quality development are clearly defined.</p> <p>Arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.</p>	<p>Organisational chart</p> <p>Written principles and agreements</p> <p>Regularity of meetings</p> <p>Work regulations</p> <p>Organisation handbook</p> <p>Minutes of meetings are recorded</p> <p>Business plan</p> <p>Operational agreements</p> <p>etc.</p>

Arguments for the quality area

Every organisation needs **management**, especially in times when flexibility and quick reactions are needed. Management is a service to the organisation that guarantees the functionality of the company. In this quality area it will be checked how management promotes cooperation to deliver performances by the organisation. Management is, therefore, not only restricted to the senior management positions, even though managers/leaders have an outstanding leadership responsibility.

Explanation of the requirements

“The company structure is presented” refers to how the company is organised, e.g. an organisational chart provides this information.

“Management principles” represent the principles governing how the organisation is run. At this point, it is possible to describe only the responsibilities of the senior management positions. These principles should have been agreed on internally within the organisation. However, how will these principles be implemented when a third party is involved in the management process, e.g. local government funding influences?

“Tools and procedures for internal communication” exist to ensure that all staff members are aware of all information relevant to their jobs, that decisions are made known within the organisation and that these decisions are enforced.

Systematic **“goal setting”** defines the operational objectives of all the various departments and jobs within the organisation. The performance of the organisation as a whole, both in terms of how the work gets done and how the organisation’s own goals are reached, depends on the role and responsibilities designated to a specific position. Therefore, target agreements have to consider the special contribution each function/position makes to the performance of the organisation. Targets can be agreed on in personal appraisals between the manager and employee, but it is also conceivable that they are set in a team meeting environment.

In cases where certain employees are not given a goal, but target agreements are directed at groups of employees, justification for this must be provided.

Proof explanations

The organisation handbook represents all the processes, procedures and policies of the organisation in a defined order. The handbook should be written based on the organisation’s interpretation of what is relevant and not based on a standard outline. A question such as “What documents does a new employee need to be able to do his/her job correctly?” will help to understand what factors are relevant. The handbook can either be in printed form or in electronic format available via the organisation’s intranet, but it must be available to all employees at any time.

It is recommended that the most up-to-date version of the handbook is easily identifiable, e.g. version numbers can be used.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

Quality Area 8:

Human Resources

This quality area includes all measures concerning planning, operations and development of the staff. The core elements here are: making the mission statement reality; reaching the organisation's development goals; and the completion of tasks based on the workplace and the functions of the employees. Staff development refers to the career, personal and social development of the employees. It also includes integration of the employees and the promotion of cooperation. The support and further education of freelancers and volunteers also have to be included in the process of personnel development.

Specifications	Requirements	Proof
Human resources planning Human resources operations Human resources development Team building Employee satisfaction	Job specifications are available and updated. Staff profiles are available and updated. New competence requirements are systematically analysed. Development progress sessions with the employees are carried out regularly. A systematic training plan for all groups of employees exists. Training is offered, results are documented and evaluated. Databases of all freelance employees exist and are regularly updated. Arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.	Human resources database Training statistics Written records of meetings etc.

Arguments for the quality area

The quality area of **human resources** covers the planning, operations and development of staff members, because constantly high quality work is only possible when the employees are satisfied. It is necessary to have job specifications for all positions and employee profiles for each person within the organisation. The skills of the workforce have to be developed based on the organisation's goals, i.e. human resources development follows the necessity of the strategic development of the whole organisation.

Explanation of the requirements

“Job specifications” are needed for **every position** within the organisation, from senior/middle management to the pedagogical and bookkeeping staff etc. The requirement refers to the tasks and duties of the position, not the person, and defines the level of authority to make decisions.

“Staff profiles” describe the practical abilities, capacity to act, strengths as well as potential, not only the formal qualifications needed. A profile must exist for all employees within the organisation, including managers.

If a staff profile for a particular group of employees does not exist, a valid explanation must be given.

“Competence requirements” aim at current, new or future skills needed to perform all tasks and jobs. They will be based on the new/changed tasks and goals as well as on the strategic development needs of the organisation which arise as a result of the changing requirements of its surroundings. The competence requirements will define the difference between the skills currently available in the organisation and the future.

“Development progress sessions” cover the development of each individual employee concerning his/her tasks/job and its performance, based on the development needs of the organisation. It is not a judgement based on performance, but feedback from the manager to the employee should be part of these meetings.

If these meetings do not occur with all employees, but with only certain individuals, a valid explanation must be given.

“A systematic training plan for all groups of employees” gives the organisation direction. The overall goal of the training is to improve not only the performance of the individual employee, but also the organisation. The training can occur in-house or externally and on-the-job training is also acceptable.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

Quality Area 9:

Controlling

Controlling includes all measures used to check the performance of the organisation and to assist the decision-making process by providing relevant data. Key indicators are to be defined, justified and checked, so that the effectiveness and efficiency of both the individual work areas and the whole organisation can be analysed/evaluated and recommendations for improvement can be made and implemented.

Specifications	Requirements	Proof
Reaching goals in terms of content Reaching financial goals Financial resources Customers: Purchasers, participants, target groups Training program Services Employees	<p>A reporting system based on the organisation-specific criteria will be defined and justified.</p> <p>Parameters, key performance indicators and qualitative indicators of success are defined and justified. They are regularly updated, evaluated and recommendations are made.</p> <p>Financial management procedures are defined, described, justified and based on operating efficiency.</p> <p>Regular internal audits are carried out and recommendations based on the results of the audit are made.</p> <p>Arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.</p>	Budgets Statistics Internal control Annual reports etc.

Arguments for the quality area

The performance of the organisation and quality development cannot be left to chance. It is imperative that the organisation controls the way it operates to avoid wasting time, money and resources. **Controlling** includes all tools needed to check the performance of the organisation based on company goals and thereby assists in the decision-making process. It is not only relevant to look at what happened in the past, but it is also important to look at what is happening now, especially checking profitability on a regular basis.

Explanation of the requirements

The **“reporting system”** documents performance, results, resources used, effectiveness and productivity of the different areas of the organisation based on pre-determined criteria. It can be either in printed form or in electronic format. The organisation must define and justify whether the reports cover the whole organisation, departments or positions. The frequency of the reporting also needs to be determined and justified.

The organisation itself must define and justify all the specifications relevant to the reporting system.

“Parameters” will only include the number of class hours or participants, for example.

“Performance indicators” like ratios, in contrast, are based on comparison and calculated by looking at the number of new courses compared to existing ones, for example.

“Qualitative indicators of success” refer to the special performance of the educational organisation, its tasks, goals and concept. They can be determined by asking the question: What characteristics and criteria can be used to record and evaluate successful performances? These indicators cannot always be objectively justified, but are subject to a consensus of opinions of those included in the process.

A qualitative indicator of success for an »open day« could be the attendance of »VIPs«, e.g. the mayor. Which person an organisation identifies as important will vary from organisation to organisation and will also depend on the planned event. But the attendance of this specific person will indicate the reputation of the organisation.

“Financial management procedures are defined, described, justified and based on operating efficiency.” – The profitability of the organisation can only be guaranteed by having financial instructions that are regularly checked to ensure that the financial resources are being used correctly. A goal of this requirement is to raise cost-awareness within the organisation with regard to products and services, so that the organisation can be managed economically. The company must define and justify which procedures are necessary for success and suitable for the organisation, e.g. break-even analyses.

“Regular internal audits” cover quality checks, self-evaluations of the organisation itself and its practices, checks on defined work processes and the agreed regulations, especially on how well they work.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

<p>Quality Area 10: Customer Relations Building a relationship with customers is at the core of successful organisational performance. The communication between the organisation and customers involves not only winning new customers, but also taking care of the existing customers. Therefore, all relevant processes are designed to meet the needs of the customer.</p>		
Specifications	Requirements	Proof
<p>Winning new customers, customer advice, customer care</p> <p>Business terms and conditions, consumer and data protection</p> <p>Complaints management</p> <p>Customer information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training offers • Enrolment process • Participant organisation • Minimum requirements • Services • Advisory sessions • Complaints process • Instructors and other staff • Testing process • Locations • Floor plans • Legal structure of the organisation • etc. 	<p>The most important customer care processes are defined and justified.</p> <p>Business terms and conditions, including consumer protection measures, are publicly available.</p> <p>Enrolment process is defined and enforced.</p> <p>Suggestions and complaints are received, evaluated and, where necessary, acted upon.</p> <p>Justification of the content and format of information provided to customers is available.</p>	<p>Internal written regulations</p> <p>Training program</p> <p>Handouts, information materials</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Room occupancy plans</p> <p>etc.</p>

Arguments for the quality area

Organisations are looked at from the outside, they are seen by their customers, who will form an opinion about the organisation and draw their own conclusions. Therefore, this quality area **customer relations** is concerned with how the product range and business conditions are designed with regard to the customers and communicated to the public. All processes which deal with customer relations must be oriented to the needs of the customers.

Explanation of the requirements

“The most important customer care processes are defined and justified.” At this point, it is important to look at more than just the way the employees deal with the customers. Winning new customers, care of existing customers and customer retention also belong under this heading. This requirement covers all communication processes and tools available to ensure two-way communication, i.e. organisation to customer and customer to organisation. The importance of each communication process or tool is decided upon, described and justified by the organisation itself. It is necessary to define procedures for dealing with the customers themselves, not what equipment (i.e. telephone, fax, e-mail) can be used for this task.

“Consumer protection measures” indicate how seriously the organisation operates and describes the rights of the customer, e.g. cancellation policies or the so-called »cooling off« period after signing a contract. These would normally be part of the business terms and conditions.

“Justification of the content and format of information provided to customers” is based on the interests and needs of the customer, i.e. what does the customer need to know about the organisation's products/services to be able to competently take advantage of the said products and services. The specifications indicate potential sources of information that could be presented to the organisations' customers.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

Quality Area 11:

Strategic Development Goals

Strategic development goals are the longer-term and comprehensive goals of the organisation, which determine the position of the organisation, within a defined time period, in its expected future surroundings. These goals are based on the mission statement and internal/external evaluations of the organisation.

Specifications	Requirements	Proof
Positioning of the organisation within its surroundings Development of a vision and long-term goals Influence on further education policy Establish and develop a market for products Win new customers Continuous development of internal competences Long-term guarantee of resources Further development of the organisation and the learning infrastructure Further development of quality goals	Regular evaluation/development workshops take place. Quality development goals are collected systematically and documented. Strategic development goals for the whole organisation are suggested in the self-evaluation report.	Workshop reports Documented goals Development plans Measurement planning etc.

Arguments for the quality area

Among the final steps of the certification process is a look into the future. The »learning organisation« must document its desire for further development and, by formulating goals, the organisation knows which direction to go in. **Strategic development goals** are the mid- to long-term goals of the organisation, not the quality goals. They refer to the whole organisation, the marketplace and its surroundings. They represent the politics and strategies of the company, i.e. they are not individual elements relating to certain areas, they are a combination of all the individual elements, translated into long-term development projects. In the case of LQW, the time period covers the four years leading up to the next certification process.

Explanation of the requirements

“Evaluation/development workshops” can also take place as »workshops for the future«. It is imperative that as many employees as possible join these workshops. The goal of such workshops is to evaluate one's own organisation and assist in its development.

“Systematic collection and documentation of quality development goals” refers to more than just the requirements of the self-evaluation report. It includes goals for the future development of quality in the separate quality areas.

“Strategic development goals” are only to be **suggested**. In the final workshop, the auditor will assist in formulating these goals in such a way that they are similar to a requirement, so that the goals can be checked during re-certification. However, it is useful to formulate indicators of success in the self-evaluation report in a way that helps to measure whether the goals are met or not.

➔ Under the heading »Service« on the LQW website (www.qualitaets-portal.de), tools are available to assist in this part of the process.

Thanks

Since its creation in 2000, the field of further education has shown great interest in “Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung (LQW®)” and provided much support.

In the first instance, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, within the framework of a program for life-long learning, provided a portion of the financial support.

A working group made up of representatives of the Federal States of Germany, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and scientific experts, headed by the Ministry of Science, Economics and Transport of Schleswig-Holstein, advised and supervised the work and will continue to do so in the future.

The first LQW model was developed in conjunction with the association of Lower Saxony adult colleges, in a pilot project in 2000-2002. The association continued to provide support in the following years, e.g. the development of the LQW initiative QE21, which included input from nine other associations of adult colleges.

Another partner in this project is the German Institute for Adult Education. They were responsible for organising the training for the auditors, building up the regional support centres and the evaluation system, all of which took place from 2003-2005.

A large number of LQW customers have participated in surveys and evaluations organised by ArtSet. They have also volunteered information based on their experiences with the model and suggested ways to improve it.

The auditors have not only worked exceptionally well, they have also participated in development workgroups, provided feedback from their own experiences and won new business.

At the end of 2005, the financial support mentioned above finished, and since this point in time, a number of regional support centres have been created. These centres are distributed across the country and will continue to provide support to the network.

Many thanks to all these institutions and the people involved in making the LQW model the success it is today!